

# SAVE LIFE! GRAB THE WHEEL!

## WHY MUST WE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY?

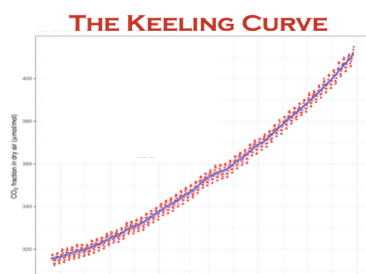
The black panels, taken from David Attenborough's Witness Statement, *A Life on our Planet*, show the destructive changes we've achieved in his lifetime. But the graph beneath shows that his lifetime is a tiny blip in the long course of human history: up to 1800, human economies were fuelled from sustainable sources. After 2100, all energy will have to come from renewable sources again as major sources of fossil fuels (oil, gas & coal) will have run out. Though it would still be possible to keep fracking and mining some fossil fuels, catastrophic climate change will have made the planet uninhabitable long before then.

## WHY DO CARBON EMISSIONS KEEP INCREASING?

Burning fossil fuels generates carbon emissions – which can be measured by carbon parts per million (ppm). Before the Industrial Revolution, the atmosphere contained 280 ppm. We are now at around 415 ppm – and show no sign of reducing that number – even though the scientists tell us we have to get it back to 350ppm. The Keeling Curve (see below) shows carbon ppm in the atmosphere over time. It shows we have a problem: the Curve has been moving inexorably upwards since records began. All the windmills, all the solar panels – everything we greens have done these last 50 years to stave off the climate emergency – have not, to date, made the slightest dent in the upward climb of the Curve.

## HOW CAN WE STOP THIS INCREASE?

Green taxes on unsustainable behaviour are an essential first step in the journey to phasing out Fossil Fuels by 2030 – or earlier if possible. We know from the experience of moving from leaded to unleaded petrol in the 1970s that raising the tax on leaded petrol, and reducing it on unleaded, quickly caused a dramatic public shift from leaded to unleaded. Green Taxes on unsustainable behaviours is necessary.



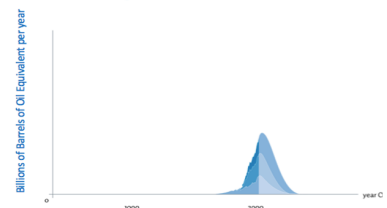
**1937**

WORLD POPULATION : 2.3 BILLION  
CARBON IN ATMOSPHERE : 280 PARTS PER MILLION  
REMAINING WILDERNESS : 66 %

**2020**

WORLD POPULATION : 7.8 BILLION  
CARBON IN ATMOSPHERE : 415 PARTS PER MILLION  
REMAINING WILDERNESS : 35 %

Global Production of Fossil Fuels: AD 0 to AD 3000



Personal Carbon Budgets (PCBs) are the next step: we need to calculate what is the average amount of carbon each human being on the planet can emit in a year to keep below the 2 degree threshold of global warming: a fairly easy calculation to make. Once we have that figure, those who wish to exceed their PCBs can buy carbon budgets off other people. This kind of green tax is a great leveller which would save the planet at the same time. Eventually, governments are going to have to make it a criminal offence to produce, sell or use fossil fuels. It's the only way to save life! Humanity has to end its addiction to oil, coal and gas.

We have to create a Green Economy: as we've seen, fossil fuels will run out by the end of this century. And long before they do, burning fossil fuels will trigger catastrophic climate change. So – we have no alternative but to make it work: it's our only hope! We shall make mistakes. But we cannot give up. Future generations depend on us making a green, sustainable economy work.

Like every other UN Member state, the UK has to present enhanced INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) at the UN Climate Summit that the UK is hosting in Glasgow in November 2021. The INDCs nations agreed at the Paris COP would give us between 3 and 4 degrees of global warming – far, far more than the planet can stand. In the UK, we have a golden opportunity to show global leadership and get all nations to deliver INDCs that will constrain global heating below 2 degrees or, better yet, below 1.5 degrees.

Greta Thunberg, Schools Strike 4 Climate, Fridays for the Future – even many adults – think that young people are the best chance we have of saving the environment. Perhaps the answer is for them to 'grab the wheel' themselves to steer humanity away from the cliff edge towards a green, sustainable society.

As Sir David Attenborough attests: "We could be a victim of the 6th Great Extinction...."

We need Education for Sustainable Development. Young people learn best through doing things. Experiential Education – like growing things, making things, selling things – embeds lessons more permanently in a child's brain than being told things in a classroom. Also, in their classrooms, children are seldom learning about the most serious threats that they will face in their lifetimes: Climate Change, Resource Depletion, how to conserve the eco-systems on which all life depends. They learn little about any of that. Nor about the Sustainable Development Goals which have to be met to secure their future. Instead, as they have put it: "You teach us about the Battle of Hastings which happened a thousand years ago – but you teach us NOTHING about the battle for survival which we are fighting right now..."

### **THIS IS THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL DECADE IN HUMAN HISTORY**

We are entering the most consequential decade in human history: by 2030, we will have made the decisions that determine whether or not humanity has a long-term future on this planet. David Attenborough powerfully explains how the 6th Mass extinction could occur in the lifetimes of young people born today. He explains that we must restore biodiversity. "Rewilding the world is simpler than you might think! And the changes that we have to make will only benefit ourselves and the generations that follow." Re-wilding, such as through Local Green New Deals – alongside education – is at the heart of the solution.

# Actions

### **INDIVIDUALS**

1. Expand the role of creativity in conservation;
2. Encourage Personal Carbon Budgets – so each individual rations their carbon emissions;
3. Encourage the creative engagement of individuals in to learn about their local environment;
4. Encourage intergenerational communication and friendships to engender long-term understanding of local micro-environments and their conservation;
5. Educate individuals to support ethical / sustainable practice by businesses, like boycotting fast fashion;
6. Lobby governments to commit to more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions ahead of the Glasgow Climate COP in 2021.

### **COMMUNITIES**

1. Create a Local Green New Deal – an umbrella community stakeholder initiative, involving local government, planners, businesses, schools, shops and community groups working together to green their community by a certain date;
2. Create local tax incentives to encourage businesses to go carbon neutral;
3. Encourage collaboration and campaigns within communities to establish and protect green spaces like orchards, parks and community gardens;
4. Engage intergenerationally with farmers to promote agro-forestry and ways of managing farms so that they nurture and protect local wildlife;
5. Encourage every community to become a Transition Community: set time-tabled goals to achieve sustainability with targets for plastic-free / carbon-free / meat-free + other targets agreed by all;
6. Incentivise imaginative initiatives by setting aside funds for community-driven green events and installations.

### **NATIONS**

1. Introduce environmental education / Education for Sustainable Development(ESD) as a core, continuous, examined component of every child's curriculum from Primary School to A-levels;
2. Create national programmes of rewilding incentivised by post-Brexit environmental grants;
3. Implement a Just and Fair Transition to a Green Economy: remove all fossil-fuel powered cars by 2030; impose punitive taxes on carbon use, and criminalise production, sale, use of Fossil Fuels by 2035;
4. Set up experiential environmental learning programmes for all young people – by, for example, monitoring biodiversity, the weather, crop yields etc. Promote accuracy in Eco-education at all levels.

### **THE UN / INTERNATIONALLY**

1. Create a "We the Peoples...." citizen-led digital UN, operating through international citizens' assemblies - addressing issues that threaten the survival and prosperity of all life on earth;
2. Recognise ecocide as an international crime under the International Criminal Court;
3. Encourage nations to phase out all pollution subsidies as quickly as possible and to use subsidies to support the movement towards a green economy.