

Meet the Open University COP26 Observers



Dr Clive Mitchell, FRGS (Hon) is Associate Lecturer with the Open University, where he teaches students to understand how the Earth works as a system, bridging social and natural sciences, climate change, nature and food systems. He has over 25 years of expertise, from climate change to environmental policy and sustainable development. He serves on the Advisory Group for WWF (Scotland), and steering group for the Sustainable Scotland Network (spanning public and higher education sectors). He's passionate about finding ways to tackle the nature-climate crisis. In his role at NatureScot, Clive leads on climate and nature and is embedded in Scottish, UK, EU and global policy contexts including just transition, inclusivity, and community empowerment. He was seconded for a year to the UK Sustainable Development Commission as Team Leader for climate change, energy, transport and buildings at where he scrutinised Government and worked with civil servants on policy. His favourite 'scootcher' involved rowing 500 km down a Siberian river, living off fish and venturing inland, treading (very carefully!) across 10,000 years' worth of fallen trees.



David Edwards is Associate Lecturer with the Open University where he tutors on Renewable Energy and does field studies guiding in Iceland. He has been involved in environmental education for nearly 30 years: first with the Royal Geographical Society advising university expeditions; then working as a ranger at the Grand Canyon concerned with air pollution, conservation and educational interpretation; then drilling the Pacific seafloor with the US National Science Foundation; and later lecturing for Edinburgh and Glasgow universities. He toured an energy talk around Scotland for the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, and gives environmental talks to schools and adult groups. He tries to build bridges between the world of environmental science and a general audience to get concepts across clearly without using jargon. As a geologist, he has an interest in Deep Time and the profound impact humanity has had in such a short period.



Gillian Mawdsley is a Scottish practicing solicitor and Associate Lecturer with the Open University. She also holds teaching roles with Edinburgh and Strathclyde Universities. Her legal interests focus largely on criminal law. What motivates her teaching is for students to obtain practical legal experience prior to becoming lawyers. Her professional experience has spanned wide-ranging legal policy interests at the Scottish/UK Government. She has undertaken evidence sessions and obtained an international perspective from membership of various Working Groups. The COP26 hosting in Scotland allowed her jointly to set up the Law Society of Scotland Working Group on Climate Change and COP26. This seeks to raise awareness of climate change and has included a survey gauging members' climate change knowledge and a "cradle to grave" conference focusing on the intersection of climate change and human rights. Her interest is in law education factoring in climate change and the societal role of law in addressing the "anticipated" COP26 commitments.



Graeme Smith has worked for the Open University for 18 months, initially in the Access, Participation and Success team and now as a Team Manager in Student Recruitment and Support. Previously he worked in prison education, teaching ESOL and creative writing and supporting the development of the prison learning programme. He has a post-graduate qualification in Writing Practice and Study (MLitt). He's lived in Taiwan and Greece and taught English there. Living in a polluted mega-city opened him up to some of the climate-based challenges humanity is currently facing and since then he's had a keen extra-curricular interest in how we as a species can create climate safety.



Kate Symons is a Lecturer in Global Development at the Open University where she is part of a team producing the new dissertation module as well as contributing teaching materials on environmental sustainability issues on the Masters in Global Development. Her research focusses on the politics of conservation areas and how conservation relates to development, focussing primarily on Mozambique. She is particularly interested in the relationship between conservation and extractive projects under neoliberalism, and the day-to-day politics of implementing and governing marine protected areas. She is also interested in how online and blended learning can support global access to higher education and before joining the OU, worked on this issue for the Centre of African Studies and the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme at the University of Edinburgh.



Dr Leslie Mabon is a Lecturer in Environmental Systems at the Open University. He is a social scientist who is interested in how people and places – especially on the coast – adapt to the effects of climate change and can cope with shocks, stresses and pressures. Leslie is especially interested in understanding how different types of evidence and scientific knowledge are used when we make decisions about how to respond to environmental problems. As well as his native Scotland, he also has long-standing research collaborations with colleagues in Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam. Leslie is a member of the Young Academy of Scotland, and a Future Earth Coasts Fellow.



Rosalie Faithfull worked in administration for charities before joining the Open University part-time in 2014, where she's now a Team Assistant in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. She has a parallel career in film and television development where she works as a script editor. In her personal life, she's been an environmental activist for the last 13 years which has included: voluntary conservation work in Kenya; campaigning in the UK with Greenpeace and Global Justice Now; tree planting, and community action. She's used to experiencing events like COP from the viewpoint of the activists outside; in 2015 she was on the streets of Paris. This time, she's looking forward to being inside, and hopes to bring a human, "Woman on the street" perspective to her observations, making them relatable to a wide audience.



Sabine Gundel is an Associate Lecturer at the Open University where she works on Environmental Policies in an International Context. She is also distance-learning tutor at the University of London, SOAS, for climate change and development. She worked for over 20 years in development-oriented research and training on issues related to sustainable agriculture, biodiversity and natural resource management. The main emphasis of her work has been on participatory approaches and innovation development, relevant for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.



Stephen Peake is Professor of Climate Change and Energy at the Open University. Previously he has served as international civil servant at the International Energy Agency at the OECD in Paris and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). His first COP was Buenos Aires (4) in 1998. He holds a PhD in Engineering and Management from the University of Cambridge, where he is Fellow of the Judge Business School and Senior Associate of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. Stephen is Head of Delegation for the OU COP26 Observers.

Meet the Open University Green Zone event speakers



Dr. Advait Siddharthan (Ph.D, Cambridge, 2004) is Professor of Computer Science and Society at the Open University. His interdisciplinary research intersects Citizen Science, Biodiversity, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science and he has over 80 peer-reviewed publications. He co-founded citizen science projects such as [BeeWatch](#), [X-Polli:Nation](#), and [Planting for Pollinators](#), and is the academic lead for [iSpot](#), an online network of 75,000 global nature observers who have collectively submitted and identified 1.5 million images of wildlife. His work has received an EPSRC prize for Telling Tales of Engagement, and featured in the RCUK impact report Celebrating Success in the Digital Economy.



Janice Ansine is Senior Project Manager - Citizen Science at The Open University. She manages projects that use innovative, accessible web-based tools and resources engaging anyone to participate and learn about biodiversity (iSpot: www.iSpotnature.org and Treezilla: www.treezilla.org). Janice holds graduate and postgraduate qualifications in media (UWI), environmental change and management (Oxford, 2000) science, society and technology enhanced learning (OU EdD-current). She contributes to citizen science teaching (www.open.ac.uk/citizen-science-and-global-biodiversity) practice and research (<https://citsci.kmi.open.ac.uk>). An experienced STEM communicator, she is a former environmental reporter (& [Reuter Fellow](#), 1998) with a wide-ranging background leading communications, public engagement, outreach and behaviour change initiatives around sustainability, science and the environment.



Professor Mark Brandon MBE completed a PhD in sea ice and Arctic oceanography based on extensive winter field work (Cambridge 1995). He moved to the British Antarctic Survey before taking up a Lectureship at The Open University in 2000. He is a committed field researcher with many trips to the polar oceans and he has published more than 50 journal articles and 3 books. He was the lead academic advisor on the BBC series Frozen Planet, and worked on Planet Earth, Blue Planet and Blue Planet 2, all four rank in the top 30 TV series ever made. He is currently contributing to the forthcoming BBC Frozen Planet II.