

Hi

Just a reminder that the **BCR Energy Group will be screening the important documentary 'Merchants of Doubt'** at the Kensington Arms, Stanley Rd, BS6, on **Weds 12<sup>th</sup> June**. All are welcome – the event is free.

If you are interested in getting involved in the **Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Energy Group, or in the new Clifton group that is just setting up, please do get in touch**. Both aim to provide a local social network for those concerned about climate change, talks and films, as well as practical carbon-cutting projects in the local area.

If you are thinking about **setting up or finding a local Sustainability Group in your area**, [Friends of the Earth are holding a 'Groundswell' event on the 15<sup>th</sup> June for everyone across the South West](#), and there will be a launch of a [Bristol Climate Action network on the 5<sup>th</sup> July](#). Anyone particularly interested in [setting up a local group can contact FOE here](#).

And here's some news that I hope you find useful and interesting.

1. Almost three weeks without coal and why gas isn't happening...
  2. Failing industries target the Global South – now it's nuclear
  3. The UK fiddles its greenhouse gas figures – disastrous
  4. Why a green jobs strategy is essential
  5. Cutting food miles in the Middle East
  6. Flight shaming – could it impact airlines?
  7. Excellent – and important – 'Costing the Earth' on eco-depression
  8. Rewilding the UK – no time left for incremental change
  9. Some local and practical news
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1. It was reported on May 31<sup>st</sup> that the [UK has had its first two weeks – since the 1880s – without coal fired electricity](#). I've just checked [Electric Insights](#) and this lasted till 7am today..(Thurs, 6<sup>th</sup> June). That's pretty good news – except that much of the replacement is with gas, biomass and imports (some of which will be coal-fired). So, still a long way from where we want to be, but a good new record.

Perhaps of greater interest is [this article](#) from the National Grid explaining why **gas is getting squeezed out of our electricity generation**. It seems that even the flexibility that gas has offered, to 'wrap around' renewables, isn't easy to sustain – the machinery simply doesn't like being ramped up and down. The Grid thinks it can achieve the same by managing demand, along with batteries and more diverse renewables. It seems that the idea that we *need* gas-fired power may finally be on its way out.

2. I am often asked why are we still pursuing nuclear when it's so expensive. ['Persuasive evidence' has recently been presented to the Business Select Committee](#) that this is simply about subsidising our nuclear weaponry. Although this linkage is transparent in the US, our government does not openly acknowledge it.

Government's support for the industry is having a perverse effect. Despite the current preoccupation with the possibility of Iran's civil nuclear programme leading to nuclear weapons, the US is supporting both the United Arab Emirates and [Saudi Arabia in developing nuclear power](#). In return, Russia's Rosatom is helping [Egypt and Morocco develop their nuclear plants](#). How much of this is about East-West rivals manoeuvring to keep their allies on-side, and how much it is about supporting failing commercial companies (such as Westinghouse) that are finding it impossible to build in the Global North – it's unclear. All industries head to the Global South when regulations get tough in the North – tobacco, chemical manufacturers, coal – but nuclear proliferation, in the Middle East in particular, is something none of us want to see. This feels incredibly dangerous.

3. We have known for many years that we are off-track for our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> carbon budgets (legally binding, set by parliament, aimed at getting us to a [50% cut in greenhouse gases by 2025, 57% by 2032 and 80% by 2050](#) – from 1990 levels). The problem is that we've made almost no progress on decarbonising our heating and transport.

Now it seems that the [cabinet has agreed to start 'fiddling the figures'](#). They will 'borrow' from past over-achievement, effectively relaxing our targets and ignoring the [advice of the Committee on Climate Change](#). This slowing will have an immediate effect on global greenhouse gases and will make it much harder to reach our 2050 goal. **Please write to your MP and ask for more support for EV charging, electrification of trains and buses, and more support for retrofitting building insulation.**

4. Sometimes it's the communities who are most in the front-line of climate change that are most reluctant to leave fossil fuels and 'growth' behind. The most common reason is jobs, of course.

