

Hi

Just a reminder that the [BCR Energy Group has a free talk on this Tuesday \(9th\)](#) – a chance to find out **what's happening with Bristol's local rail network, plans to open up old stations, the Portishead line etc.** Trains are often an overlooked part of the city's transport, air quality and greenhouse gas problems, so please come along. This will be at the **Kensington Arms, Stanley Rd, BS6. Doors open 7pm.**

And [Alex Minshull, Bristol's Sustainable City and Climate Change Manager, will be talking at Clifton library, 25th July](#), on **Bristol's 2030 carbon neutrality target.** The event is hosted by [Clifton Climate Action](#) and all are welcome.

And here's some news that I hope you find interesting. I attach a word copy for easier reading on some devices.

1. **Oil and gas get a 'rebranding'...**
2. **Floating solar – on the up**
3. Panama – one example of how climate change challenges conventional economics
4. Mexico's tourist trade decimated, while Brazil experiences dengue fever outbreak – they're linked
5. **Kenya says 'no' to coal – and thanks from SolarAid**
6. More information on **deep sea mining for minerals**
7. Public sentiment is changing...
8. **Our antibiotic crisis – another 'market failure' linked to climate change**
9. **Useful information on how / what to recycle**
10. Some local and positive news

1. Wow. It seems that **oil and gas has been rebranded on the [FTSE index](#)** (a listing of the top 100 companies on the London Stock Exchange) as **'non renewable energy', putting it firmly in the same category as coal...** This may seem like a small thing but to the King Pins of industry, this is not minor... In the Financial Times it was stated that **'For investors, it [the oil and gas industry] is now a dirty word'...** Woo-hoo! 'Alternative energy'

has (finally!) been rebranded as 'renewable energy' – ie it is no longer the junior challenger....

2. The costs of solar just keep going down – and this month the [world record low price was broken again, this time in Brazil with bids of less than 2 cents per kWh.](#)

In addition, it seems that [floating solar is really taking off – particularly in East Asia.](#) The cooling effect of water underneath panels can make them more efficient, and the panels in turn can help reduce evaporation. Apparently we have about 1.3 GW of floating solar at the moment, but the World Bank estimates this could be several TW ([terrawatts, a thousand gigawatts](#)), even if we use just 10% of the world's suitable inland water. So, a big potential with an existing technology – good news.

3. **Panama is a country that illustrates some of the tough climate-related choices faced by many low /middle income countries.** The country is experiencing extreme weather and last year the famous canal that connects the Atlantic and Pacific had **too much water; and this year, not enough.** The authorities have had to put weight restrictions on ships passing through. The [canal provides a large proportion of national income, so this reduced income really matters. The canal had major investment in 2016](#) to take the new, super-sized ships. Now the choice is whether to create a third feeder lake to allow for *even more* extreme climate conditions in the future. The difficulty is that this will mean [taking down much more rainforest](#), in a country where it is already badly depleted....

Given that **Panama looks set to lose several of its idyllic islands to climate change within the next few decades**, the decision to cut forest to support this asset is a good illustration of the difficult political choices some governments are facing.

4. Brazil is the country most in the firing line when it comes to rainforest destruction – and with good reason. President Bolsonaro has made it clear that [Brazil will only stay in the Paris agreement if it is not challenged on its agricultural policies](#) and this year [rainforest destruction has reached new levels](#) as the country has increased its soya production.

However, this policy is having direct consequences at home and abroad. Brazil has experienced a **600% increase in dengue fever in the first six months of this year**, plus increases in other mosquito borne diseases such as yellow fever and Zika virus – caused primarily by hotter temperatures. And abroad, the **increased use of fertiliser on the land is creating run-off, causing massive algae blooms and seaweed islands the size of Jamaica – made even worse by warmer ocean water**. Much of this [pungent seaweed has washed up on Mexico's prime tourist beaches](#), turning tourists away and destroying livelihoods. All Mexico can do is put up barriers and send ships to catch the growth – but in the meantime, the coral reefs are being destroyed and the blooms are changing the oxygen balance in the water.

Into this awful picture comes 'green finance'. In order to stop another six million hectares of Brazil's virgin 'cerrado', natural grassland, being converted for soya production over the next ten years (on top of the Amazon destruction), a green bond is being sold to [raise finance for farmers who have already turned cerrado into poor pasture, to support them in 'upgrading' their 18 million hectares to soya production](#). **This will require tilling the land and the use of more fertiliser, and therefore more CO2 emissions from lost soil carbon, fertiliser production and application; more use of pesticides and herbicides; and more run-off affecting surrounding ocean and countries...** A seemingly 'green' policy that simply supports our demand for grain-fed meat.... If you haven't cut your meat and dairy consumption and/or switched to [Pasture for Life](#) yet, please consider....

