

Hi

Trees have been much in the news and this article has a [fantastic chart showing how the UK is falling short of it's target of 30,000 hectares](#) reforestation per year. [Avon Needs Trees' crowdfunder](#) has just two days left (though there will be another...!) - please support if you can to help build secure, long-term forest in our catchment. ANTs has also organised several fundraising events including a [cream tea-picnic in a forest garden](#); a [nature walk through Kingsweston and Blaise](#); and a [totally green pub quiz](#) – no celebrities or sport...! **I hope to see you at some of these.**

Several other local events, talks and films are listed at the bottom of this email.

And here's some news:

- 1. Greta Thunberg is angry – we adults don't know the numbers**
- 2. The Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2019 is out – our progress is slow**
- 3. 71% want to live more sustainably... Some suggestions..**
- 4. Which countries are aiming for net zero? What can we expect from our new government?**
- 5. Liverpool announces green new deal; London wants stronger anti-idling law**
- 6. Green mortgages coming to Spain – what about UK?**
- 7. Modelling shows a possible future for Europe's coal zones**
- 8. £18 million for mini nuclear plant research, against all the evidence...**
- 9. Climate close to human tolerance**

- 1. If you haven't seen [Greta Thunberg's address to the French National Assembly](#), please watch it and send to others. **She is angry** – angry that she and other children have not been protected from the hate they have received for speaking the truth; and angry that we adults have not read, and still do not understand, our remaining carbon budget. As she points**

out so clearly, on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 we had a remaining carbon budget of **420 GT of CO2 to give us a 67% chance of staying below 1.5 degrees of warming**. At current rates, we have perhaps **8.5 years**. Greta is right - we all need to know this – and be talking about it loudly, and *acting*.

2. Given this knowledge, the [Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2019](#) is, inevitably, a frustrating read. (If it's a bit too detailed for you, here's a [good summary from Carbon Brief.](#)) Our **renewables are up to 33% of our electricity (from 29% in 2017) and transport emissions are down a tiny amount (0.1%) after several years of increasing. Domestic fuel consumption was up 3%, mainly because of the 'Beast from the East'**. As ever, we are making hardly any progress on decarbonising transport or heating and therefore we will not make our UK legally binding carbon budgets in the 2020s. **We are most certainly not on track for carbon neutrality by 2050.**

So, although there are bits of good news in the UK – including this week's announcement of [another coal plant closure](#) – we are **only winning slowly, which means losing**. As UN Secretary General Guterres said last week, this is a ['race for our lives'](#) and as energy analysts [Wood MacKenzie](#) stated in their report this week, **we can no longer rely on the private sector for this transition; we need serious government leadership and intervention**. To add to this, the CEO of [SSE this week called on the UK government to 'up' its ambition for off-shore wind, from 30GW by 2030 to 40GW](#) – but it is transport and heating where we need more action.

3. In a survey of citizens in the US and Australia **93% indicate they are now worried about the environment** and [77% want to live more sustainably](#). In the UK, [71% say climate change is more pressing than Brexit](#). Many of us have switched our energy suppliers, cut our driving and flying, and we're eating less meat and dairy - and maybe wondering what to do next. **Here are some simple suggestions:**
  - ▣ **Stop impulse buying**, think and then source second hand if needed;

- ❑ **Pledge to go UK-only with seasonal, preferably organic, fruit and veg - for the next two months (at least);**
- ❑ **Start working out how you are going to cut your heating bills this winter.** Please see attached for some thoughts.

4. Here's a clearly [laid-out list of which countries have policies to go carbon neutral](#): it includes the UK but we know we have no policies to achieve this. Encouragingly, [18 EU countries want 2050 targets put into law](#).

What can we expect from our new government climate-wise? Here's a really good [breakdown of Johnson's position on various key environmental issues](#). Most worrying is that he has taken money from the climate change denying, Lawson-backed Global Warming Policy Foundation. And here are [similar profiles for Leadsome and Villiers](#), new heads of DEFRA and BEIS – **showing inconsistent positions (eg pro-fracking) that reveal they too have not read the IPCC page Greta refers to.....**

It is clear that now, **more than ever, we need to get climate change to the top of the political agenda** – delivering serious and enforceable [Environment](#) and [Agriculture Bills](#), and preventing trade deals that will undermine both. We are **in line for a Brexit that even ardent pro-Brexiteers did not vote for** – please watch this [short youtube for Rees-Mogg's suggestions on where we go with environmental](#) and safety regulations. **No dangerous toys from China but pretty much everything else can go....**

5. Some **UK cities are moving faster than others in announcing actual plans for carbon neutrality....** Here is [interesting news from Liverpool regarding a proposed 'Green Deal'](#) to boost jobs and get the city cutting carbon. In London, [2000 electric taxis are already saving cabbies £3.5 million](#) and Sadiq Kahn is lobbying for an [enforceable anti-idling law \(please sign the petition\)](#). [Cornwall's plans](#) seem to rely heavily on (much needed) tree planting; We wait to hear details of Bristol's plans..

