

11.04.2018

Hi

Good news - we now have the figures to tell us that in 2017 the world added more renewable capacity than coal, gas and nuclear combined. Below are some other items that I hope you find uplifting. The challenge is that the world is still **only producing 12% of its electricity from renewables**. There is still a long way to go....

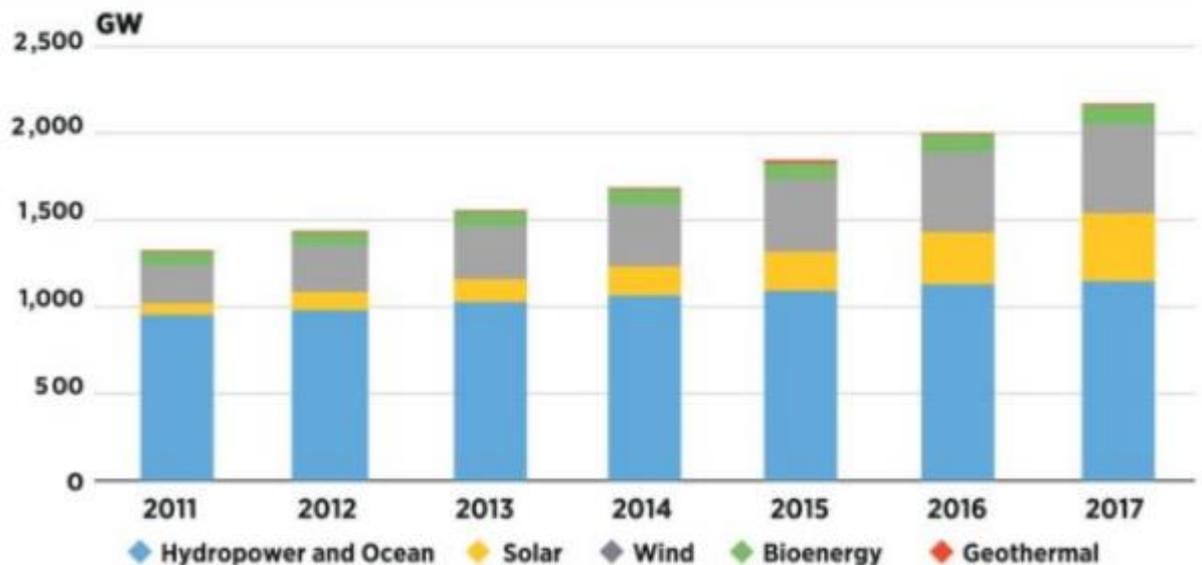
1. **Saudi Arabia pledges \$200bn to solar projects** - that's BIG!
2. **Google and Apple go 100% renewable**
3. Central Banks give more warnings on climate change
4. Let's get real about our national debt and national emergencies
5. **KPMG finds eliminating plastic makes financial sense!**
6. World Service broadcast on **plastics** - the impact of China's ban
7. **Christina Figueres in London** - book your place
8. What **Shell** knew...
9. A fifth motorway hydrogen refuelling station
10. **EDF** - where's it going?
11. **The Big Clean Switch - a simple way to make sure your energy is green**

1. Saudi Arabia produces about a third of OPEC's oil - **10 million barrels per day** - but the Kingdom is now seriously planning for a post-oil future. It is pledging \$200 billion towards solar projects at home which will start generating in 2019 and will build up to **200 GW capacity by 2030**. (The UK's entire electricity capacity from all sources is around 100 GW.) This is a pretty extraordinary vote of confidence in a global decarbonised economy - and it saves the Saudis heaps of money, as they are still burning precious oil to generate electricity....

This chart from the International Renewable Energy Agency is fascinating. **The prospects for future solar growth**

are enormous.

