

Personal statement to the Inspector at the Bristol Airport Inquiry

by Dr Kathy Fawcett

September 16th 2021

For my own, personal statement I would like to talk about my experience as an educator and to make really quite a simple point and a request, and it is about *hope*.

I have a PhD in ecology but I went on to become a secondary science teacher. I was part of the leadership team in a 6th form in a big state school on the outskirts of Bristol, and then ran the education dept in a science centre in Bristol and I now teach university students about science communication.

Across my twenty years in education, I've taught learners from age 5 to adult, and do you know, the issue of climate change has been a constant throughout that time. I've worked alongside colleagues at all levels who worked tirelessly, passionately and creatively to teach an understanding and awareness of what climate change means for us and for all life on Earth. And now we're increasingly - and rightly - asked to put thinking about sustainability at the heart of everything we do.

And what we all want is for our students to be informed, to ask questions, to speak up and to have high expectations and aspirations for themselves and for the future. And this is right isn't it, because education is all *about* the future – it's an investment, if you like a *promise* to the future. But now it feels as if our job as educators is also to *protect* that future in order to allow our students to have some hope.

I think an important point here is that whilst teachers have *influence* but they don't have real *power*, and that for education to really count there needs to be coherence between what we teach and what our students observe and experience in the rest of their lives. So, for all those ideas about sustainability that we try to teach and model to be visibly and spectacularly ignored elsewhere is a real problem.

And it's not like we're saying anything new, or anything radical. There is surely nothing substantive that we can disagree on here – we agree that climate change is happening, that's it's anthropogenic, that's it's likely to be catastrophic and that emissions from aviation are contributing to the damage. The disagreement seems to instead be in the value we place on that promise to the future that our teachers are making in our schools and universities, when it is set alongside more immediate, economic interests.

We all know that children notice not just what we say but what we do. They watch us closely, and that means that consistency and leadership really matter, whether we define leaders as parents, teachers or politicians.

And whilst politicians are not generally well liked or trusted, scientists, medical doctors and, significantly, teachers are amongst the most trusted professions in our society. So, if what students see is that these trusted adults say one thing and those in power do entirely another, that undermines the work we do as educators. It actually damages our professional credibility.

If what they observe instead is the power of cynical, short-term interests prevailing, despite all the damage we know those actions will do to the planet, how can they themselves *not* learn to be cynical? How can they *not* learn despair and how will they stay hopeful for the future?

That lack of alignment between the message and the behaviour is so corrosive and damaging for our young people.

Of course, it's never going to be easy for us to step away from doing things the way we've always done them, but I'm sure that you'll agree that we need to show students of all ages that OUR generation can make those really hard decisions that make a difference now.

And THIS IS one of those hard decisions, and it's going to need real leadership and real courage.

We know that collectively we have a mountain to climb, so maintaining hope while we do that is going to be crucially important. And that's what I'm really here to ask you for, because you have that real power, to make good that on that promise to the future that teachers everywhere make, every day, through the work they do, and in so doing, to allow their students to stay hopeful.

So, thank you for your time today and for the courage that I trust and hope you will be able to bring to your decision making on this important issue.

Thank-you.

An open letter from concerned academics to the Planning Inspector regarding Bristol Airport's expansion plans

Presented to the Bristol Airport Inquiry on 16th September by Dr Kathy Fawcett as part of her statement to the Inspector.

Dear Inspector,

Re: Appeal by Bristol Airport to expand

We write this open letter to you on a matter of national and international importance: Bristol Airport's planning appeal to expand their passenger numbers by two million a year.

We are academics with expertise in climate change science impacts and policy, zero-carbon futures, the green-economy transition, sustainable transport and business, sustainable cities, green energy, sustainable food production, climate change communications, ecological economics, the impact of climate change on mental health and many other related fields of research.

In December 2020, the UK Climate Change Committee published its Sixth Carbon Budget. On aviation it noted that:

- there should be no net expansion of UK airport capacity and
- the Government should re-assess its airport capacity strategy in the context of the UK's Net-Zero commitment and any lasting impacts on demand from COVID-19 (para 2, p34).

On 18th March 2020, North Somerset Council planning committee rejected a planning application from Bristol Airport. Despite an overwhelming rejection of the plans from local residents (nearly 9,000 formal objections), local councillors on the committee and the damage caused to the airport's business plan by COVID-19, the airport have appealed.

We consider that:

- Any increase in passenger numbers and flights from Bristol Airport runs contrary to the UK's climate targets and responsibilities to international climate mitigation as per the Climate Change Act (2008) and the Paris Agreement.
- In the year that the UK is hosting the COP26 conference, it is vital that the UK shows leadership on climate change and takes the necessary actions to secure a safe, zero-carbon future.

