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10. 2022-2024 Coal power ends in the UK

By 2024, over half the UK's electricity came from renewable energy sources. In September 2024, the last coal-fired power station was shut off ending 142 years of coal power in the UK and marking a major milestone in the country's energy transition.



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9. 2019 UK ends fracking and sets a net zero target

Plans for gas production from fracking in the UK were abandoned after protests over environmental safety and climate impacts. The Government strengthened the UK's climate target requiring them to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050.

8. 2018 New wave of protests

Greta Thunberg started the Fridays for Future school strike movement in Sweden. Extinction Rebellion launched and staged waves of protests across the UK, inspiring further groups such as Just Stop Oil. Public awareness and political pressure increased dramatically.



Markus Spiske, Pexels

7. 2015 The Paris Agreement

After years of lobbying and global negotiation, 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement – a legally binding international treaty to limit global warming to below 2°C. In the UK, over 60,000 people marched in London to support climate action.



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6. 2007-2008 Kingsnorth protests

Alongside campaigning for the Climate Act, growing protests were taking place against fossil fuel development, airport expansion and new roads. Actions at the Kingsnorth coal-fired power station by Greenpeace and Climate Camp groups gained national attention. This was a key moment which helped accelerate the UK's move away from coal.



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1. 1950s-1980s Early warnings

Concerns about the impacts of burning fossil fuels on the climate emerged in the 1950s. In 1965, U.S. President Johnson's Science Advisory Council delivered a detailed report highlighting the risks. Oil and gas companies also understood the problem. By the mid-1980s, many scientists and environmental groups were publicly calling for action.



Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Flickr
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2. 1992 The UN Earth Summit, Rio

The Earth Summit brought together 179 governments and environmental groups for a two-week meeting in Brazil. It led to the first international agreement – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – which later led to the annual COP climate conferences.

3. 1992 First steps towards clean energy

Momentum grew for renewable energy. The first UK windfarms were built in Cornwall and Wales. The Welsh project was created by a company set up by staff from the Innovative Centre for Alternative Technology, marking the beginning of UK onshore wind power.

4. 1997 The Kyoto Protocol

After years of pressure from environmental groups and scientists, the Kyoto Protocol was agreed by 192 nations despite opposition from fossil fuel companies. This was the first global agreement that committed 37 industrialised nations to cut their greenhouse gas emissions.



Yelena Odintsova, Pexels

5. 2005-2008 The Big Ask campaign

Led by the Friends of the Earth and supported by many other organisations, 'The Big Ask' pushed for legally binding climate targets. It contributed directly to the Climate Change Act (2008) which set legal targets for cutting UK CO₂ emissions. "This was the British environmental movement at its best... all focused on the same issues and playing to their strengths." Joss Garman, European Climate Foundation.



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Climate change and energy

From early concerns in the 1980s, climate change and how we use energy has become the central focus of environmental campaigning. Work has included lobbying for strong policies, protesting and raising awareness, and developing safer alternatives.