

We do have a Climate EMERGENCY: It is up to us all – So what can WE do?

INTRODUCTION: The UK has a carbon footprint per person almost 50% above the world's average. The UK is already responsible for almost 5% of the 1°C global temperature rise since the mid-19th century despite only having a population of less than 1% of the planet. The UK is not on track to meet its 5th Carbon budget target to 2032. Its new Net Zero Carbon target by 2050 relies heavily on sucking CO₂ out of the air – unproven at scale. In 2018, the UN IPCC's special report warns of the catastrophic consequences of exceeding 1.5°C. Meanwhile, last year China invested one third of \$Trillion in renewables; India is now on track to exceed its 2022 target for installation of solar panels. Despite Trump, 40% of the US population come under US cities signed up the Paris Agreement to address climate change. The 20% most affluent people on the planet, including most in the UK, is responsible for 70% of the green house gas emissions causing most of the critical climate change. Climate change is 100% caused by humans but that means we can fix it – if we act.

"There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew" - Marshall McLuhan

UNDERSTAND. Our first duty as citizens is to be clued up. Confront the issue by finding out and discovering good sources of information (*See references below*) Try to discuss it with family and friends. The more you understand the better able you are to communicate about it. Seek out an understanding of major examples of solutions so that when talking with children, family & friends you can convey a sense of 'this, we can do'.

INVESTIGATE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT. Understand what makes up your carbon footprint. Think Global Act Local.

ENGAGE AS A CITIZEN. Investigate how your local authority and the Government is contributing to reducing GHG emissions and; engage with local councillors and MPs. Consider frequent correspondence, even with Government ministers. Explore environmental organisations and get involved in actively working for change in your community. Small actions can really matter.

DIVEST. Rapid movement of personal & national investment out of fossil fuels is the most important action to make. Your pension and investments might rely on fossil fuel related companies. Humankind can at best afford to use about 10% of known fossil fuel reserves. These have NO future. Mass divestment must happen NOW. Instead causing climate change, investments now need to be rapidly redirected into renewable energy systems & sustainable, low-carbon infrastructure. Influence where you can by writing to your pension provider, your local authority, Government ministers and your MPs. Even the National Trust was recently shown to have indirect investments in fossil fuels so consider any organisations you are a member of.

UK SUBSIDISES FOSSIL FUELS. Incredibly, the UK subsidises fossil fuel companies to the value of **billions of pounds** every year despite an international commitment, as part of the G20 countries, to curtail & cease this. Influence where you can to stop your family's taxes fuelling climate change.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT & CONSUMPTION. If you can make new investments choose those promoting sustainable development; investigate the ethical criteria of companies, ones that are not part of the problem. Influence others.

CUT BACK ON AIR TRAVEL or CRUISES. (Wherever possible) These have high carbon footprints, and many cruises have high environmental impacts. Instead, connect with local nature.

AN ENERGY EFFICIENT HOME. Assess your insulation levels and possible heat losses. Get advice if unsure. Check the renewables component of your energy supplier. Consider solar panels.

GET A SMART METER. These can give you a real sense of what causes the energy you are using in the home.

REDUCE, RE-USE, RE-PURPOSE, only then RECYCLE. Reduce your consumption, this reduces energy consumption and environmental impact, all of which helps reduce emissions.

PLANT TREES. As many as you can, for as long as you can.

REDUCE MEAT CONSUMPTION. A significant personal shift in diet can be an important reduction in one's own carbon footprint. Investigate. The western diet fuels climate change.

DOWN-SIZE YOUR VEHICLE & REDUCE USAGE. Even the more efficient large 4X4s have high life-cycle carbon footprints. 53mph is commonly the most fuel-efficient driving speed. Consider a smaller more efficient car. Better: walk or cycle, where possible, consider bus/train: that means planning to allow yourself time.

TOWN PLANNING. On a daily basis, development is being proposed that will determine the future carbon footprint. Does that large warehouse proposed in your area have a solar roof? Is that residential estate built to 'passive house' standards? Will your local planning guidance deliver a built environment that guarantee 'zero carbon' development in the near future? Ideally, challenge your local authority & local councillors on their role in ensuring a built environment that is both adapted to climate change, mitigating the worst and built for the future.

REMEMBER – IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS !



INSTEAD WE MUST JUST DO WHATEVER WE CAN

Some Important Sources of Information & Books

Skeptical Science - Climate change simply explained with good graphics

<https://www.skepticalscience.com>

Desmog – website that unearths the impediments to the shift we need to make.

<https://www.desmog.co.uk>

Hope for the Future – a Christian organisation that gives good guidance on how to lobby and work with your MP to get the changes needed.

<http://www.hftf.org.uk>

Understanding how our consumption drives climate change, waste & pollution.

<https://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/>

Greta Thunberg addressing COP24 (UNFCCC), short video here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzeekxyFOY>

NASA scientist **James Hansen** speaking out on climate change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWlNyAMWBY8>

Naomi Kline talking about **Capitalism versus the Climate** here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN_vbJCWT6c

James Hansen (2011) Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity

Paul Hawken (2018) Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming – See also: <https://www.drawdown.org>

Naomi Kline (2015) This Changes Everything

Kerryn Higgs (2014) Collision Course: Endless Growth on a Finite Planet

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsacker & Anders Wijkman (2018) Come On! – Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet.

Mike Berners-Lee (2010) How Bad are Bananas? Carbon Footprint of Everything Town & Country Planning Assoc. – useful guidance about best practice.

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/planning-for-climate-change>

The summary report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a body established by the United Nations, is accessible at:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>