

14.12.2018

Hi

First, I wish you a really happy Xmas. There's not much to be cheerful about climate-wise but what keeps me focused is remembering how far we've come **in just five years**. If we can achieve the same level of change, or more, in the next five years, there is still room for optimism. I hope that is a positive thought for you for Xmas and 2019.

Here's some news:

1. 2018 CO2 figures - not good
2. EU car manufacturers lobby to weaken emission targets
3. Swedish mums pledge not to fly for a year
4. MPs still invested in fossil fuels - is yours?
5. How many BP/Shell/EDF 'free placements' are there in our civil service?
6. The UK aid budget supports fossil fuel programmes around the world
7. Shell aligns CEO pay with carbon objectives
8. Maersk plans to be zero carbon by 2050
9. Carbon capture and storage - where are we heading?
10. What's happening with UK nuclear?

1. Just two years ago it looked like the world's CO2 emissions might have plateaued. For three years there was no significant increase and the world was getting cautiously excited about 'peaking' and 'decoupling'... But in **2017 global CO2 went up significantly - by 1.6%** - and it looks as if **this year it will be up again, a shocking 2.7%, the fastest acceleration in seven years**.

This is truly dispiriting and it seems that even we in the EU cannot be smug. [Here's a good article](#) with moving charts showing the speed of change, and [this article gives a clear analysis of where the growth comes from](#). Regardless of what other states are doing, we in the UK should be cutting by 10 - 15% per year by now, according to climate scientist Kevin Anderson, and we are not cutting *at all* (just fudging the figures).

2. In fact, **progress across the EU as a whole is reversing....** Energy consumption is **on the rise after several years of going down**. This is particularly evident in transport which has seen a massive **4% year-on-year increase in fuel consumption by aviation and road transport**. The EU has the overall aim of a **40% cut** in greenhouse gases by 2030, and **transport is responsible for a quarter**. The EU Parliament has agreed a **20% cut in ghg from new cars by 2025 and 40% by 2030, plus 35% of all new cars sold by 2030 should be zero/low emission**. But car manufacturers in some countries (notably Germany) are lobbying hard and have persuaded the Council of Ministers to

water down these targets. At the moment, there seems to be an impasse which risks car manufacturers getting away with no 2025 target at all....

3. Some individuals are taking personal action to cut their transport emissions...In [Sweden, two mums have launched a pledge to not fly in 2019](#), and they're asking **100,000 others to sign**. There's a [Twitter tag - #FlightFree2019](#). Personally, I've stopped buying produce that is clearly flown in and I've found some **really good low-impact holiday solutions** this year. **I would love to see - and circulate - your ideas. Please do send to me.** (Did you know that we are now flying Cornish crab to Vietnam to be shelled, then flying it back here for sale... How crazy.)
4. As I write, we are waiting for a final declaration from the Katowice COP24 conference. There has clearly been much lobbying from all sides, including coal.... But [some good news is that global investors worth \\$32 trillion have been urging governments to address their 'climate change ambition gap'](#), a clear sign of how far the financial world has understood the issues and got moving. Perhaps the first step for our parliament should be to [divest MPs' pensions from fossil fuels](#). Two hundred MPs are backing [this campaign](#). **Can you write to yours and check if they are on the list?**
5. You may remember some emails back **I asked you to ask your MP how many BP, Shell and EDF placements there are, working for free in our civil service (paid by their companies), developing our energy policies.....** I finally heard back from my own MP, Darren Jones (Labour). He forwarded the **unhelpful /dismissive six word reply from the Cabinet Office - 'This data is not held centrally'. That was it.... I have asked Darren to go back and ask the same question specifically of BEIS. Please let me know how you get on.**
6. But wouldn't you know it? When the one *most important* thing is to get the Global South to leapfrog fossil fuels, our government is using our [aid budget to promote oil and gas exploration projects around the Global South, including fracking in China...](#) We are, apparently, exporting 'UK expertise in shale gas regulation' while at the same time trying to [weaken the same in this country....!!](#) (Why are we giving aid to China? And which bit of **'no more fossil fuel infrastructure at all'** does the government understand? If you are as appalled as I am by this [criminal misuse of our aid budget, please sign this petition.](#))

In the meantime, [fracking at New Preston Road in Lancashire has again been halted](#) - this time after a tremor of 1.5. (The threshold for stopping work is 0.5. We have had 47 tremors since work began in October.) [Here's](#) another petition to sign, and if you bank with [HSBC you may want to query their increased stake in IGas](#) - or maybe just

change
banks....

