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How to create Climate Justice Memorials

A step-by-step guide for planning a climate memorial event in the run-up to and during COP26

Intro

This action guide contains everything you need to create your own Climate Justice Memorial in a local park, street, in front of a bank, MP offices and town halls - wherever makes sense for your community and climate demands.

ACTION GUIDE

1. [What are climate justice memorials?](#) Include [Target ideas](#)
2. [Action ideas](#) 3 simple but powerful ideas
3. [Step-by-Step How To guide:](#)
4. [Visual ideas and examples:](#) link to downloadable wheatpastable posters
5. [Messaging Guide:](#) (NEON, FCJ guide,, C&R demands link etc)
6. [Climate Memorial Hub:](#) A map of climate memorials and ways to get involved locally and connect nationally and globally with other activists.

What are climate justice memorials?



Photo: Pacific Climate Warriors perform welcome ceremony near Bonn to open COP23

What

Memorials are spaces, installations or ceremonies which help commemorate something important to a community, often including ceremonial elements such as lighting of candles, song, speakers and readings, a moment's silence or gesture.

Simply put, creating a climate justice memorial involves bringing people in your community together to lay tributes and remember the lives, stories and demands of those hardest hit by the climate crisis.

On the eve of the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow, climate memorials will be laid across the country to lift up demands for climate justice and for the UK to #DefundClimateChaos.

Public memorials can be a powerful way to help people see and feel the urgency of the climate crisis. In this moment, we all need spaces to share our grief, anxiety, rage, memories and our care and solidarity for others. Climate Justice Memorials can help bring people

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together to learn from and celebrate the communities resisting on the frontlines of flooding wildfires and the extreme weather everywhere this summer.

Where

Our collective memorials should make it clear, in location and message alike, at whose doorstep the blame for climate chaos lies. Choose a location that helps make a direct, emotional connection between the people and lives impacted by the climate crisis, and those responsible. Some ideas include:

- **central public spaces** that act as natural gathering points for our communities: town squares, pedestrian streets, parks, outside community centres.
- On the **doorstep or windows of banks** that finance fossil fuel extraction, or at the museums and institutions that take polluters cash-for-greenwash.
- At the **offices of MPs, ministers, corporate executives** and elected officials failing to take action in line climate science and climate justice

What's important in your location choice is that your climate justice memorial can become an open, evolving and welcoming focal point that invites your community to come and lay down their grief and stories, and gather strength and resilience from others. They could be places that we can come back to time and again for healing, reconnection, celebration and protest through COP26 and beyond!

Memorial Ideas

If you already have an idea for a powerful memorial - fantastic, we can't wait to see the full creativity and diversity of the UK movement for climate justice this Autumn. We encourage everyone to tell their own personal stories, to remember your loved ones near and far.

If you're looking for some creative new tactics, here are two simple but powerful Climate Justice Memorial tactics and resource you could try with a group of friends. They can all range from easy to more advanced depending on your or your group's capacity.

1. **Poster memorial** - easy for individuals and small or remote groups to try out
2. **Street Memorial** - advanced, for bigger experienced action groups

1. Poster memorials

What

This tactic involves creating a personal tribute or token out of a selection of visuals, posters, stories and messages that we've worked with frontline communities around the world to collate.

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Download posters or order printed copies [here](#).

Where

This can be as simple as putting up a poster in your window with candles or fairy lights. For more impact, you could lay this in a public space like a park or outside a community centre and invite others to create and add tributes to a collective memorial that builds over time. Prepared to go even further? These posters can also be wheatpasted windows, walls or pavement at the HQ offices and local branches of high street banks and insurers who must [#DefundClimateChaos](#)

How

Choose an image or story that moves you, cut it out and craft a personal tribute to bring along and lay either at an existing Climate Justice Memorial or a location you register.

You could use collage and crafting supplies to create window tributes with people's photos and stories of climate impacts. You could try your hand at wheatpasting a larger wall or window with several posters and your own printed slogans. To highlight your posters as a memorial you could also use chalking, individually painted tributes on stones, handwritten messages, handprints, painted hearts, ribbons, photographs, candles, flowers and other personal items.

