

27 March 2018

This morning I read another [article](#) on how staying below 2 degrees of warming depends on **local and personal action**. It is [small-scale activists](#) who are getting things moving in New York and many other cities around the world. Congratulations to the [students at Bristol University](#) who have finally secured a pledge for all investments to be fossil fuel-free by 2020 - that's fantastic news. There is much for others to get involved with. For example, Bristol City Council is hosting a discussion on the [future of the city centre](#) (which needs to be largely car free), and Bristol Civic Society are holding an event to look at the [city's transport planning](#). [Bristol Friends of the Earth](#) are inviting everyone to a general meeting on the 4th April, and Bedminster Energy Group have the [first of several talks](#) tonight, on One Planet Living. To understand the bigger economic picture, [Positive Money](#) will be hosting an event on Thursday 29th March. **There are many, many other initiatives all over the city.**

Here are some links and news items you may find useful, with a heavy emphasis on personal action.

1. **Hinkley - an amber warning over safety standards**
2. How many **EDF, BP and Shell 'free placements'** work in our civil service?
3. 97 GW of coal retired last year - that's big!
4. The worlds' solar energy capacity up by 100 GW last year - also big! **You can add more...**
5. **Europe's over-reliance on biomass**. You can plant anywhere...
6. Our MPs demand that greenhouse gases are prioritised along with air quality pollutants
7. **Legal action is changing the fossil fuel landscape; some cases to support**
8. The World Health Organisation warns on **antibiotic use**; 50% goes to our animals
9. Holidays - some greener options
10. A powerful - and uplifting - talk from **Jeremy Leggett**. Disruption is happening faster than ever believed.
11. **Palm oil - is it in your soap?**

1. You probably haven't heard it in the news but **Hinkley C**, the new nuclear plant under construction, has been given [an amber warning over its safety standards](#). The question is whether it is making sure that the defective steel used at Flamanville (Hinkley's big sister) won't be used here. It got the OK in France based on falsified documents. This needs watching because the history of the nuclear industry is that **political considerations trump safety**.
2. **Why is nuclear so central to the UK's energy policy?** Our utilities and National Grid state that centralised power plants are outdated - nuclear in particular, because of its inflexibility. The answer is partly in our weapons programme, but may also be that **EDF (as well as BP and Shell) have staff working for free** within our civil service. This

is part of the 'corporate capture' of our government. **Please write to your MP asking for a clear number on how many placements there are and exactly what their roles are in determining our energy policy. Please send me any replies you get.**

3. Some good news. **Coal is on the decline**: 97 GW (equivalent to all the UK's electricity capacity from every source) was retired last year. This includes **45 GW in the US, under Trump, and 8 GW in our country**. New coal plants are still coming on line in some Global South countries, but this is slowing. However, if this is replaced by large-scale gas, it is of little benefit because of the methane losses in gas production and transportation.
4. The good news is that the rise in solar is accelerating - almost **100 GW of new solar** (again, roughly UK capacity from all sources) around the world in 2017. Increasingly, this is going to Global South countries. In the UK, solar has almost come to a halt - despite the fact that we still have **one more year of Feed In Tariffs**. It may **still be worth installing panels so do investigate asap**. If you need suggestions on installers, please let me know. And if you haven't yet changed to a **100% renewable tariff, the offer of joining Bulb and getting £50 for yourself and the same for SolarAid still exists. Please contact me for details**.
5. At the moment, the UK - and Europe's - ambitious renewable targets **rely heavily on burning wood**. This is only 'clean' if the same amount of CO2 is removed quickly by new growth & if it is sourced locally so that transport is minimised - and that **still doesn't sort the nitrous oxide and air pollutant problems, nor the loss of carbon from forest floors (four times as much as the wood itself)**. However, **wood is being considered not just as a fuel source, but also for our clothing and a replacement for plastics**. This **Costing the Earth** is worth listening to for an idea of where the wood industry is going. If you want to plant trees but don't have any land, consider a little **guerrilla planting**. For my last birthday, along with a few friends, we planted 50 hedging whips in public areas... I hope to be able to watch them grow for the next 20 years. So far, they've been left alone... I'm planning an expansion...
6. Our government has lost three court cases over its plans to limit air pollutants. Earlier this month, the **MPs from four key select committees** joined forces to say that the government needs to stop treating this as a box-ticking exercise, and should prioritise greenhouse gases along with NOx and particulates. At the moment, **Bristol City Council's policies seem firmly fixed on meeting the bare minimum NOx requirements**. There are answers that meet all requirements - an assertive approach to decongesting the city and towards incentivising clean public transport, walking, cycling and electrification. **Friends of Suburban Bristol Rail** have some interesting ideas for opening up old train stations in and around the city.
7. Our **fossil fuel companies face legal action** around the world, but particularly in the US. Here in the UK, **Plan B Earth** had their first hearing against our government this month, demanding that our **100% decarbonisation to 1990 level (our Paris commitment) be enshrined in law (as per our Climate Change Act)**. You can help the world's most at-risk countries, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), mount a

