



PRE-AGM SIDE EVENT
at University of Exeter
18 & 19 May 2026



University
of Exeter

Universities as Climate Leaders: Mobilising Global Research for Systemic Change

Monday, 18 May 2026

- 18:30 – 19:00** **Arrival Welcome Reception**
Reed Hall, University of Exeter Informal gathering with drinks and light canapés. Opportunity to network among WUN leaders.
- 19:00 – 21:30** **Hosted Welcome Dinner**
- Host** Professor Lisa Roberts, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter
- Format** Seated dinner with invited Exeter guests (Council, senior leadership, leading academics)
- 20:00 – 20:30** **Plenary Dinner Talk**
“Transformational Research: From Regional Innovation to Global Influence”
- Speaker** Professor Stuart Brocklehurst (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Business Engagement & Innovation)
- A compelling, future-looking talk introducing the University of Exeter’s world-leading research ethos and global collaborations. Talk to frame the strategic purpose of the Study Day: how leading universities can move from research excellence to global climate leadership, setting the stage for the next day’s call to action.
- 21:30** **Close**
Hotel Accommodation - Mercure Exeter Southgate Hotel
[Mercure Exeter Southgate Hotel](#) | [Exeter Hotel - ALL](#)
-

Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Venue: LSI, University of Exeter

Study Day runs 09:00–15:00, including breaks and lunch.

Well ahead of the study day, attendees will receive a short pre-briefing (“Potential WUN Climate Leadership Pathways: Discussion Paper”) outlining emerging and suggestive opportunities for collective action, ensuring they arrive ready to co-design tangible and achievable outcomes.

- 08:45 – 09:30** **Arrival & Coffee**
- 09:30 – 09:45** **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
- Speaker** Professor Stuart Brocklehurst (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Business Engagement & Innovation)
- Overview of Exeter’s global leadership in climate and sustainability research, while also launching the call to action for the day: “How can WUN, led through Exeter’s strengths, mobilise collective research excellence into globally influential climate action by 2030?”

- 09:45 – 10:15** **Keynote Plenary “The Climate Crisis: New Science, New Solutions, and the Role of Global Universities”**
- Speaker** Delivered by a globally influential Exeter climate scientist (e.g., Prof. Tim Lenton, Prof. Pierre Friedlingstein)
- Focus on Earth system tipping points, climate futures, and the critical importance of transnational research partnerships.
- 10:15 – 10:55** **Showcase Session: Exeter’s Transformational Climate Research**
- Three rapid, high-impact talks showing what’s possible when cutting-edge science meets global partnerships:
- Net Zero & Green Futures Solutions - Professor Jean-Francois Mercure
 - Climate & Health Intersections – Director, ECEHH
 - AI, Data Science & Climate Risk Modelling – Professor Richard Betts
- Purpose:** to inspire delegates with a clear picture of Exeter’s leadership and to spark ideas for a climate flagship initiative.*
- 10:55 – 11:10** **Refreshment Break**
- 11:10 – 12:10** **Unlocking Systemic Change: Driving Positive Tipping Points for Climate Action, Resilience and Security in a Changing World through the WUN’s Network**
- Welcome** Alex Huke (Head of Environment & Clean Growth, Exeter Innovation)
- The Global Carbon Budget – Understanding the Scale and Urgency of Change**
- Presentation** Prof. Pierre Friedlingstein
 Prof. Stephen Sitch
 Prof Willem Landmen UP
- Panel Discussion: Tipping Points - Challenges and Opportunities; How Systematic Change Can Accelerate Climate Stability**
- Chair** Alex Huke (Head of Environment & Clean Growth, Exeter Innovation)
- Panellists** Abrams Jesse
 Steve Smith
 Peter Lefort
 Puja Thiel
 Prof Willem Landmen, UP
 Prof. Francis Tam, CUHK
- 12:10 – 13:10** **Delegates Interactive Session: A Potential Role of WUN in Accelerating Global Climate Solutions**
- Chair** Natalie Gawor
- Open facilitated interactive discussion with delegates to generate actionable ideas and potentially new collaborations to prompt positive tipping points across research and policy:
- Tipping Point Toolkit
 - Green Futures Network
 - Global Investment Fund
- Outcomes and key insights from the panel discussion would shape the closing plenary.

13:10 – 14:10

Networking Lunch

Hosted in the LSI, featuring exhibit stands from key research institutes (e.g., Global Systems Institute, Environment & Sustainability Institute).

14:10 – 14:40

Closing Plenary: A Potential WUN–Exeter Vision for Global Climate Leadership

Exeter leadership synthesises the panel and open delegates discussion outputs and proposes a potential WUN Climate Impact Platform with 2–3 clearly defined, high-ambition collaborative goals emerging from the day

Examples might include:

- A WUN Global Climate Messaging Taskforce shaping evidence-based briefs for international policymakers
- A WUN-led track at COP31/COP32’s Science Pavilion
- An annual WUN Global Climate Forum, hosted initially by Exeter, focusing on climate solutions and policy impact.

Speaker Professor Tim Lenton

14:40 – 15:00

Final Remarks & Departure (for Bristol)
