



The emissions have to stop¹

It's been thirty years since the United Nations established the Climate Change Framework. Since then, international efforts to save the planet have seemingly proved ineffective and levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have continued to rise. We have squandered valuable decades pursuing our petty concerns. Any glance at the media suggests that as a society we seem to consider the latest fashions or the lives of minor celebrities more important than the future of life on the planet. We have failed to comprehend the basic fact that if we continue our current way of life the Earth's atmosphere will change disastrously. But thankfully this tragic future can still be averted – Climate Change can be prevented if fundamental reforms at national and international levels are taken to reduce and ultimately completely stop the emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases within the next decade.

“Our actions effect the functioning of [the] entire planet.

All of us have a responsibility – actions taken at an individual level can have consequences.”²

But as individuals we cannot just abandon our responsibilities to government - in the fight against Climate Change we are all implicated. We need to understand that many of our daily activities can be damaging - unconsidered choices can contribute to global warming and we need to be aware of the consequences to the climate when we decide to jet off for an exotic holiday or buy a new SUV.

“Far-reaching changes can be brought about by the likes of you and me.”³

“We need every action possible to bring down emissions and we need them now.”⁴

The good news is that actions by individuals can also be beneficial – we can all play our part and help prevent Climate Change. One of the fundamental causes of global warming is the profligacy with which we have used fossil fuels over the last few decades. Therefore, the first step is to “Power Down.”⁵



This is especially true for our aging stock of 29 million homes in the United Kingdom (UK) where energy use accounts for about 14% of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ We cannot meet our climate objectives and targets for emissions reduction "without near complete decarbonisation of the housing stock."⁶ This means that all our homes have an important role to play and making simple changes could reduce waste and use less energy. These may include improving insulation and installing double - or triple - glazing. We can install more efficient appliances and make sure we switch them off at night or when not being used. We can change all light fittings in the house to LED's.

Similarly, emissions from transport must be reduced. Transport is now the highest emitting sector of the UK economy, accounting for 22% of total greenhouse gas emissions.⁷ Private cars account for 13% of this total.⁷ So, we should all be aiming to shift away from internal combustion engine cars to electric vehicles. Or better still start to use public transport and to cycle or walk.



“The energy economy – that is now powered largely by coal and oil will be powered increasingly by solar and wind energy.”⁸

Once energy efficiencies have been achieved the next stage is to “Power Up.”¹⁴ We need to start shifting our energy resources away from fossil fuels to renewable sources such as solar and wind. This may include installing photovoltaic panels on your roof or swapping your gas-fired boiler for a heat pump.

“The challenge of the Twenty First Century is Climate Change. It is the challenge that everyone...can play a part in tackling.”²



We need to begin to take the Climate Emergency seriously – it is a problem that will affect everyone, and therefore we all have a stake in resolving it. Almost every aspect of our own lives and consumption patterns will have to change. And yes, it may include sacrifices– but if we all play our part the cumulative effect will be considerable. We need to face up to the overwhelming scientific evidence that to prevent the disaster of global warming the solution is simple – we need to break our dependency on fossil fuels and lower and ultimately eliminate all CO₂ and greenhouse gas emissions.

“If the emissions have to stop,
then we must stop the emissions.
That is black and white. There is no
grey when it comes to survival.
We have to change.”¹



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