

Hello

This morning's news is terrifying – **a metre of rainfall in Japan in just 24 hours** – more than some parts of the UK get in *a year*. **Seven million people were advised to leave their homes. Can you imagine this in the UK?**

**Yet somehow we are still not moving** – believing that our own personal action doesn't matter and that we can rely on technology to make the shift for us. As the Committee on Climate Change has pointed out this week, **behavioural change is now vital** – household consumption has hardly changed over the last ten years and is responsible for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our emissions. By next year, the Global North needs to be cutting emissions by **10 -15%, and for every year that we don't, the cuts necessary in the following year become even more drastic.**

Here's some news that I hope will encourage and help you make climate change your priority. There's a heavy emphasis on practical action.

- 1. Big investors need to question lobbying activities**
2. We all have a role in cutting demand
- 3. Drax moves to gas – why?**
- 4. The UK's answer to power shortages – rely on Europe**
5. Some good news on **tidal stream**
- 6. Our 'State of Nature' reports – do we care enough to change our food?**
7. Battery trains coming to the UK
- 8. \$12 billion spent on shipping cheat devices.... What's our government doing?**
9. Various bits of news and local information

1. This week the FT reported that **big investors are still failing to pressure the big emission companies on their lobbying**, often out-sourced to their professional / trade bodies. This lobbying is vast and behind the scenes. Companies that control the agenda and terms of reference control the argument. They re-enforce the sense of 'There is no alternative' and 'Too big to fail' – 'Best to go with the status quo....'

It works. [Liz Truss, Secretary of State for International Trade has just declared to parliament that the UK will not stop subsidising fossil fuel investments abroad any time soon...](#) Trump has rolled back restrictions on methane emissions and it appears that [BP was a big part of the lobbying on this. Here](#) and [here](#) are chilling articles on how lobbying works in the US. See [here](#) for just how detailed and specific big companies can focus. And if you think that Koch brother methods don't work in the UK, read [this](#)... It's not just fossil fuel companies – it seems [Google has been financing climate scepticism while publicly stating its concern on climate change...](#)

What can we do? **Write to your pension and insurance company, and your bank, and ask them about their policies.** Are they still directly or indirectly funding fossil fuel projects? Do they have assets invested in fossil fuel companies? Are they questioning these companies on their lobbying activities? What are they doing to invest positively in a climate-safe world? **Write one letter today with those questions**

– as simple as that.

Let's not forget that [3 – 4 environmental activists are being killed each week](#) in countries with even less scrutiny than our own. We need to understand where our money is invested.

2. But the best way to get the attention of big fossil fuel companies is to **stop using their products.** Remember that although your own actions may seem small, **the full life cycle of the fuel you use - directly and indirectly - means you are cutting far more than you see** (thirteen times more, according to Professor Kevin Anderson of the Tyndall Centre).

And cuts in demand **send price signals to companies. Huge investments can't happen when there's weakening demand.** Just this week, the [International Energy Agency has cut again its forecast for oil demand growth in 2019 and 2020](#); and because of weak demand, despite all the tensions in the Middle East, Venezuela, Ecuador and elsewhere, the

world's three biggest oil traders are predicting [no rise in oil price by this time next year](#) (approx. \$60/barrel). **That's not enough for many of the oil reserves these companies want to extract. What we do, as individuals, in the 5<sup>th</sup> biggest industrial economy, matters.**

How do you cut your demand for fossil fuels? I attach the 'Green Steps' that I've attached before, a series of actions, starting with the very simple. As the Committee on Climate Changes says, **reducing waste is the fastest response we have – and it makes us wealthier.** EDF has come out with a report this week saying that most [businesses could be saving significant amounts with simple management changes](#). That's true for us at home too.

3. Our government has come in for [huge criticism](#) this week for giving the go-ahead to [Drax's conversion of its last two coal power plants to four gas](#) units. Just 3% fugitive emissions make gas no better than coal, and gas extraction and distribution routinely involve such losses. And as Bloomberg has pointed out again this week, [gas plants being built now make no economic sense – they are being crushed by renewables](#). Why are we still building new fossil fuel infrastructure? (see point 1 for a likely answer....).

**General Electric and Siemens have been two of the world's biggest gas turbine manufacturers** but they have had to adapt fast to our changing world. As most countries have turned away from gas-fired power plants, both companies have developed clean tech departments. [General Electric is reinventing itself as a provider of grid-scale batteries and has just won enormous contracts in California and South Australia](#). And just recently, [Siemens has partnered with UK100, a network of UK mayors and council leaders, and is aiming to 'drive local smart energy projects'](#) (though whether this includes some gas 'peaker plants' is unclear). It's this kind of transformation we need to see across the fossil fuel sector.

**You can support this transition by switching your electricity supply to 100% renewable.** It's easy to do – but [some companies have confused everyone by using the cheapest 'brown' power and then buying cheap renewable certificates on a secondary market](#). From my research, **Good**

**Energy, the Bristol Energy Company and Green Energy UK** have genuine relationships with their suppliers so when you increase demand from them, you genuinely stimulate the supply of more renewable energy – which is what we want.... **Genuine renewable energy won't cost you more if you follow through with some simple efficiency measures** (see Green Steps).

One bit of good UK gas news... The BBC reported this morning that **Cuadrilla is finally withdrawing from its site in Lancashire**. We wait for confirmation....

4. This week, EDF has announced *another* cost increase for Flamanville, big brother to Hinkley Point C. (Hmmm... this is getting boring....) As new nuclear looks less and less viable, how will we fill the gap when our existing Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors (AGR nuclear) start to come off-line in 2023?

