

**Ian Katz**

Creative Forward Look

After a period that has seen the purpose and public value of Channel 4 debated at length, the channel's 2023 slate is packed with content that delivers against precisely what it was created for: ensuring that those who feel they are unheard are given a voice, challenging those in power, and remaining the boldest, most collaborative partner to producers across the country.



At the heart of the channel's 2023 schedule lies a prioritisation of the kind of must-stream content that we hope will drive video-on-demand ('VoD') growth in line with our Future4 strategy. From unmistakably Channel 4 new comedy like *The Change* to supersized returners like the second series of *The Curse*, from watercooler formats like *The Piano* to big-scale reality like *Rise and Fall* – our slate of shows says something interesting, and often urgent, about the country today, and demonstrates the value that a public service media organisation like Channel 4 can bring to Britain.

## Represent unheard voices

Whether it's through showcasing stories from diverse voices across the country, nurturing unknown talent or ensuring that our programming encompasses the widest range of thoughts and opinions, representing unheard voices is core to our purpose.

Following the release of our Disability Code of Portrayal, our 2023 slate features the widest and most prominent representation of disabled people on the channel to date. So far, we've already seen Rosie Jones exploring society's attitudes towards disability in a moving documentary, and hilarious visually impaired comedian Chris McCausland in *The Wonders of the World I Can't See* – a unique take on a travelogue which sees audio description organically embedded into the format as Chris' famous friends describe "what the fuss is all about" at some of the globe's most iconic locations. Still to come are moving documentaries *Amputating Alice* and *Adam Hills: Take His Legs Again*. Finally, we'll see *The Unique Boutique* open its doors and create jaw-dropping bespoke pieces for those who aren't catered to by high-street fashion brands. We're also delighted by the impact that Lucy, the 13-year-old blind and neurodivergent winner of new hit *The Piano*, has had, creating what will surely be one of the TV moments of the year.

Regional representation is also high on the agenda – from the anarchic Joe Lycett's *Big Brummie Party*, aired live weekly from Birmingham, to the beautiful Welsh language opera *One Moonlit Night* via the brilliant *Belfast Midwives*. We're also excited by the returns of *Geordie Hospital*, *Hullraisers*, and *Rescue: Extreme Medics* (set in Scotland) later in the year. The opening of *Channel 4 News'* permanent Leeds studio (alongside the appointment of a Leeds-based correspondent) will also ensure that we are covering more topics that resonate with those outside of the M25.

Building on the legacy of our ground-breaking *Black to Front Project*, we'll see *The Defenders*, *Crazy Rich... Ghanaians*, *Blue Therapy* and *Secret History: Britain's Human Zoos*. Meanwhile a number of Black presenters have since become fixtures in our primetime schedule including Stuart and Scarlett Douglas (*Worst House on the Street*), Yinka Bokinni (*Interview with a Killer*) and Tinie Tempah who returns with new series about property and cars.

After her hugely impactful menopause documentaries, Davina McCall is tackling another hot topic in the area of women's health this year – the contraceptive pill. Bridget Christie, meanwhile, turns her comic gaze on the experience of mid-life women in *The Change*, almost certainly the first comedy about the menopause.

Finally, we remain as committed to diversity of thought as other forms of diversity. *The Andrew Neil Show* has been recommissioned for a third season. Already this year, we have aired a thoughtful and sensitive film exploring the hotly contested question of assisted suicide (*Prue and Danny's Death Road Trip*) and later this year we'll air provocative polemics about the monarchy and climate change, as well as an examination of the very live argument over trans and gender through the story of Kathleen Stock, the philosopher drummed out of Sussex University for her gender-critical views.



My Dead Body

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# Challenge with purpose

We will continue to stimulate conversation and debate with a slate of shows which tackle tough subjects, ask difficult questions to those in power, and challenge conventional thinking.

Channel 4 News' daily output, now accessible on multiple social platforms, will continue to provide the high-quality, trusted journalism that viewers seek. Alongside this, our current affairs output will keep holding power to account with a series of uncompromising *Dispatches* investigations such as the highly impactful *Undercover Ambulance*. We'll also see the return of our hit streaming-first Current Affairs series aimed at young people, *Untold*. With around two million views for the first series (and millions more on our YouTube documentaries page), it has proved that PSMs like Channel 4 can engage young people with current affairs content across a range of topics from toxic masculinity to fast fashion. Subjects tackled in 2023 will range from life inside prison to the fascinating world of sugar mummies.