We therefore urge you to reject this appeal.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Molly Scott Cato, Professor of Green Economics, Roehampton

Dr James Dyke, Assistant Director Global Systems Institute, University of Exeter

Professor Chris Preist, Professor Sustainability and Computer Systems, University of Bristol.

Professor Mandy Rose, Documentary & Digital Cultures, University of the West of England.

Dr William Clayton, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography (specialism: sustainable transport)
Centre for Transport and Society, University of the West of England, Member of the Bristol
Advisory Committee on Climate Change.

Dr Steve Melia, Senior Lecturer in Transport and Planning, University of the West of England.

Dr Diana Warner, Medical Doctor MB, BS.

Dr Steve Presence, Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, University of the West of England.

Dr Miles Thompson, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of the West of England.

Dr Bas Amelung, Assistant professor at the Environmental Systems Analysis group, Wageningen
University, Netherlands.

George Lovesmith, Senior Lecturer, University of the West of England, and Teaching Fellow,
University of Bath School of Architecture.

Dr Steve Cayzer, Senior Lecturer, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Education Lead for
Climate Action Framework, University Of Bath.

Nick Regan (MA, LTCL, EU Commission Laureate), Lecturer in Spanish, Department of PoLIS,
University of Bath.

Martin Ward, Senior Lecturer, University of the West of England.

Dr Jon Mulholland, Associate Professor in Sociology, University of the West of England.

Professor Rich Pancost, Head of School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol

Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh, University of Bath, Director - UK Centre for Climate Change &
Social Transformations

Professor Duncan McLaren, Professor in Practice, Lancaster Environment Centre

Dr Nick Nash, Research Fellow, University of Bath

Dr Kathy Fawcett, Senior Lecturer in Science Communication, University of the West of England

Dr Paul Bain, Reader (Associate Professor), University of Bath

Dr Charlie Gardner, Lecturer in Conservation Science, University of Kent

Dr Oscar Berglund, Lecturer in International Public and Social Policy, University of Bristol

Professor Rebecca Willis, Professor in Practice, Lancaster University

Professor Eric Herring, Professor of World Politics, University of Bristol

Professor Phil Goodwin, Emeritus Professor of Transport Policy, UCL & UWE

Dr Alison Green, Executive Director Scientists Warning Foundation

Dr Rowland Dye, Physicist & Scientist.

Steve Westlake, PhD Researcher, Cardiff University

Prof John Marsham, Professor of Atmospheric Science, University of Leeds

Dr Ian Walker, Senior Lecturer, University of Bath

Dr Chris Miller, Professor [retired] Social Work & Social Planning, School of Social and Policy
Studies, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

Dr Ruth Wood, Senior Lecturer in Environment and Climate Change, University of Manchester

Prof Lynn Raphael Reed, Emerita Professor, University of the West of England

Paul Hoggett, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, UWE

John Atherton, Chair of Environmental Sustainability Committee, University of Nottingham

Mr Peter Knapp, PhD student, Imperial College London

Dr Paul Reid-Bowen, Programme Coordinator Religions, Philosophies and Ethics, Bath Spa University

Professor Colin Davis, Chair in Cognitive Psychology, University of Bristol

Professor Gavin D'Costa, Professor in Religion & Theology, University of Bristol

Dr Christopher David Coath, Senior Research Fellow, School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol

Dr Anastus Khan, Reader in Original Thought, Coventry University

Sally Weintrobe, Psychoanalyst, Fellow British Psychoanalytical Society

Prof Wendy Hollway, Professor emeritus, Open University

Ewan Davidson, Tutor, University of Edinburgh

Dr Els van Ooijen, Retired visiting lecturer, Retired Lecturer, School of Psychology and Therapeutic Studies

Dr Jane Woodin, Senior University Tutor , University of Sheffield

Dr Elspeth Crawford, retired, University of Edinburgh

Dr Elizabeth Weightman , Lecturer in Psychology, University of Exeter

Dr Phoebe Beedell, Research Fellow, University of Lincoln

Dr Maggie Turp, Retired, Tavistock and Portman Trust

Dr Phil Leask, Honorary researcher, University College London

Dr Kate Adams, Lecturer, University of Salford

Dr Joey Talbot, Research Fellow in Transport Data Science, University of Leeds

Dr Ella Furness, Research Associate, Cardiff University

Dr Adrian Gibbs, Principal Environmental Consultant, Eunomia Research & Consulting

Professor Paula Hill, Professor of Finance, University of Bristol

Professor Stuart Cooper, Professor of Accounting, University of Bristol

Professor Calvin Jones, Deputy Dean, Cardiff Business School

Dr. Ashish Malik, Lecturer, University of Aberdeen

Dr. Kersty Hobson, Reader in Human Geography, School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University