

24.01.2018

Hi

Just a reminder that I will be starting a **series of talks in Clevedon on the 8th Feb.** For more info, please email casa2012clevedon@gmail.com.

Here are some other bits of news you may find interesting.

1. **UK wind hits record production**
2. Severe weather - hot and cold - in January
3. Louisiana withdraws from coast: Cape Town drought
4. **New York joins legal challengers to fossil fuels**
5. **Insurers withdraw from coal**
6. What's happening in the US?
7. Where are we with electric vehicles?
8. **Help to get to work in Bristol - grants & schemes**
9. Fukushima exhibition in Taunton
10. **Reforestation - China, India and UK**
11. Your fridge temperature - it matters!
12. **Bitcoin energy use** - extraordinary...
13. Zero West workshop 26th January & air quality survey

1. It's now been confirmed that the UK generated over **30% of its electricity from renewable sources** in 2017. Latest government projections are that this will rise to **38% by 2020**. 'Low carbon' generation, ie including nuclear, is expected to be **70% by 2025, and 76% by 2030**. This implies a big jump in renewable generation but there appears to be a big hole between projections and planning.

However, earlier this month, there was good news: the UK broke its wind generation record. If you are familiar with [Gridwatch](#), you will know the wind dial only goes up to 10GW. But it seems we got to **13.5 GW earlier in January**, a really cheering **29% of all our electricity** demand. Off-shore wind is the one renewable source that the government has pledged to continue to support up till 2025.

2. January has seen extreme weather around the world. **New Hampshire fell to -73.3 degrees C**, while Sydney sweltered in **+47.3 C**. Alaska hit **new records in December** and Antarctica was an unusually warm - 23 C. In the UK we are noticing big changes in the times we see new wildlife. WWF has a simple ['Noticing Change Checklist'](#) that they would like

you to fill out - when do you first see wasps, frogspawn, or lawns being cut? If you're a nature watcher, please let them know.

3. Many populations are already facing real change. In Louisiana, it appears that much of the coast may be declared uninhabitable and an aggressive policy of abandonment is being considered. Cape Town, which has suffered drought for many years, is likely to become the first major metropolis that simply runs out of water.

4. Greenpeace's legal challenge against the Norwegian government has failed but the oil industry is facing multiple suits in the US. Earlier this month New York City announced its own suit against the biggest five listed companies, including Shell and BP. Win or lose, the point of these cases is to cast doubt over the companies' long-term profitability and therefore the current market value of their shares. This adds to their multiple long-standing concerns - access to reserves, the instability of the oil price and the looming threat of electric vehicles and 'peak demand'.

5. Damages from US disasters alone last year totalled \$306 billion and it seems that big insurers are now rethinking their commitments to fossil fuel industries. Lloyds, which is on the hook for \$4.5 billion damages from the Harvey and Maria cyclones, is the latest to say they now have a '**coal exclusion**' policy. This is another important change to the friendly financial environment fossil fuels have operated in.

6. We're all Trump-watchers these days but policies seem to be bringing mixed results. Trump has slapped a 10-50% import on many imported manufactured goods which may be good for emission reductions - but this includes cheap solar panels from China. **The question is whether the American solar revolution can continue at the same pace with higher costs.** And although cuts in corporation tax have been widely decried, the reforms include deterrents to corporate borrowing which are reported to be hitting oil and gas companies very hard. **Smaller shale companies, in particular, look vulnerable** as they operate only on cheap finance and are still generally unable to cover their costs.

Attempts to frame a review of the grid so that only coal and nuclear could be 'winners' has been slapped down by the US regulators. This should really kill off Trump's plans to revive coal. **It is reported that another 74 coal plants will close by 2020.**

7. There have been several really interesting programmes looking at just how fast the electric vehicle revolution will happen... Fully Charged has done a quick, fun explanation of why range, performance, cost and charging are soon to be worries of the past, and why the **government's 2040 target of no new petrol /diesel will be met by 2030.** It needs to be. The

Committee on Climate Change, which oversees government policy, is warning that we need [60% of cars on the road to be electric by 2030](#) if we are to stay within our legally binding carbon budgets.

And in China, one city (of nearly 12 million) now has [16,400 electric buses](#).... Now they are getting going on electrifying their taxis...

8. Bristol's TravelWest is looking for champions to promote cycling and walking to colleagues. And there is still time to apply for **grants of up to £30,000** to help employees choose cleaner, greener travel options. **Free six month loans of electric bikes** are on offer, and travel advisers to discuss individual transport options. Please contact Kurt Scheibl on 07834 450 582 or travelwestbusiness@bristol.gov.uk

Living Streets are holding a ['Walking Summit' in London on the 10th March](#) to look at how UK cities can prioritise walking. Places are free.

9. Taunton is hosting an [exhibition on the Fukushima disaster](#), entitled 20 Millisieverts Per Year . It is on till the 17th Feb.

10. The UK is one of the most deforested countries in Europe and more ancient woodland is being [destroyed to make way for HS2](#). However, this month the government announced [plans for a new belt of 50 million trees](#) across Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, to be planted over the next 25 years. Most of the money will come from public fundraising.

Many countries are **promoting tree planting as a 'negative emission technology'** that will help keep them within their Paris pledges. India has had several mass-plantings: last year they broke their own record with [66 million trees planted in 12 hours!](#) And [China has also been replanting](#) since the late 1990s, and in [2018 plans new forests](#) the size of Ireland.

11. What's the temperature of your fridge? Fridges and freezers are high consumption gadgets in the home because they are on all the time - so they matter. Keeping the temperature below 3 degrees will use a lot of electricity and not preserve food for longer. Apparently **optimal temperature is between 3 and 5 degrees** - so get a fridge thermometer and check.... Also, we all need to **vacuum the back of our fridges** every few months, apparently. Keeping it dust free improves performance....

12. You may have heard recently [reports](#) that Bitcoin, the crypto-currency, consumes vast amounts of electricity. [Radio 4's More or Less has investigated](#) - and found out it's true!

13. If you would like to find out more, or get involved, in serious suggestions for Bristol's transition to a low carbon economy, [Zero West will be meeting for a full-day workshop](#) on the **26th January**.

Bristol Friends of the Earth are campaigning hard on air quality issues. They would appreciate your taking the time to fill out this [short survey](#).

As ever, if you would like to come off the mailing list, just let me know.

All good wishes.

Nikki