5. Although governments across the developed world, [including ours](#), **continue to subsidise the coal industry abroad**, it appears that **many Global South countries are waking up to the bad deal they are being**

sold. In Kenya, a [\\$2 billion Chinese coal fired power plant has had its licence revoked](#), the tribunal stating that **climate change had not been considered in the impact study.** This is really encouraging! Even in Pakistan, where China has been building many coal plants, the government is now saying [they are too expensive](#) and the country has stated an [aim of 30% renewables by 2030](#). The economics of renewables are winning out...

Remember, if you want to help get renewables into Global South countries you can invest through [Trine](#) and [Ethex](#), or donate to charities such as [SolarAid](#). Here's an [excellent SolarAid short video which explains what life without light is really like in countries, close to the equator, where it gets dark every night at 6pm....](#) Donations at my talks have always gone to SolarAid -- and the charity has just passed their **2 million households benchmark**. Here's a [thank you, from SolarAid, to everyone who has donated or bought solar lights at events I've organised](#). My thanks to you too.

6. This month, there have been **more developments on deep sea mining for minerals.** [Greenpeace has launched its report](#), warning of **'irreversible damage'** and calling for strong international regulation. The report warns that **governments such as ours are positioning themselves as ocean protectors while licencing deep sea mining, with insufficient research into the impact on organisms at the very bottom of the food chain.**

According to the Financial Times, the UK-backed International Seabed Authority has given **29 licences to our government and others, covering 1.3 million square km, more than five times the surface area of Britain.** **Our government has just awarded one licence to Lockheed Martin**, the arms manufacturers. Companies are not supposed to begin work until the regulations are agreed, expected to be July next year – but a company backed by Maersk and Glencore does appear to have started mining in the Pacific.

7. Public opinion is changing.... According to [this report, Tories are now urging prospective leaders to end the ban on onshore wind](#) – Conservatives are more worried about fracking than turbines, apparently...

And I urge you to **read the attached statement** from UN Secretary General to the Climate Change Preparatory Committee. It's full of urgency, and very sobering. **'We are in a battle for our lives.'**

In another fascinating FT article – **'Activist employees now pose new labour relations threat to bosses'** – many examples were given of large international companies where employees are demanding that companies' buying and selling arrangements meet their own ethical criteria. None were specifically climate related, but it seems as if this is just a matter of time....

8. Our antibiotic crisis has led our Chief Medical Officer to warn of a ['post-antibiotic apocalypse'](#) and ['silent tsunami', potentially as catastrophic as climate change](#). Last year [she urged the public to eat organic meat and dairy](#) to help avert this crisis.

This Radio 4 ['The Bottom Line'](#) is a really interesting discussion on the [crisis as a 'market failure'](#) – with even Lord Jim O'Neill, ex-Goldman Sachs, stating that nationalisation is about the only answer... This is relevant to climate change, not only because [approximately 50% of global antibiotics go to our animals, 70% in the US where farming is even more intensive](#), but also because it illustrates how conventional economists are now recognising **'market failure' in many of the most critical areas of our economy** – including the failure to address climate change in our fuel production, distribution and consumption.

9. If you're still wondering **whether you should rinse your plastic and glass before recycling**, whether envelopes with plastic windows are acceptable, or whether to use compostable plastic, here's a [useful Guardian article answering these questions and more...](#)

10. Here's a bit of local and good news:

- ❑ Bristol's Full Council will be discussing the **city's 2030 target on 16th July, 5pm**. Questions are needed by 8th July, 5pm – and statements should be sent to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk by noon on the 15th. The council papers are [here](#).
- ❑ Bristol residents are asked to respond to a [consultation](#) on two options to **cut air pollution**;
- ❑ WECA is offering **grants of £1 – 15,000 for small and medium enterprises to improve energy efficiency**;
- ❑ A [poetry event to honour the Severn Beach line](#);
- ❑ Following on from the school strikes, there's a [planned strike for everyone \(!\)](#) starting Sept 27th; [here's](#) more;
- ❑ Changes have been made to the [Cycle To Work scheme](#), scrapping the £1000 limit on bikes.