***Template press release on the Relay to COP26- please insert MP names and locations***

**Climate justice is on the march through *insert location.***

**Young people are walking through [insert location] to draw attention to the devastating effects of climate change. And *insert MP name* is joining them.**

The Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN) have come together with local churches and Christian Aid to mobilise people across the country to highlight the effects of climate change on the world’s poorest communities. The walk – called the Relay to COP26 - began in Cornwall in June and will finish at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in November.

As it passes through ***insert location***, they hope to gather support and build grassroots pressure on world leaders attending COP to take decisive action on climate change before it is too late.

The UK will host the COP26 summit in November this year. As host, the UK Government is in a unique position to set the tone for those discussions with world leaders. Prime Minister Boris Johnson can ensure that the summit puts pressure on the international community to pursue an agenda centred on climate justice. More specifically, the UK government can put pressure on rich countries to meet and exceed the decade-old promise of $100 bn of climate finance.

Many of the world’s poorest countries are facing the double threat of a global pandemic and the ongoing effects of climate change through extreme weather events such as floods and droughts.

Alok Sharma, President for COP26, says on the subject of climate finance, “Developing countries need clarity and confidence now that the $100 bn a year pledged to help them tackle climate change will be delivered…Developed nations need to deliver, and having spoken to governments around the world, I know the vital importance of the $100bn goal is understood. I hope that developed countries will pledge new funds over the coming months.”

The UK’s pivotal role as host is an opportunity to push for an inclusive, green and just economic recovery which addresses the impacts of Covid, debt and climate change.

The relay to COP26 is a symbolic act of faith and hope. It will take a near 1200-mile route to the COP26 in Glasgow, having begun at the G7 in June. People from *insert location* can join walkers as they pass through the county showing their support and raising awareness.

**Rachel Mander, YCCN Relay Co-Lead said:** *“We stand in solidarity with people and places that are being plunged into debt and poverty because of climate change. More carbon emissions means more disease, more food insecurity and more poverty. We will be in our 30s when the world reaches 1.5 degrees warming. We will not let the UK government host summits on our doorstep only to hear more talk and no action.”*

**Pete Moorey, Head of Campaigns and UK Advocacy at Christian Aid, said:** *“We’re delighted that as this relay goes from Cornwall to Glasgow, local MPs are listening to the calls of young Christians and churches who want ambitious action to deliver climate justice and tackle the climate emergency that is hitting the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people the hardest.”*

To join the Relay, people can visit the website [www.yccn.uk/relay](http://www.yccn.uk/relay) and sign up as it passes through (see full route details below). The walkers will be joined along the Relay by a purpose-built boat, the Pilgrim. The Pilgrim will meet up with the walkers at key residency hub locations, to symbolise the idea that we are all facing the same climate storm, but we are not all in the same boat when it comes to resources to face those challenges. The Pilgrim will display messages from people around the world who are affected by the impacts of climate change.

**Relay route:**

Full route can be found here:

<https://www.yccn.uk/>relay

***LOCAL ROUTE- Date of Arrival:***

Stockton-on-Tees- 26th-29th Sep

Trimdon- 30th Sep

Durham- 1st Oct

Pelton- 2nd Oct

Newcastle- 3rd Oct

**Further info**

Ways for people to get involved include:

Signing up to walk a section of the route. [www.yccn.uk/relay](http://www.yccn.uk/relay)

Invite your MP to a Relay event, urging them to sign our pledge calling on the UK government to ensure the $100bn climate finance is mobilised and exceeded. [www.yccn.uk/political-engagement](http://www.yccn.uk/political-engagement)

**Notes to editors**

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