Two major moments will punctuate our year.

Firstly, the Coronation of King Charles III will give us the opportunity to examine Britain's relationship with the royals in a way that no other broadcaster would. Frankie Boyle will ask, in his own inimitable style, whether the monarchy has a place in our modern world, and – only slightly less seriously – *The Windsors* will return for a special episode on Coronation Weekend. Then in August, our Climate Season will feature a number of films designed to inspire meaningful change. This will be the biggest and most important series of programmes that Channel 4 has ever made on this subject and comes at a critical moment in determining whether Britain can really get onto a path that will take it to net zero by 2050.

We'll also make sure we are covering the hot topics that are in the zeitgeist. In a year when toxic masculinity has become more prevalent and visible than ever before, we've already aired *Consent* – a searing docu-drama about rape culture in schools. We have also commissioned Maggie Gaudin and Dan Reed (*Leaving Neverland*) to make a documentary examining the rise of Andrew Tate and why his anti-feminist agenda resonates so loudly with many teenage boys.

As part of our Future4 strategy to drive VoD viewing, we are investing in Premium Factual box-sets – many of which are likely to prompt vigorous debate. 72 Films' four-part series exploring the rise and fall of Boris Johnson is intended to be the definitive documentary on the events that shaped one of Britain's most controversial and influential political figures. Similarly, we'll take in-depth looks at Prince Andrew, the Johnny Depp and Amber Heard trial, and we have already aired the moving *George Michael: Outed and Paula* this year.

Consent ↓



# Reinvent entertainment

We will continue to innovate in 2023 as we build on a solid slate of new returners, drive young viewing on VoD, and continue to offer producers a place to pitch their boldest, most ambitious ideas.

Investment in young-skewing reality shows is a central part of our Future4 plans to drive VoD viewing, and this year will see a number of major launches. Our tentpole reality show, *Rise and Fall*, explored the age-old but timely tension between haves and have-nots with drama, humour and plenty of entertainment, while *Scared of the Dark* offered a genuine twist in the celebrity reality space. Also coming up is *Alone*, perhaps the most extreme survival show to feature on British screens, and a soon-to-be-announced series asking who has what it takes to survive in prison. On E4, joining an extended series of smash-hit *Married at First Sight UK* and *Made In Chelsea* is *Alan Must Win* – an anarchic twist on reality which sees a group of celebrities secretly doing everything they can to ensure an underdog wins a popularity contest.

Across every genre, viewers will find content that feels like it couldn't exist on any other channel. This includes *Naked Education* – a heartwarming, body-positive format, where our resident GP presents a class of teens with a wide variety of nude bodies to discuss issues like pubic hair and penis size. *No Strings Attached*, where celebrities enter Mel Giedroyc's X-rated book club to read erotic fan fiction written about themselves while a group of puppets act it out, is certain to get people talking too.

Alongside schedule staples like *Gogglebox*, *The Great British Bake Off*, *24 Hours in Police Custody* and *Taskmaster*, a new generation of returners are taking their place as schedule fixtures. The noisy *Open House: The Great Sex Experiment* is back to explore whether monogamous relationships are right for everyone, while *The Dog House* and *Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker* are sure to provide even more joyous moments to viewers around the country. Love Productions' *The Piano*, meanwhile, was our biggest unscripted launch since June 2020.

And while we continue to innovate in long-form content, we've also significantly expanded our digital offering to engage young people across Britain, many of whom consume more of their content on social media than in front of the telly. The launch of *Channel 4.0* late last year has already proved a success, quickly becoming a go-to brand filled with entertaining and anarchic content from the best and biggest creators in Britain including Chunkz, Nella Rose and Alhan Gençay.

# Tackling the climate emergency

## Carbon Action Plan

In 2022, we set a new standard requiring all production companies to complete albert's 'Carbon Action Plan'

## Climate Content Pledge

In 2023, Channel 4 will air a season of programmes dedicated to exploring the impact of the climate crisis aiming to inform, educate and inspire individuals to take action following commitments that Channel 4 made as part of the Climate Content Pledge at COP26

## Ambitious science- based targets

In 2023 we are strengthening our existing climate commitments by aligning to the Science Based Target methodology with robust near-term (2030) and net zero (2050) company-wide emission reduction targets





↓ Dispatches: The Truth About Nike and Adidas

## Channel 4 empowers its viewers and suppliers to take action

With the climate emergency posing an unprecedented threat, this is not a time to stand idly by and at Channel 4 we recognise the importance of examining every aspect of our operations and programming so we can play our role in combatting this global crisis and inspiring systemic change.

