**What Started Here, Ends Here:** Framing the Glasgow COP

As Scottish civil society we believe that the COP in Glasgow should have a sense of place, a distinct feel which inspires real meeting, engagement, listening, and can enable transformation. We want people coming to Glasgow, whether for the official COP, or for activities related to the COP, to feel the distinctiveness of our city of, *Glas gu*, the ‘Dear Green Place’. This document will help when we plan, convene or are involved in activities around the COP so that we can tie together all that we do with these themes and create a distinctive and effective civil society presence at the COP.

**A welcoming, inclusive city: and a welcoming, inclusive climate movement:**

Glasgow prides itself as a city with a warm heart, the friendly city. You can’t stand looking lost in Glasgow for long before several people start trying to give you directions. We want global civil society to experience the warmth of a Glasgow welcome and the light of our multicultural winter festivals, despite the inevitable cold weather and dark days of a Scottish winter. The city showed the best of its open and welcoming nature during the commonwealth games, with Pumeza Matshikiza’s performance of ‘Freedom come all ye’ during the opening ceremony becoming emblematic of the open, progressive and hopeful city that we are. With November often feeling like the longest, darkest, coldest month, we want all those travelling to the city to experience the warm glow of hospitality and welcome during their time in Glasgow.

As a multicultural city with connections to many parts of the world, we are excited to welcome the broad and diverse global climate movement to Scotland, believing that we are most effective when we have many voices and approaches, embracing difference; building, through our distinct ways of doing things, something that is far greater than the sum of its parts. Inspired by the Edinburgh Fringe, whose founding principle is ‘to be open access, accommodating anyone with a desire to perform and a venue willing to host them’, we welcome movements, events, activities, organisations, campaigns and individuals, acknowledging the importance of all our voices.

**Glasgow’s place at the start and Glasgow’s place in the solution**

It was in Glasgow in 1776, that James Watt invented the steam engine, detonating the explosion which has since grown and propagated, and which has now brought us to the brink of climate crisis. Now, nearly 250 years later, Glasgow is to host those who are gathering to agree how to respond. In November 2020 world leaders and civil society will come to the River Clyde, to what was once the Queen’s docks, a place crowded with steam-ships, plying their trade in coal, iron, steel, and the machinery of industry around the world. Glasgow’s rise in the age of industry was propelled by prosperity won by its position as the second city of the Empire, with its ties to the slave trade. The impact of our colonial past is evident across the world today, with the huge disparities in wealth between countries reflected in Glasgow itself, in its highest level of inequality in the UK; extreme poverty cheek by jowl with huge wealth.

The river Clyde today, its industry stilled, is rising along with our planet’s oceans, and the site where COP26 will take place is at risk, along with parts of our city, of being reclaimed by the river.

But out of Glasgow’s industrial past came powerful social movements: the rent strikes of 1915 led by Mary Barbour, just across the Clyde at Govan, spread across Glasgow and the UK, bringing reform that resonates today. From the weavers’ and Red Clydeside, to the action by workers at the Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride, which prevented Pinochet’s fighter jet engines returning to Chile to be used against the Chilean people, Glasgow has been a place of social movements for two centuries. With the recent brutal action against decision not to host COP25, the connection between Glasgow and Chile’s people made by the Rolls Royce workers is more relevant than ever.

Injustices wrought by climate breakdown are now writ large across the earth, with those countries who have done least to contribute to the crisis affected the most. But as Glasgow’s injustices sparked social change, civil society across the world is calling for transformational actions and, with time running out for us to keep our planet below a 1.5 degree rise in temperature, there is an unprecedented challenge ahead. Every crisis has its turning point – and Glasgow is hosting the COP at a crucial point in history, where we can choose to turn away from the brink of destruction.

**Telling stories, singing songs:**

Scotland has a rich tradition of story and song, in both Scots and Gaelic, and within our multicultural communities, that has been bringing people together, in good times and bad, for centuries. Glasgow’s links with all corners of the world through her diaspora communities enrich the culture of the city and add weft and weave to the cultural tweed we are creating. The ceilidh house was a place for gathering around the hearth to share stories, songs and poems, particularly during the long nights of winter. And ceilidh culture continues today, both in its original sense, and in the more modern version as communal dances. We will bring ceilidh culture to the COP26, offering a place where civil society from all over the world can gather around a communal hearth and where people’s stories are heard. This can be both in the sense of embracing the principles of the ceilidh in the places we create for civil society, and also in creating a space within the Civil society hub for musicians, storytellers and poets from all corners, to gather and build a place of meeting.

We will create a space where those experienced in the dance of the COP, can mingle with others taking part in the dance for the first time; where all are welcome to make their offering, try their hand, and take part, as we gather to insist that action is taken before it’s too late, and in the hope that it’s not already too late.



