

Notes on some recent climate change articles

1. Climate change article by Madeleine Cuff in 'The i' on 3rd of April 2021.
"Hello it's Friday the 22nd of July 2050, and it's been an extremely hot day across the UK. Widely, today's temperatures exceeded 36°C, with temperatures from Southampton to Birmingham exceeding 40°C, and a high of 43°C in Worcester. This follows nine days of temperatures exceeding 30°C in Scotland and 34°C across England and Wales."

Does this sound a little Sci Fiy? Possibly, but note that in January 2007, the BBC presented a special programme presented by David Attenborough that featured a fake weather forecast for 2020. Based on Met Office best modelling, it predicted top temperatures of 30°C in London and 28°C in northern England. In reality, the South East hit 33°C last July and temperatures climbed into the high 20°Cs as far north as Scotland. So yesterday's forecasts have already become today's weather reports. So tell your children and grandchildren to invest in companies manufacturing air conditioning equipment.

2. A recently published book by Mark Carney, the ex-governor of The Bank of England, entitled; 'Value(s): Building a better world for all.'

Establishing a good degree of pandemic resilience says Mr Carney, would have cost less than the economic output lost in just a single day of the covid-19 crisis. That missed opportunity is one indictment of market failings. Another, he goes on to say, perhaps the most troubling, is the inability of markets to value the natural world. How is it that we can put a value on Amazon, the company, yet only ascribe value to the Amazon rainforest by logging it and stripping it bare? We are in thrall to a dangerous market fundamentalism that fails to value the things we do and in things that are of real worth to all of us.

On the subject of current government policies, he feels that they are better than previous policies but they are still not enough. There has been big progress in that there are much clearer signals about what isn't going to be allowed. Knowing, for example, that there will be no new internal combustion engine vehicles from 2030 in the UK and Europe sends a message to the auto industry to get on with developing electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. So don't buy a petrol or diesel vehicle after 2025 or you will be buying obsolescence.

On the subject of COP26, he explains that it must succeed as we won't get another chance to make a real difference on a global scale. In relation to a comparison between the climate crisis and other crises of value, failure isn't an option. Failure could happen but he is hopeful that having learned lessons from previous crises, we can improve our ability to deal with the climate crisis. However he is adamant that we must not self-isolate from the environment crisis. "We have to live the values that are necessary to solve it".

In trying to learn from the very real pandemic crisis we are in at the moment, it is critical that governments worldwide listen to the science and take great note of the data produced on climate change in order to act quickly before significant temperature rises become irreversible. Can you imagine millions of people in parts of the world living in a kind of

indoor lockdown because it's too hot to go outside? Another lesson from the current crisis is the need for communities, markets and governments both local, regional, national and international to work together on tackling the problems of climate change. We must move away from isolationism to ensure that those populations around the world who are at the greatest disadvantage have the means of coping with climate change.

3. 'UK hydrogen vehicle switch would need boost to wind power.' From The New Scientist, the 3rd of April 2021.

A new analysis suggests that shifting to hydrogen trucks, buses and cars in the UK would require about 2000 more coastal wind turbines than if batteries for electric vehicles were prioritised. If half of heavy-duty trucks and buses and a tenth of cars are run on hydrogen by mid-century, with the rest on electric batteries, the UK will need 15 % more electricity than it would by using battery electric vehicles alone. The UK government must rule out impractical solutions like widespread use of synthetic fuels and hydrogen in trucks, buses, vans and cars before 2030 after which renewable energy demand in transport will rise quickly.

4. 'Increasing threat of wildfires in the UK'. From the New Scientist, the 3rd of April 2021.

Climate change is projected to drive a large increase in fire danger across the whole of the UK. Flooding is considered to be the biggest threat to the UK but in a few decades, wildfires will pose a more obvious and noticeable hazard. If the world continues to have high carbon emissions, the number of days with conditions hot and dry enough for serious wildfires in the south of England will rise from 20 a year to 111 by the 2080s. Town and country planning rules may need to change in order to block developments in fire-prone areas.

5. 'GM crops could greatly reduce carbon emissions'. . From the New Scientist, the 3rd of April 2021.

According to a 2018 report by The World Resources Institute, if farm yields stay at today's levels, most of the world's remaining forests would have to be cleared to meet estimated food needs in 2050. This would be an absolute disaster for much of the world's wildlife. The EU could significantly reduce carbon emissions by embracing genetically modified crops. If EU countries had grown GM crops in 2017, in total they could have cut greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 33 million tonnes of carbon dioxide that year. The reason is that GM crops have higher average yields meaning less land is needed to produce the same amount of food. This analysis was compiled by Emma Kovak of the Breakthrough Institute in California.

NB: Council elections are coming up soon. It would be a good time now to question prospective candidates to explain their ideas and plans to help combat climate change.