For 40 years, Channel 4 has harnessed the immense power of film and TV to raise important societal issues, including those relating to the climate and sustainability. Amongst the highlights, back in 2011, *Hugh's Fish Fight* saw chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall spotlight the issue of fish discards in a campaign that directly changed opinion in Westminster and Brussels, altering the way fish is sourced, sold and bought in this country. More recently, Channel 4 hosted the UK's first ever political leaders' debate on the climate crisis ahead of the 2019 General Election, giving *Channel 4 News* its biggest viewing share amongst 16-34-year-olds since 2011. In these ways, our programming can engage audiences, help shape attitudes and behaviours, and drive meaningful change.

Looking ahead, we are fully committed to leveraging our content to inspire action against the climate emergency. Channel 4 was one of the first broadcasters to sign the Climate Content Pledge at COP26, which commits participants to using their content to help audiences understand what tackling climate change might mean for them, as well as inspire and inform sustainable choices. We are working hard to engage audiences with the climate emergency through entertaining and provocative programming that appeals to younger viewers and encourages them to act.

# Tackling the climate emergency cont.

↑ A Year in the Ice: The Arctic Drift



## Inspiring systemic change

In 2023, Channel 4 will air a season of programmes dedicated to exploring the impact of the climate crisis as part of our on-going commitment to inform the public's awareness and understanding of this urgent global issue. With the world facing increasing environmental challenges, Channel 4 will help viewers understand the impact of the climate crisis on them, the whole of the UK, and the rest of the world.

Following our call out in 2022, the independent production sector responded to Channel 4's Climate Emergency brief. The resulting programming will explore a variety of burning conversations relating to climate change and seek to explore the informed and expert-led arguments surrounding climate change solutions.

The series *Climate Change: The Solution* will look at the practical and achievable solutions to key domestic issues – from housing to energy – and what is hindering significant progress in these areas. Collectively, the programmes will explore the role of governments, big business, and individuals and what each can do to help get us back on track to reach net zero.

This collection of programmes will look at how the climate crisis impacts us all, and crucially what all of us can do about it. Channel 4's programming aims to inform, educate, and inspire individuals to take action and make a positive change for the future of our planet.

## Channel 4's Climate Emergency brief

Channel 4 took a bold step when it issued its Climate Emergency brief in May 2022, inviting the independent production sector to create high-impact climate and sustainability focused programming across genres. The initiative invited producers to create programming for Channel 4 that is hopeful and irreverent, energising and empowering audiences to live sustainably and to engage with the global conversation on climate change.

The content follows up commitments that Channel 4 made as part of the Climate Content Pledge at COP26. Whether through hard-hitting documentaries, taut dramas, entertaining stunts or viral social ideas, we want to amplify the voices of those who are passionate about making a positive impact on the environment. Our ambition is to find big, compelling ideas that add to the global conversation.



Climate change is, quite literally, the burning issue of our age but sadly often makes for rather 'eat-your-peas' television. We're looking for ideas that are inventive or audacious enough to make our viewers sit up and think about what they can do to help solve the problem – and ideally empower them to actually do something about it.

Ian Katz, Channel 4 Chief Content Officer

# Taking bold action

As we move towards a sustainable future, our impact on emissions is becoming a part of every decision and process we undertake, from the content we showcase, to our office operations and the partnerships we enter. We launched a significant programme of work in 2022 that covers everything we do off-screen and on-screen. Off-screen, this involved re-baselining our emissions as a first step. This has enabled us to gain a full picture of where our emissions lie, to act on the most material areas first.

A substantial part of the emissions relating to Channel 4's activities relate to the production of the programmes that we commission, and so it is vital to work with our production partners to minimise emissions on our commissioned content. We have introduced mandatory annual climate emergency training for our Commissioners, to empower creative teams to take action early in the editorial process with the aim of reducing emissions during production.