- See more ideas in the Step-by-Step Guide
- See [How to wheatpaste](#) a mural
- See **Visuals and Messaging Guide** (coming soon)

2. Street memorials

What

This tactic is big, bold and beautiful. It involves bringing people together to design and then paint a mural or a whole street or square with massive art to highlight calls for climate justice.

Street murals are an increasingly popular and exciting tactic to inspire and mobilise people while collectively creating a powerful message.



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Where

There are no real limitations to where you could paint a street mural - from parks and town squares to whole roads in the centre of London's financial district or outside a local bank branch that should [#DefundClimateChaos](#).

How

You'll need careful planning and some training but the preparation and painting together are great ways to build skills, strengthen your group and foster community and solidarity locally.

- Read the full action guide "[A better world is paintable](#)" (page 15-25)
- Follow the [Step-by-Step Guide](#) below
- Attend How to Paint a Street Memorial training in early October.

Step-by-step action guide

- Get some like-minded people together
- Get out laptops, phones, pens and paper
- Follow the steps below to design and plan your own climate memorial

STEP 1: Location and target

Being clear about the purpose of your climate memorial will help you pin down the most suitable location. Some possible ideas include:

- **central public spaces** that act as natural **gathering points for our communities**: eg. town squares, pedestrian streets, parks, outside community centres, existing memorials/murals/statues.
- **outside a campaign target** that is fuelling the climate crisis eg. banks that still finance fossil fuel extraction, town halls of councils investing local pension funds in fossil fuels, or museums and universities that take polluters cash-for-greenwash.
- **At the offices of the ministers, MPs, corporate executives and elected officials** who slow climate action at every step.

If you were to create a climate justice memorial in your community, what location would make the biggest emotional impact? Jot down the first 3 places that come to mind.

1. .
2. .
3. .

Things to discuss

- ☐ What is a significant location in your community?
 - ☐ If you are part of an existing grassroots campaign or group, what is a significant location for your campaign target?
- ☐ Who is the audience you want to see and participate in your climate memorial?
- ☐ Who is the target or decision maker you want to put in focus with your event?
- ☐ Is the location easily accessible by public transport?
- ☐ Is it open air and able to accommodate people safely with social distancing?
- ☐ Is it a safe location?
 - ☐ Will the memorial be part of a larger march or rally that blocks traffic to the area or do you need to consider this?
 - ☐ Does it make sense to get permission for your memorial site (eg. if it's outside a community centre or in a town square)?
 - ☐ If your memorial creation is part of a disobedient action (eg. laying a memorial outside a bank or MP office without permission) what do you need to do to make it safe for the organisers and participants?

STEP 2: Choose your memorial object or concept

How we memorialise people and show our solidarity and care in moments of crisis or celebration varies greatly within our communities and cultures - from large murals, quilts, statues and street art to simple tributes made of candles, flowers and pictures of loved ones. The rituals and ceremonies we use vary greatly too, from song and dance to moments of silence and laying of wreaths or tributes.

Picking an appropriate and culturally sensitive memorial concept will be key to helping bring people together and share a clear message about what climate justice means in your community. Do you want people to be able to express their hopes or fears around the climate crisis? Or to share their demands for climate justice? Or a story of something they will lose? Or to celebrate the resilience and strength of loved ones or groups you've made connections with on the frontlines of fossil fuel extraction and climate impacts?

If a passer-by came across your memorial event or action, what visual/audio cues or objects would let them know that they are at a memorial site for climate justice?

Jot down the first 3 objects/elements that come to mind.

1. ,
2. .
3. .

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Check out these videos examples for creative inspiration:

- Facebook: [National Covid Memorial Wall](#),
- Black Lives Matter [Rogers Park Memorial wall](#)
- Youtube: [The Rise for Climate Justice Mural Project](#)

Or simply download or order copies of a ready made, wheat-pastable photos, templates and posters you can use.