For those of us who can't understand why we're not transitioning faster, given the climate change facts, this is a revealing [podcast. It's an insight into how – and why – many poor Guyanans have pinned their hopes on the new oil industry](#) in their country. Similarly, here's a [good article on the difficulties the Navajo nation has had in deciding to close its coal plant](#), despite the fact that the profits went elsewhere and they were left with the health and environmental impacts. Giving up a known industry that appears to offer growth is clearly very difficult – even when all the evidence stacks up for doing so...

Some governments, such as in India and China, have positive retraining and employment programmes for those in the coal industry. New York has just launched its [Climate Jobs New York](#) that will create both prosperity and 70% renewable energy by 2030. But in the [UK, jobs in the renewable sector have been cut by a third since 2014](#), a really cataclysmic drop for those in the onshore wind, solar and insulation industries. Our government is not incentivising infrastructure investment to help us avoid climate change.

5. When we think of the Middle East we tend to think oil and gas – but not necessarily the huge carbon footprint of flying in food. Here's a really interesting – and cheering – [podcast on how new growing techniques are cutting that particular bit of their carbon footprints](#).

6. Flying is the hardest thing for most of us to give up. But apparently there is a [new term – flight shaming – that is taking off in Europe](#) and may even impact on our airlines.... Here's a [link if you want to pledge to be flight-free next year](#). Happily, there's another new term, much more positive – **train-brag**.

Like many people, I've 'given up' flying but it does truly feel like a plus – much more exploring of the UK, usually by train – much less stress! If you're having a 'low impact' break this year, please do let me know about it.

7. [‘Climate change is our third world war.... And we \*must\* afford it.’](#) So says Joseph Stiglitz, the World Bank's former Chief Economist. If opinion polls are accurate, it appears that [75% of us in the UK believe climate change is the biggest crisis faced by humanity today](#). We seem to have reached a societal tipping point, though not quite a political one...

This frustration and anxiety is making many of us anxious and depressed. I found this [‘Costing the Earth’ useful and powerful](#). I hope you do too.

8. [Eni is about to start seismic surveys in Cardigan Bay](#). Permission for oil exploration in this sensitive area appears to be based on old and inadequate environmental impact reports. Welsh MPs are protesting, and given that they have just [stopped the M4 expansion on environmental grounds](#), possibly oil exploration will be stopped too. The [oil industry tells us that it's ‘listening to Greta Thunberg’, but there's little sign..](#)
9. I recently went to visit the [Knepp Estate](#) in Sussex, having just read Isabella Tree's illuminating [‘Wilding’](#). It was fascinating – and horrific – to hear of the **tremendous strain put on the land, and on them as farmers, by the constant round of chemical applications – sometimes 14 for each crop...** Then wonderful to read about the rebounding of nature since they have

'taken their hands off the wheel'. I would highly recommend the book and a visit.

[Rewilding Britain](#) is now calling for [25% of the UK](#) to be returned to nature and their [website explains clearly how that could happen](#). As they say, we no longer have time for incremental changes. There is a [petition to sign if you would like this discussed in parliament](#).

10. Here's are a few bits of local and practical news.

- ▣ Here's a Greenpeace [tool to find out whether your MP has signed the plastics pledge](#);
- ▣ Here's a [link to the XR newsletter](#)
- ▣ The [Greta Thunberg mural in Bristol](#) – fantastic!
- ▣ Anesco is offering a [package of solar, battery, heat pump and EV charging to domestic customers](#);
- ▣ Here's a [useful update on where we are with EV charging](#) in the UK;
- ▣ [Pea milk is coming to Sainsbury's](#) – a better alternative to nuts?
- ▣ There's a [Green Fair in Somerset on 9<sup>th</sup> June](#)
- ▣ Meet at **Redland Station 2pm on 9<sup>th</sup> June** for fun demo in favour of half hourly train service – see attached flyers
- ▣ There is a [massive demonstration planned in London for 26<sup>th</sup> June](#), supported by every climate and wildlife group
- ▣ [Christians in Science](#) are holding an event on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> June
- ▣ [Clean Air Day event](#) on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 12 – 2pm, Castle Park
- ▣ The BBC has launched an ['Our Planet Matters'](#) website – all the facts in 4 mins

As ever, if you want to come off the mailing list, just let me know.

All good wishes.

Nikki