Turning to our on-screen content, we created a Climate Emergency brief for a raft of new programming that addresses climate change. The brief calls on indies to come up with high-impact shows intended to inspire audiences to engage with the international climate emergency.

During the year, we carefully reviewed our commissioning process, and we have implemented systems to ensure that climate themes are taken into consideration and tracked throughout every production.

In recognition of the increasing importance of reflecting the climate emergency across all our programming, we formed a new cross-genre commissioning group. Channel 4's CEO Alex Mahon has also become a founding member of a cross-broadcaster CEO group that represents over 70% of time that UK audiences spend watching TV and film.

## Our organisational commitments

The initiatives we have undertaken in 2022 form part of our commitment to using our wide-reaching platform to help audiences understand the implications of climate change and to inspire sustainable choices. It is through collective action and systemic change that we can make the most meaningful impact towards a sustainable future.

In 2023 we are strengthening our existing climate commitments by aligning to the Science Based Target methodology with robust near-term (2030) and net zero (2050) company-wide emission reduction targets. These science-based targets are being finalised and will be submitted to the SBTi for accreditation. You can find the full report on the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures on page 134.

In early 2023, Channel 4 designated Alex Mahon as Executive sponsor for sustainability at Board level. She chairs a monthly steering group along with key members of our Executive Management Board, who have been assigned responsibility for ensuring delivery of climate action plans in their business areas.



## Tackling the climate emergency cont.

### albert: Taking action

Since its inception in 2011, the BAFTA-owned and industry-backed albert has been empowering TV and film industry professionals to act on climate change and reduce the environmental impact of production.

As an active member of the albert community, Channel 4 already mandates all productions to use the albert calculator to measure their carbon footprint.

In 2022, we set a new standard by also requiring all production companies to complete albert's 'Carbon Action Plan'. This initiative requires that all productions reduce and offset their emissions and work towards achieving albert's sustainable production certification.

Every part of the screen industry can play a role in making a positive environmental impact, and this work enables Channel 4 and its creative partners to do so by identifying and acting upon opportunities both on and off screen.

### 4Earth: Empowering our employees

Alongside its partners and viewers, Channel 4 is committed to empowering its employees to make a positive impact on the planet.

Our employee networks provide a safe space for community building, personal development and driving policy change within the organisation. Established in 2019, 4Earth is a community of environmental champions who inspire change and positive action for the planet at Channel 4.

In 2022, 4Earth gained an impressive 80 new members and hosted over 500 attendees at 12 staff events. These events featured influential guests including presenter Jon Richardson, actress Bonnie Wright, singer AURORA, presenter Ade Adepitan, and Jenna Robinson from *Married at First Sight UK*. These thought-provoking discussions and conversations showed how comedy, music and other art forms can be used to inspire and navigate the enormous challenge of the climate crisis.

4Earth also encouraged the take-up of staff training modules on how to go net zero and supported the launch of a new volunteering platform and climate-focused policies for staff.



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## #ClimateMatters

Channel 4 established a #ClimateMatters streaming collection to bring together and showcase its climate-related content across a range of genres. This powerful, thought-provoking collection of programming exposes the stark realities of the climate emergency and seeks to inspire action among viewers.

From hard-hitting investigations into unethical business practices to captivating documentaries that showcase the beauty and fragility of our planet, these programmes challenge and educate in equal measure.

Through these programmes, Channel 4 can help viewers to understand the scale and complexity of the challenges we face and to identify practical steps to reduce their footprint and contribute towards a more sustainable future.

The titles include *Inside the Shein Machine: Untold*, which investigated Shein's working practices; *Dispatches: The Truth About Nike and Adidas* – the team heads to the Maldives to see what's really going on with our favourite trainers; Grierson Award Winner 2022 *Arctic Drift: A Year in the Ice*, the story of a ship full of international scientists who stay frozen in the Arctic for the best part of a year studying the impact of climate there; *Celebrity Trash Monsters*, in which celebrities are charged with wearing their household rubbish for a week in a bid to make them more mindful of their life styles; *How We Forgot To Save the Planet*, which sees comedian Kieran Hodgson explore the history of climate change in Britain; and *Joe Lycett vs the Oil Giant*, which investigated whether Shell was as eco-friendly as its advertising made it out to be, and was the winner of the Edinburgh TV Festival 2022 Inaugural Climate Impact Award.