Things to consider

- ☐ Who do you need to connect with to design your local climate memorial concept collectively?
- ☐ How can the design and tone of your memorial convey what's at stake in the climate crisis and the key messages of justice, care, love, respect and solidarity with those on the frontlines of intersecting crises?
- ☐ Is there a simple object or tribute that anyone can create or bring to lay at your memorial to make it participatory? Some ideas include: a painted stone, a photo frame, a handwritten message or picture, tying a message/ribbon to a tree or fence, adding a small picture or sticker to make a larger mural,
- ☐ If your focus is on a particular climate-impacted frontline community, how can you ensure their voices and traditions are represented in a respectful and sensitive way?
- ☐ What will your memorial look like with everyone's contributions? What design /visual elements do you need to help link everyone's individual tributes together?
- ☐ What kind of materials are easily accessible to all?
- ☐ Do you have access to raw materials and art supplies to help people create their tributes beforehand or on the day? What do you need to provide? See [How to Host an Art Build](#)

STEP 3: Choose your demand and message

Our memorials can serve to help more people in our community to connect with their own anxiety about the climate crisis and to start conversations about what climate justice would look like. They can bring together different communities and grow our grassroots groups.

Whether you want to help people make the climate connection between the finance institutions fuelling more oil, coal and gas extraction, or memorialise the resilience of a particular community impacted by flooding, droughts or wildfires, you'll need a simple, clear way of communicating your memorial's key message to the public and media. What do you want? Why does it matter?

[Example key messages](#)

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*What words, images and stories will best communicate the message you want to get across?
Jot down the first 3 words, images and stories that come to mind.*

Words:

Images:

Stories

Things to consider

- ☐ Is there a recent climate impact that particularly touched you/your community or a section of your community? What stories, words and images could bring this to life?
- ☐ Is there a target you want to highlight in your community that is connected to the climate crisis eg. a bank financing coal plants in Bangladesh? a council continuing to invest in fossil fuels but making cuts to local social care?
- ☐

STEP 4: Design your memorial ceremony, event or action

What rituals or elements have moved you and helped you feel connected to others at a previous memorial or action you've seen or attended?

Jot down the first 3 ideas that come to mind

1.

2.

3.

Things to consider

Duration

- ☐ What time will your memorial creation start and finish? Do you want the memorial to build up over hours or several days or throughout the COP26?
- ☐ How permanent would you like this memorial to be? Who will you need to liaise with to ensure it can be protected for the duration of your event? Options include:
 - ☐ Temporary: use chalk and materials that can be easily cleaned up and removed
 - ☐ Semi-permanent: negotiate the period you will leave your memorial up
 - ☐ Permanent: petition or lobby your target to keep the memorial in place -: this can create a reputational dilemma for your target if they choose to clear it up..

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- ☐ If you don't have permission, could you start a petition to keep the climate memorial until the end of COP26

Covid Safety

- ☐ Add in from other guide
- ☐ It's important to liaise with the workers who may be impacted by your event - here's a template letter explaining that your action isn't targetting them
- ☐ How can you minimise the impact on low-paid workers like cleaners
- ☐

Ceremony and ritual

- ☐ What audio / soundscape / music should accompany your memorial?
 - ☐ Check out a selection of soundscapes and audio clips (coming soon)
 - ☐ Check out a selection of songs
- ☐ What rituals and ceremonies are culturally important to your community and the communities you are memorialising? How can you incorporate these elements into your event?
- ☐ Who could speak or give a reading or sing at your memorial event?
- ☐ Think about the flow of the day as people arrive, what happens while they create their tributes, and what they can do during the event? You could:
 - ☐ pass out candles to light together if your event is at dusk
 - ☐ gather together for a moment's silence or a collective gesture of respect.
 - ☐ Read out stories or statements from frontline activists around the world

Visuals and Messaging

- ☐ How can you make your message stand out visually among lots of small and unique tributes? A big banner, a sandwich board, a window collage, placards?
- ☐ How does your action connect to others happening around the world visually?
- ☐ Who will capture photos and videos?
- ☐ Will you livestream your event?
- ☐ How will you deliver your message to the target of your action?

Logistics

- ☐ How will you set up your memorial practically? Make a step-by-step plan and practice!

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STEP 5: Invite your community

Once you've designed your memorial event - it's time to start inviting people to help you plan and take part in it.

Start by registering your climate memorial event here.

STEP 6: On the Day logistics and coordination

Roles on the day

☐

Supplies

☐

STEP 7: Amplify your impact