

COUNCIL TAX STRIKE

For Climate & Ecological Emergency

ACTION PLAN

The environmental movement has only scratched the surface of what non-violent civil disobedience can achieve. Our elected authorities are living in an outdated reality and need waking up. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to simply withhold council tax and tell the world why we've done it.

If thousands of people all over the UK engage in financial civil disobedience with a simple demand: *act as if the truth is real* and engage in climate action NOW – the authorities will take notice. Because our taxes pay their expenses.

We will start with 1 or 2 simple, and achievable demands. Then after a successful campaign, the plan is to go back with radical, transformation demands: to create a legal binding citizens assembly and make a plan for a zero carbon city by 2025.

THE DEMAND

It's important to choose a demand that is simple for the council to implement. Examples of local demands that link in with the climate and ecological emergency could be road building, air pollution or local incinerator plans. Something the council just has to cancel.

For example in Norfolk, the demand is that they publicly declare a climate emergency **AND** immediately cancel plans for the Norwich Western Link Road (3.8 mile dual carriage-way).

The demand(s) should be **clear**, and easy to pitch in one line to people you are asking to get involved. For example:

Cancel plans to build or upgrade incinerators
Cancel road building scheme

HOW IT WORKS

Individuals/ groups can completely withhold their council tax and be willing to spend a few weeks in prison to bring attention to this issue. This creates a huge story and can take just one person to send necessary shock waves into the system.

OR

Individuals/groups can commit to withholding £10 of their monthly council tax payment. This option will be more powerful if a group commit together and coordinate their action. Individual groups may consider using a conditional commitment where they agree to participate if a certain number of other people join them.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Council tax applies to the whole household/property. This means the decisions to participate should be a household decision as councils can target any adult living at the address. However, refusal to pay council tax **cannot result in a criminal record**, it's a civil matter. So theoretically no one should lose employment by acting to defend life in this way. However refusal to pay council tax cannot result in a diminished credit score.

 **See the full legal briefing here**



GETTING SIGN UPS

Most sign ups will come from face-to-face interactions on the street, or social media. This is an amazing opportunity to engage with your community and find some wonderful people you might not otherwise know.

Sign-ups will come from members of existing campaign groups, looking for a new tactic to give leverage to their campaign.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sOh6bj8-9YQQVn6MZ5OAmU3n0LIHC_ZOtZYWFg8nEfK/edit?usp=sharing

SOCIAL MEDIA

It's recommended that you have a presence on social media for the campaign so that more people can find you. It's also advisable to have a website where all the need-to-know information is held:

The Website should include:

- ◆ Information about the campaign
- ◆ The next meeting
- ◆ Contact Information

You will need a simple but appealing logo, that we can help you design.

Once your web page is up, let us know at cnclstrike@gmail.com and we'll link to it from the main site. Alternatively we can create your page if you send us your text.

Ideally you will have a presence on; FACEBOOK, TWITTER & INSTAGRAM.

Choose a name that is easy to remember like @norwichtaxstrike @bristoltaxstrike

We'll feature campaigns on our website too for people to find.



WHEN YOU'VE GOT LOTS OF COMMITTED PARTICIPANTS:

If your target is 100 strikers It's advisable to find 200 people committed to ensure you can follow through on your 100 promise.

Set up a large social in a park or pub and invite all the participants, this is time to get to know each other. 🍷👏

Everyone should be put into smaller affinity/support groups. They're encouraged to meet regularly to check in each and address concerns anyone might have. Each group of 8 should appoint a co-ordinator who'll attend co-ordinators' meetings and be responsible for keeping in contact with everyone in their group.

CANCELLING YOUR DIRECT DEBIT

You will likely have to cancel your direct debit with your bank, if you have one. If you are withholding some rather than all the amount, you will then need to make a partial payment each month by cheque, or online payment. This is a good opportunity each month to remind them why we are withholding payment.

WRITE YOUR EXPLANATION LETTER

You should write a letter to the council and make it clear why you are withholding the £10 each month. Perhaps if you have children, have them help write the letter. We will also be looking to share individual stories and share why people felt the need to strike against their local council. EXAMPLE:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uhOkfWUyppzf197aaOEJTZvAVSMJnXsQQFTUXvcArs8/edit?usp=sharing>

WHY £10?

By only withholding your payment to £10 it cost them lots of extra money to deal with the situation, then the £10 itself. Meaning it's in their interest to not deal with us, or give us what we want. This is their dilemma.

We'll be talking about all these steps in our affinity groups/larger get togethers.

FIRST STEPS

First establish exactly how your council tax is being spent. This information should be available on your council website. You may want to find more information via Freedom of Information requests. A great website to help with making FOI requests and finding out what information others have already asked for is <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com>

Timing will be an important thing here and we will be doing all of this together at the same time.

RESOURCES

- GUIDE ON RUNNING STREET STALLS
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sOh6bj8-9YQQVn6MZ5OAmU3n0LIHC_ZOtZYWFg8nEfk/edit?usp=sharing
- EXAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s3lwqmQOzgZV9my57c6Dw_idv6UwBfb77FqlreU4tOY/edit?usp=sharing
- EXAMPLE LETTER TO SEND TO THE COUNCIL
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uhOkfWUyppzf197aaOEJTZvAVSMJnXsQQETUXvcArs8/edit?usp=sharing>

Why not take the opportunity to educate your local bailiff on the climate and ecological emergency if they knock on your door? It's another opportunity to record it on your phone and post to social media. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/action-your-creditor-can-take/bailiffs/stopping-bailiffs/stopping-bailiffs-at-your-door/#:~:text=You%20shouldn't%20let%20a.come%20in%20through%20unlocked%20door>

QUICK CONTACT:

@TaxStrikeUK Twitter
@CouncilTaxStrike Instagram
Search: Council Tax Strike on Facebook
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