legal challenge by joining [Mission Lifeforce](#). It's a small commitment with, potentially, a big impact.

8. If you need an added reason to cut your meat and dairy use, the **World Health Organisation is now warning of a 'slow tsunami' and expects [10 million deaths per year by 2050 from antibiotic resistance](#)**. We use half of our antibiotics on our animals, 70% in the US. Even our fish, which are now largely farmed, are fed antibiotics (with their corn!!) and around **20% of them are fed to our livestock**. The UK is undergoing an intensification of farming. If you are still eating meat products, it's worth **sourcing from pasture-fed, organic producers**. And if you are vegetarian/vegan, also make sure you are sourcing as much organic as possible. It doesn't make sense to support chemical-intense veg / fruit production.... If you've cut your meat, this shouldn't cost you more...
9. Most of us will be considering **holidays** at this time of year. It seems that the 'I don't fly' movement is growing, now including some [academics](#). If you want to plant trees for your holiday, [Trees for Life](#) comes highly recommended. Or why not try an [organic farm](#) or [forest holiday in the UK](#)?
10. **Jeremy Leggett set up both Solar Century and Solar Aid, after a long career in the oil and gas industry**. For a really cheering, and authoritative look at where the world is going, here's an [excellent half hour lecture](#). And here are some generally cheering headlines in the 2017 [Bloomberg Energy report](#). But if their predictions are correct, note that the world still does not peak its energy emissions till far beyond our 2020 deadline.
11. One last thing you can do.... The **production of palm oil is now spreading beyond East Asia to Latin America and Africa**. It means massive forest destruction. Please check the products in your shopping basket. **See below for Greenpeace's campaign against Carex**. It is often easy to substitute non-palm oil products or at the very least, look for the ['sustainable palm oil'](#) sign.

Many thanks. **As ever, if you want to come off the list, please let me know.**

All good wishes.

Nikki

The Greenpeace logo, featuring the word "GREENPEACE" in a bold, green, sans-serif font with a slightly distressed or hand-painted appearance.

Nikki,

The forest homes of orangutans are being destroyed for palm oil – an ingredient in almost half the products on our supermarket shelves. **For years**, the brands that use it have been **hiding the truth about where they get theirs from**.

Nikki – the time for hiding is over.

If enough of us ask Carex to reveal their sources, we'd be able to hold them to account. It would be a massive step in cleaning up **one of the most destructive industries on Earth.**

Carex doesn't seem to care that orangutans are dying for palm oil. Let's show them we do.

[Sign the petition](#)

Just last month we found out that Bornean **orangutan numbers have more than halved** – that's about **150,000 gone in less than 20 years.**

Carex made a promise to customers – that by 2020 **orangutans and forests** wouldn't be **sacrificed for the palm oil used to make their hand wash.** But they're way off course and unless they start taking action now it'll be too late.

After people called them out, Unilever, Nestlé and Mondelez (Cadbury) came clean about where they get their palm oil from. Carex is lagging behind.

Nikki – will you tell Carex to take action on destructive palm oil and help protect orangutans?

[Sign the petition](#)

If Carex really do care they need to:

1. Come clean about where their palm oil comes from.
2. Publish a clear plan to reach their 2020 target.
3. Cut the offending growers from their supply chain.

Will you help make sure Carex take the first step?

[Sign the petition](#)

Your support has forced the hands of big companies in the past. Remember when HSBC agreed to **stop funding companies involved in any kind of deforestation in Indonesia** after we piled on the pressure?

Let's do it again.

Thanks for all you do,
Nick Monro aka Dikson

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