# Notes on giving the Heading for Extinction talk

**Please note that this document is now in legacy mode: a new talk is being prepared as of January 2020 and this document and the associated slides will no longer be updated by me (KJ).**

Thank you delivering this really important Talk! Please contact Kate Jeffery (k.Jeffery@ucl.ac.uk) for questions or feedback on the slides. Some guidelines are outlined below and in the following notes.

## Basic guidelines

* Please only give this talk if you are an experienced speaker and preferably have done the speaker training. We regularly hold trainings so we should be able to get you trained quickly. Please get in touch with eventsxr@gmail.com if you would like to arrange a speaker training with your local group.
* Please invite yourself to the [XR Speaker Forum](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2215590238709482/) on Facebook where you can share your experiences, ask questions and receive updated materials.
* The aim of the Heading for Extinction (HfE) talk is encourage the maximum number of attendees to take the next step that works for them on their Extinction Rebellion journey. It is also to educate the public (“Tell the truth”) about our difficult reality so they can spread the word and add their voices to the global demands for action.
* Please make sure this is the latest version – it should have been downloaded from <https://bit.ly/2ZwnjEH>. Please don’t distribute by email, or else obsolete copies get propagated through the system.
* Don’t run these from Google slide viewer! – download and run using PowerPoint or else the fonts won’t render. There are also other formats available (pdf and odt) – if you need something else, please let Kate know. The font is a standard one – Tw cent MT condensed extra bold – it should already be installed on most computers and in any case has now been embedded in the file. If it still doesn’t work please feed back.
* Speaker notes accompany each slide. If the notes aren’t showing, the notes window is underneath the main slide window and may need to be clicked-dragged to pull it up. Please note that THIS IS NOT A SCRIPT. In fact, the bulk of the notes are a transcript of a talk given recently using the version 3.0 slides. Reading from notes provides a terrible audience experience and so the idea is to make it easy for you to give the talk freely and spontaneously without too much need for memorization. The notes/transcript are to give you some background so that you have some knowledge that you can freely talk about. If you forget the details, don’t worry – the take-home message of each slide is pretty clear on the slide itself – just repeat what you can see on the slide, pause for the audience to absorb and then move on. However it’s obviously better if you have some things you can say about each slide. We are constantly improving this aspect (references for the info to be added shortly), and your feedback is also welcome.

## Talk preparation

* Well before the talk, get in touch with the local talk organisers. They can let you know whether any other XR events are planned that you should promote at the end of your talk. Discuss with them whether a local XR group already exists or whether they could set one up. Maybe interested people could get together at the end of the talk and start to gather ideas for a local XR group? If the organisers of the talk would like to set up a local XR group but don’t know how to do so, please put them in touch with xr-regionaldevelopment@protonmail.com.
* Furthermore, local organisers may be able to provide you with resources, e.g. printing, and they will know whether you can show a PowerPoint at the talk venue.
* If organising a talk yourself, read through [this material (shorturl.at/cisDL)](shorturl.at/cisDL) for some guidance
* Relevant slides are editable so you can add your Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) training date + any other local events, or change the final slide.
* Run through the talk well ahead of time to check timing. To make the PowerPoint fit with the time you’ve been allocated and audience you are speaking to, you can hide/unhide slides.
* If the fancy transitions annoy you, you can set them to “Fade” or “None” using the “Transitions” tab at the top.

## Things to bring

* Big TV or projector + screen at the venue. Alternatively you can take one along and have something to project onto (which can just be a light coloured wall or sheet)
* 1 main laptop with the PowerPoint already loaded on it.
* 1 backup laptop (in case the main one fails). This isn’t essential but is good practice.
* Notes. It is recommended not to use notes as they actually make things more, not less stressful. If you feel you need to, you can print off the notes that are beneath each slide (instructions on how to do this [are here](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/print-speaker-notes-c7231a54-4ac8-4479-9199-6005a40efa2a)), or the notes will appear in Presenter View when you are using a TV or projector.
* Leaflets & posters (for people to take away from talk).
* Clipboards & pens (for people to fill out sign-up forms).
* A container for donations (place somewhere visible before start of talk, and/or hand around at the end).
* Direction signs (so people can find the room).
* Signup forms to give out at end: [click here to print off](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1tmRP5kUQcE4_283NN0_AnBCJ-aCLvW-X) (check expected audience size on FB event page). We have also made it easy for people to sign up online, with a URL and QR code on the last slide (for the QR code, people can just point their phone cameras at it and it will take them to the sign-up page online). This makes it harder to know how effective the talk has been in recruiting people, but is easier and saves trees – your call!

