

You call this 'democracy'!

The role of political funding, our voting system and centralised government in climate chaos.

Neale Upstone – Political Funding Watch
& Graham Smith – Republic

Sometimes fighting against climate chaos can seem like hitting our heads against a brick wall. This session looks at some of those bricks, how they are held in place, and how we might remove them.

Political Funding (see politicalfundingwatch.blogspot.com)

- Do your votes cost less at Sainsbury's? Who bankrolls the big parties and why? What's the impact of this on climate action?

The Voting System (see www.electoral-reform.org.uk)

- Not much more than a third of voters voted for the current government; more people didn't vote than voted for the winners. Can proportional representation help?

The Monarchy (see www.republic.org.uk)

- Tackling climate change requires big reforms and the full support of the people. Our system of government focuses power centrally down from the Queen, which encourages power to remain centralised. Could constitutional reform help?
- And what do the royals pay for? Do they keep flying and we keep paying, when oil prices go up?

Centralised Government

- Britain has the second (to Malta) most centralised government in Europe. How might things look if Whitehall gave people more control over their local affairs?

The Media (see www.flatearthnews.net)

- The drive for profits in the global media has led to a drastic reduction in real journalism and the rise of PR in its place. How do we overcome the “Flat Earth” news?

Tax (see fiscalreform.blogspot.com)

- We could have a tax system where we raise most tax revenue from those things that we want to discourage (inefficient land use, pollution and resource use). We currently only raise 3% of taxes this way. Our tax system favours waste and monopolisation of land. It certainly isn't democratic! Not surprising, as those who gain are those who fund the political parties.