I have long asked the question **why city and county councils can't access the massive amount of green finance that is desperately looking for**

**workable projects...** I met Molly Scott-Cato last week at an event and she assures me that a **SW Green Investment Bank is coming, based in Plymouth**. Let's hope it doesn't get [sold off within five years as our national Green Investment Bank did...](#)

6. One of the proposals in the government's Clean Growth Plan in 2017 was that **mortgage companies should ask for an Energy Performance Certificate on any property being bought, and should be prepared to loan more, or at a better rate, if it clear the new owner will be spending little on fuel bills**. This should then follow through to current home-owners who see a **value in insulating their homes because those improvements will be reflected in the price they can sell at**.

As far as I am aware, this is not happening in the UK in the way envisaged. So, interesting to note that the [European Investment Bank is supporting a major Spanish bank to provide 'green mortgages' at lower interest rates](#). Let's hope it catches on here – **ask your bank if you are applying for a mortgage or home loan**.

7. Losing jobs is one of the biggest obstacles in our energy transition. So a [report from the European Commission on how the 405 coal producing regions of Europe could become major solar hubs](#), producing almost 900 TWh of electricity *without losing jobs* is extremely welcome...

**There is other excellent news on coal**. Not only has [another UK coal-fired electricity plant announced its closure because of 'market conditions'](#), (we will be down to [four coal plants next spring](#),) but [Poland – which is still building new coal plants – has had a major legal setback, led by the UK's environmental legal agency, Client Earth](#). Their latest planned plant may not go ahead, and **interestingly the challenge is based on the poor economics of coal**.

In addition, [global insurer Suncorp has said it will no longer finance or insure new coal plants or mines, and will not underwrite existing assets from 2025](#). This leaves Australia, the world's biggest coal exporter and one of the world's biggest coal users, with no Australian company

**prepared to insure new mines or plants.** This is another big nail in the coffin of coal.

8. EDF has confirmed again that **Flamanville, the big brother to Hinkley, will not be ready to load fuel before 2023**, at the earliest. And it appears that [Hinkley is likely to be killing hundreds of thousands of fish a day](#) through its cooling systems... [Here's an excellent, clear but light-hearted 24 Q & A comparing nuclear to renewables](#). And here's a good article explaining [our nuclear waste problem](#) – we have **no moral right to embark on a third generation when we have no solution for the waste from the first two.**

Even though the economics of new nuclear make no economic, energy or even emissions sense – our government has [confirmed its intention to throw taxpayer money at the industry](#). This means **we take on a large part of the construction risk which, we have seen with new-builds around the world, is enormous.**

Worse, [our government has just thrown Rolls Royce another £18 million to develop 'small modular reactors'](#) which are **extraordinarily expensive, even more complicated in terms of security (fuel delivery, waste management etc), and hugely unpopular with the public.** Given the opposition to fracking (for example), why would any government think this was a viable plan? This feels like another 'bung' to an ailing arms company...

9. I have often asked, at my talks and in these news emails, for **everyone to write to their MPs with the simple question: 'How many EDF, BP and Shell staff – former or current – are working within BEIS?'** At a talk this week one member of the audience gave **first-hand evidence of being at BEIS and finding the 'senior economist' he had met on previous occasions had 'returned to Shell'**. I wish politics – our corporate capture – was not a factor in our transition but it very clearly it is. **We are fighting for our lives against a system that is absolutely stacked against change.** I hate to put it in such terms, but it is true. [Switching just a fraction of our subsidies for fossil fuels could pay for our energy](#)

[transition](#). If you have not written to your MP yet, please do so today – and demand an answer.

10. Here are some local pieces of news that may be of interest:

- ❑ Please sign [this petition](#) for improved services on the Severn Beach railway line;
- ❑ This petition is to [end Avon Pension Fund's investments in fossil fuels](#);
- ❑ [Airport Watch has the latest info on plans for Bristol's airport](#) and a crowdfunder to mount a legal challenge;
- ❑ [A global climate strike is planned for 20 – 27<sup>th</sup> September](#);
- ❑ The BCR Energy Group will be screening [Food Inc, a powerful film on the industrialisation of farming](#), on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August;
- ❑ Clifton Climate Action's talk this [Thursday will be from waste expert Libby Watts](#). All are welcome.

Many thanks. I hope you have found this useful and interesting. **As ever, please let me know if you would like to come off the mailing list.**

All good wishes.

Nikki