## Speaker guidance

* Although the aim of this talk is to convey the facts about the climate and ecological crisis, and XR’s role in fighting it, the truth is that people are not readily swayed by facts – for most people it is more important *who* is giving the talk than what they say. So that means you can relax slightly about getting every little fact exactly right, although of course it’s best to try! The more important thing is to come across as someone your audience feel they respect and trust. This generally means trying to look as much like the demographic of the audience as possible, within the constraints of reality. If your audience is quite conservative then dress appropriately – wear a jacket, smart shoes etc and be very careful with use of language and jargon. Keep politics out of your talk – every snide remark you make about a political party or Brexit etc risks immediately alienating half your audience.
* Please be mindful that everyone confronting the ecological crisis has a difficult emotional journey to make. Some may not have adjusted yet and can be argumentative, hostile or upset, possibly at you! It helps to acknowledge these emotions at the start of the session, and to reinforce XR’s regenerative culture throughout.
* **Nervous?**
	+ Don’t worry! Your audience won’t know/care (you’ll find after a few talks you hardly feel nervous any more)
	+ People staring at you can feel threatening but remember they are there to learn and not to judge you, and they are interested, not threatening! If you can make them smile at you at the beginning with a lighthearted comment to break the ice you’ll feel much more relaxed (and so will they).
	+ It helps to practise the talk a lot, at least at the beginning. If you can practise in the actual venue, even better.
	+ Find one or two friendly faces in the audience that you can talk to as if they are your friends. If that feels weird, imagine your friends hovering just over the audience’s heads and talk to them instead! Try to resist the temptation to talk to the slide or to read form it.
	+ The main part of the talk with full slide deck is designed to be approximately 60 min long including the intro, two main sections and breaks, and a short Q&A. Psychological time passes much more slowly on a stage so have a clock of some sort so you don’t overrun. There is a shorter version available if you have only been given limited time.
	+ **Use the ‘Presenter View’ function if you can.** This will mean you can see the next slide when presenting, which is useful to prepare your thoughts. You can find this at the right hand side of the ‘Slide Show’ tab in PowerPoint. Instructions [here](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/video-deliver-your-presentation-b2febe59-24ea-4d96-8da7-3277435f465d?ui=en-US&rs=en-GB&ad=GB).
	+ **Speaker notes shouldn’t be read out word-for-word.** The notes are underneath the slides, or to bottom right on Presenter View: you can make this view bigger when you are presenting). However it’s better to just use the slide to prompt free speech – it’s more natural and less stressful. The slides are designed to be somewhat self-explanatory so if you forget what you planned to say it doesn’t matter too much.
	+ **Add local events at the end.** You can add a slide at the end where you can add local events, such as the date of your NVDA training.

## Q&A session

We have in the past tended to recommend against a Q&A as questions sometimes demand specialist knowledge that speakers don’t have, or audience members can be fixated on irrelevant issues, and that can be stressful and undermining. However, audiences and organisers often expect and like a Q&A, and it helps humanise XR speakers and XR generally to have a more conversational finish to the event. If a Q&A is planned, here are some tips:

* Think about having the audience get together in small groups to generate one question per group – this facilitates discussion, allows everyone to have an input and reduces “hijacking” of the Q&A by someone with an axe to grind.
* Be honest – if you don’t know the answer to a question it is much better to simply say so (“I don’t know actually – that’s a good question: I’ll have to see if I can find out”). Nobody expects you to be an expert on everything. Often members of the audience can supply the answer.
* People often raise the issue of personal climate actions, sometimes challengingly (“Why did I see someone from XR eating a burger?!”). Sometimes this can be quite passionately expressed and the questioner insists on a long discussion. To avoid the Q&A being hijacked like this, first express sympathy for the position and anything relatable you can think of, then explain XR’s position briefly and move on as soon as possible (“We completely understand with this view and agree about the importance of individual action. I myself am vegan for example. HOWEVER, the reliance on collective individual actions has not worked in the past and there is no reason to expect it to in the future. People act they way they do because the system encourages or even forces it. We therefore need to change the system – that is what XR is about. We welcome everyone, no matter how high-carbon their lifestyle. Next question?”)
* Sometimes people in the audience challenge facts about the science. We have fact-checked as carefully as possible but even scientists do not always agree on facts (or indeed *especially* scientists!) and it is better not to get into an argument. Just say something deflecting (“That’s interesting, I didn’t know that – we’ll look into it; thank you for the information”) and move on.
* If you had any difficult questions you found hard to answer, please send feedback to k.Jeffery@ucl.ac.uk so we can compile a collection of answers to help future speakers.

## After the talk

* Either you or the organiser should type up the content of the sign-up forms here: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/detailed-form-manual-data-entry?clear_id=true>
* You may want to split this task up as it can take a long time. After you have done so, please destroy the forms, ideally with the aid of a shredder. Crucially, the organisers need to get in touch with xr\_integration@protonmail.com to agree to XR’s GDPR conditions if they want to have access to the contact details of their audience.
* If any costs were incurred through printing or venue booking etc, please ask for donations at the talk. If the donations don’t cover costs, make sure to keep your receipts and send them to eventsxr@gmail.com and we’ll consider whether we can cover your costs with our national budget. This decision will vary from case to case, depending on how much money you’re claiming and how much of our budget we’ve already used up that month.
* If you receive donations exceeding the event costs, please donate them to Extinction Rebellion via <https://risingup.org.uk/>, or let the organiser keep them for their local XR group.
* Please contact k.jeffery@ucl.ac.uk for any questions or comments about the talk itself.

**We hope you have a good experience in giving the Talk!**