Total Renewable Power Generation Capacity, 2011-2017



- Data management now uses 7% of the world's electricity and this is expected to triple by 2021.** Alarmingly, I read in the FT (so it must be true!) that one year of downloads for a particularly popular song can be the equivalent of the emissions from 100,000 taxis... Both Google and Apple have just announced that they are now effectively sourcing **100% of their power from renewable sources**. In general, this means signing power purchasing agreements with wind and solar farms around the world, rather than actually generating on site - but **Google says it aims to actually power** its own operations in the foreseeable future. Both are part of the **RE 100 group** of major corporations that have **all pledged to go 100% renewable within the next few years**. Interestingly, several data companies are now looking at **siting their operations in very cold climates** - Finland, Alaska, Iceland - because so much of their power usage is in cooling.
- 'Once climate change becomes a clear and present danger to financial stability, it may already be too late,'** says **Mark Carney**, Governor of the Bank of England and Chair of the Financial Stability Board. Along with heads of other European central banks, **he is considering 'carbon stress tests' for our banks** and insurance companies but there is resistance to compulsory disclosures. The nub of the question is **whether our banks have over-invested in fossil fuels that will never be used; have they priced in the real physical risks of climate change - drought, floods, food supply disruption, conflict - and the 'regulatory risk' of governments actually getting serious and changing policies to decarbonise faster**. It seems there is an awareness of the real risks, but a reluctance to change.
- It's an interesting thought that the **UK paid off its last bit of World War 2 debt in 2006** - and yet now that the world faces a mass existential threat to life - or at the very least, to the civilisations we have created - **governments are unwilling to spend to avert catastrophe**. 'Normal' economics prevails....

5. **Everyone's going plastic free!** Today I read that global accountancy firm [KPMG - following pressure from staff - has agreed to stop supplying 3 million plastic water cups to staff per year](#). They finally did the sums and found that re-usable plastic bottles would **save them £60,000 a year and pay back within 18 months....** They now plan to cut plastic from their hot drinks machines and cutlery from their canteens... **Too often it feels as if nobody is responsible for consumption in the workplace - clearly raising difficult questions can have an outside impact...**
6. For an **excellent overview of the world's sudden awareness of our plastics problem**, here's a great broadcast from the World Service - [The Real Story](#). Alarming, the world is **set to quadruple its use of plastic by 2050** - but China's ban on imports of waste, plus the David Attenborough-effect, could change this. We need to value waste - we need our **government to mandate a certain percentage of packaging to come from recycled goods in the Resource and Waste Strategy to be announced later this year**.
7. **Christina Figueres**, she who headed up the Paris Agreement is [coming to London on the 31st May](#), courtesy of The Guardian. She should be a fascinating and inspiring speaker - Figueres has given us the clearest warnings on **just how little time we have to make the decisions to stay below either 1.5 or 2 degrees...**
8. The legal suit that [ExxonMobil launched to counter](#) the many legal cases it faces has been thrown out of court. And it now appears that Shell is in the firing line. Documents reveal that back in the 1990s [Shell's own scientists predicted violent and damaging storms by 2010 as a result of climate change...](#) This is the first legal case against a fossil fuel company that [isn't seeking damages, rather a change of behaviour...](#)
9. Having said that, **Shell is now devoting a small part of its development budget to clean technologies**. Two weeks ago Shell opened its [fifth UK motorway hydrogen refuelling station](#), using hydrogen from water with the waste product of oxygen... Although not stated, it's assumed that Shell is collaborating with long-distance hauliers making predictable journeys along our motorways. A re-fill of hydrogen can keep a vehicle going **700km and refuelling is quick** - so there are definite advantages over battery vehicles.
10. **Where is EDF going?** Its [profits took another significant drop](#) earlier this year and a large part of its survival strategy seems to be a shift into [renewables and storage](#). Interestingly, and much welcomed, this **includes a push into off-grid solar in the Ivory Coast and Ghana**. Hinkley is being pushed as fast as possible but I am told that it would **still be possible for all sides just to walk away and sign a no-fault, no-litigation deal**.
11. **EDF is not the only big utility company haemorrhaging customers**. It seems the Big 6 [lost over a million customers last year](#), mainly to smaller suppliers. If you have not yet switched to 100% renewable tariff, you can get great rates and guaranteed green supplies by joining [WWF's Big Clean Switch](#). Alternatively, the [Bristol Energy Company](#) (which keeps money local and is owned by our Council) is about to launch a **100% renewable gas tariff to match its 100% green electricity**.



As ever, if you wish to come off the mailing list, just let me know. The next series of free talks begins on Thursday April 26th at Bishopston Library, 7.30pm. Details and Eventbrite booking can be found on [my website](#).

Many thanks.

Nikki