Well, this being the UK we're planning to rely heavily on our European neighbours... Last week [Ofgem announced various price incentives to get two more interconnectors built – another one to Ireland and one to Germany](#). (We already have [five, and six under construction](#).) And we're hoping for [another to Norway, though that seems to be running into domestic opposition](#).

Although more interconnectors seem like a good thing, it is possible that **in order to feed that foreign demand, Germany will continue to burn coal and Ireland will continue to burn peat...** (Of course, we won't count that on our emissions...)

Why don't we just invest in our own renewables? We have **massive untapped potential for solar in the UK. Have you considered installing?** The Feed In Tariff has gone but in many ways this makes the calculations less complicated for home-owners. The costs have fallen and most installation companies need support right now, so are willing to do good rates. The returns are still worth-while – and if you combine with a battery, you have energy security. If you combine with an electric car, you will have very cheap travel.

Here is a fascinating insight into how one [US owner used his battery to stay in his home during Hurricane Dorian](#).

5. There is some good news on tidal power – not tidal barrages but tidal stream. The successful [Meygen project off the top of Scotland looks set to expand in capacity, and with a data centre](#) that will enable it to tap into various new opportunities. And in the Channel Islands, [Alderney is also going ahead with a tidal stream project](#) that it is hoped will be enlarged so that the island can export power to the UK and to France.

My understanding is that **this industry is managing to develop without government support. But with support, it would have the potential to scale up fast, and bring down costs** (as with wind and solar).

6. Last week we got our [‘State of Nature’ reports](#) – detailing our truly awful losses in biodiversity, the web of life we rely on... This crisis goes hand-in-hand with climate change.

As ecologist Benedict Macdonald writes in his highly recommended book ‘Rebirding’, **‘Birds are not dying out beside us, swallowed by new housing, but vanishing from our rural deserts where we have all the spaces needed to save them.....’** How exactly are we losing them? **‘Having eliminated the top end of the food chain centuries ago, we are very close to wiping out life at the bottom. The birds [and mammals, reptiles etc] caught in the middle vanish around us every day.’** Salutory to read that the UK faces the fastest and most imminent extinctions of woodland creatures compared with all our European neighbours.

**This is about our agriculture and our land use – the fact that we have sprayed pesticides and herbicides and fungicides on our soil for decades, as well as destroying habitat.**

We can, of course, turn our gardens into mini nature reserves, dig ponds and leave our lawns to grow – but the **real issue is the food we eat.**

People tell me that organic food is too expensive and although that may be true for some, for many of us it's a choice. Organic food seems expensive because we can probably fill ourselves up with something cheaper and we want to leave cash for the treats – chocolate, alcohol, meat, take-aways, holidays, clothes, gadgets... A veg stir-fry or pasta dish doesn't have to be super-expensive – and [we're told the world only has 60 harvests left](#)... So maybe **we should start investing in our own health and that of our planet, even if just one meal per week....**

7. Travelling by train (rather than car) is a good move – but even better if the train is electric. The UK hasn't got far with electrification – but here's some good news. It seems that [battery powered trains have been commissioned – no overhead wires](#), thereby slashing costs...
8. The International Maritime Organisation agreed in 2015 that **all ships will drastically cut their sulphur emissions by 2020**. Most shipping companies haven't taken much notice – and now they are faced with having to pay more for higher grade fuel. So, what have they done? Well, the reports are that more than [\\$12 billion has been spent on fitting cheat devices that capture the sulphur and then dump it at sea](#). According to the International Council on Clean Transport, **'For every tonne of fuel burned, 45 tonnes of warm, acidic, contaminated washwater containing carcinogens... and heavy metals... will be dumped...'**. Write to your MP now and ask what our government is doing about this.
9. Here are a few other bits of news and some local events:
  - ▣ [Lloyds of London has joined the list of insurers saying they won't insure the massive Adani coal mine and train line planned for Queensland – and that they will cut their exposure to coal more generally. This is another big win for environmentalists who have campaigned for more than a decade;](#)

- ❑ **This company is offering [climate-friendly insurance on all your normal insurance needs](#).** I don't know them but they look good – feedback welcome from anyone who uses them;
- ❑ We are now being urged to avoid [North Sea cod, Atlantic salmon and tuna from anywhere](#) as stocks plummet;
- ❑ If you want to find out [where your local car share points](#) are, just put in your postcode...;
- ❑ [Car-free blocks across a major European city](#) – there's a thought..;
- ❑ The UK is now building the [world's biggest wind turbines](#);
- ❑ The Environmental Audit Committee is seeking [public thoughts on how to make tourism sustainable](#) – time to suggest a frequent flier tax as a start;
- ❑ The Woodland Trust has a [tree planting day at Avoncliff, 30<sup>th</sup> November](#);
- ❑ [350.org have a series of online webinars for learning how to end fossil fuel finance](#);
- ❑ [Bath and West Community Energy has a meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October](#) to discuss future plans;
- ❑ [Bristol Energy Coop has its AGM on the 17<sup>th</sup> October and its crowdfunder for Netham Weir hydro](#) is still open;
- ❑ Bristol Tree Forum is holding its annual meeting at 6pm, 4<sup>th</sup> November, City Hall. All welcome.

I hope you have found this email useful and interesting. How do we make change? – like eating an elephant – one step at a time. Do one thing, stop and congratulate yourself, tell everyone, then move on to the next. Where are the fossil fuels in your life and how will you cut them out?

Warmest wishes

Nikki