7. **There is some good news from Shell.** The company had already said it would drop its 'Net Carbon Footprint' 20% by 2035, and 50% by 2050. **It has now agreed to targets being set for 3 - 5 years ahead, every year from 2020. Pay of the top 1200 employees will be linked to performance on this.** Exactly how much of a difference this will actually make remains to be seen. They are still, primarily, an oil and gas exploration and production company.... **But the targets do include consumer consumption of their products, and crucially, Shell has said it will review its membership of industry lobby groups....** **BP** is now under similar pressure.
8. **Big and small boats are beginning to go electric...** It's good to see that this isn't just leisure craft - small and *large* ferries are getting there too... Extraordinary! But even better news is that **Maersk, one of the world's leading container shipping firms, has pledged to get to zero carbon by 2050.** Too slow, of course, but since the **International Maritime Organisation has only pledged a 50% cut by 2050,** it's good to see a major company going further. How they will do it is another question. Most likely it will be with biofuels, and that will put pressure on our land use and woodlands.
9. The pressure on the world's forests is growing and the price of wood products is escalating. One of the technologies **bringing new demand is biomass plants such as Drax.** (In fact most of our coal plants have been converted to wood-burning. They're 'cleaner' because we don't count the emissions - just hope someone, somewhere is replanting...) The **Committee on Climate Change is now saying we should have no more large biomass,** unless they have filters and scrubbers to catch the carbon emissions and either store these long-term or use them in a way that displaces other high emission technologies (CCSU)...

The **government has just given Drax £20 million** to develop more usages for CO2 but most of the suggestions on their website look (laughably) short-term or ridiculous to me - **beer bubbles, sneakers, aviation fuel, plastic utensils and furniture and they even suggest their technology might be useful for when we all start living on Mars...** This does not look like an essential part of the speedy solution we need..... (but all governments are banking on it...)

10. For many months now, our **nuclear generation has been well below the usual 20%, sometimes as low as 13%.** (As I write this on a high consumption, working, winter afternoon, **nuclear is contributing just 14.4%** to our electricity.) This seems to be due to the **closure of Hunterston power station,** one of our ageing 'advanced gas cooled reactors'. These 14 reactors are **operating way beyond their expected**

[lifespan and now exhibiting cracks](#). For more information on the health, or otherwise, of our nuclear fleet, this [Costing the Earth](#) is useful.

A central plank of government policy has been to replace the existing plants with new ones... We were **supposed to be cooking last year's Xmas dinner on Hinkley C electricity but it now looks like 2026 at the earliest and I'm told, more likely, 2030...** In the meantime the [new plant at Moorside is officially dead](#), and this week [Hitachi is rumoured to be considering pulling out of building Wylfa, despite government offers of taxpayer money for the construction...](#) Bradwell and Sizewell are still in the pipeline but our [National Infrastructure Committee say that none of these make economic sense...](#) **Will our government get serious about renewables and clean tech???? It seems no other plant can fill the generation gap as quickly - nuclear is clearly no answer for the next decade or more.**

Thank you to all those who made comments on the 'Green Steps' I circulated last time. I **have made some adjustments and hope that these will help you with your New Year resolutions...**

If you live in Bristol, you may want to **sign the Bristol pledge** attached, not to burn wood in the city where it is really adding to our air pollution problems.

And if you are still short of Xmas presents, here's a link to [Avon Wildlife Trust's shop where you can buy wildflower vouchers](#). Climate change is killing our biodiversity, but so is the lack of habitat and food sources that our pollinators and others need. **These plants also come peat-free!**

Warmest wishes for Xmas. *As ever, if you want to come off the list, please just email me.*

Nikki