

## Climate Concern UK

### Some Items from past e-Mailed Updates (pre- March 2006)

#### Kyoto Agreement, key points:

- Kyoto is a legally binding agreement between countries to meet emissions reduction targets of all greenhouse gases by 2012 relative to 1990 levels.
- No. of countries which took part in discussions: 141
- No. of (industrialised) countries which ratified the agreement: 36
- Reason for delay: the agreement needed countries responsible for 55% of 1990 emissions to ratify - after the USA refused in 2001, Russian ratification was needed - this was only obtained in November 2004.
- Overall average emissions target: 5.4%
- UK target: 12.5%
- Some eco-advanced countries have agreed to high emissions targets; e.g. Germany and Denmark 21%
- Some less advanced countries are allowed to **increase** emissions: e.g. Greece +25%, Spain +15%, Ireland +13%
- The large developing countries, especially China, India and Brazil, took part in the discussions but were not expected to have reduction targets.
- Penalties: 40 Euros per tonne of greenhouse gas. Also, after 2012, shortfalls to be added to any new target and multiplied by 1.3.
- Review: annual meetings.
- Market-based approach: to give incentives through carbon trading; e.g. a company or country finding it expensive to achieve an emissions reduction has the alternative of paying money ("buying credits") so that the money can be used elsewhere on projects where an equivalent emissions reduction can be achieved at less cost. Conversely, a company or country exceeding its target receives money ("selling credits"). In Europe, carbon is being traded at around £10 per tonne.

Some sceptics say that Kyoto involves a lot of expense to achieve small reductions - but it is both a start to more serious world efforts on climate change and a big political achievement.

#### Hurricanes

As with other aspects of climate change, there is no real proof that our greenhouse gas emissions are the cause of the recent hurricane disasters - there have been severe hurricanes in the past (e.g. 12,000 people killed in Texas in 1900) and the frequency of hurricanes has barely increased. However, a recent study of satellite imagery shows a near doubling in the quantity of *severe* hurricanes (Category 4 & 5) over the last 35 years in all oceans, correlating with sea surface warming across the tropics. Since hurricanes pick up their energy from the warm sea surface, it follows that warmer seas due to global warming are likely to add to the severity of hurricanes.

#### Carbon Offsets

Are you all aware that you can offset your own greenhouse gas emissions by making a contribution to carbon reduction projects? For those prepared to extend doing their bit in this way, especially for air travel, you can go on to [www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org) to make a small payment. Climate Care are engaged in projects, mainly in developing countries, such as low-energy lighting, renewable cooking fuel and rainforest restoration (although planting trees is controversial as a method of reducing greenhouse gas - the trees will eventually give it up again when they either burn down or decay!).

#### Help the Publicity

A new A4 publicity notice with colour graphics is now available to download and print. Fill in your e-mail address and contact telephone no. (or if you prefer, use ours: [contact@climate-concern.com](mailto:contact@climate-concern.com), 01325 378452). You can take these notices along to shops, supermarkets, libraries, voluntary bureaux, etc, and ask the staff to display them. Also, wherever opportunities arise, they can be placed

on notice boards in public buildings, offices, schools. A5 and A6 size-flyers with a similar design can also be supplied; we do not yet have funding, so these must be charged at cost.

For other campaigning suggestions, see our web page <http://climate-concern.com/campaigning.htm>

### **Will You Speak?!**

We are especially keen for more individuals to give talks to schools and/or established community groups around the UK - this seems the best way to get in front of decent numbers of people. Most community groups regularly book speakers and many have their meetings in the evenings, e.g. WI, Townswomen, Inner Wheel, Soroptimists, church groups, political parties, Rotary, Round Table, Probus, U3A, Civic/Natural History Societies, etc. - libraries have lists or databases showing societies and contacts.

If you are retired or in part-time work, you could give talks to schools - sixth forms will book a climate change speaker for Citizenship, General Studies, sometimes Geography.

Even if you have no previous speaking experience, providing you have prepared what to say (and we can supply a suggested talk, along with Powerpoint presentation if required), it really isn't difficult and can be very satisfying. This must be the one of the best things you can do to help spread the word on the dangers of climate change. How about taking the plunge?! - e-mail or phone to discuss.

### **Answering Scepticism**

Scepticism about man-made climate change is widespread and you will probably all have encountered it. The unwillingness to believe due to the inconvenience of confronting energy indulgence is bad enough, but scepticism is also fed by newspaper articles (esp. Telegraph, Mail) denouncing climate change as a problem. We now also have a best-selling popular novel; "State of Fear" by American author Michael Crichton (Jurassic Park chap). This quotes selected scientific data to make out that climate change concerns are exaggerated, and portrays environmentalists engaged in criminal activity in order to attract funding.

I believe that the best response to accusations of underlying motivations (which may have an element of truth - scientists need funds!) is to point out that human affairs often involve hidden agendas and that the leading name **sceptic** climate scientists have been found to receive funding from oil and mining companies! Also that such considerations don't disprove that man-made greenhouse gas is a major factor in climate change.

Don't forget how to answer the many people who get out of worrying about their contribution to greenhouse gas by saying: "But the climate has *always* changed":

- Most researchers believe that at least 60% of recent warming (especially during the last 30 years), can only be explained by our emissions. Even if this is wrong and the true extent is lower, it is in any case the *high risk* which causes so much concern - due both to the *irreversibility* of greenhouse gas emissions and possible *thresholds* for catastrophic runaway warming (<http://www.climate-concern.com/Thresholds.htm>).
- Warming due to our emissions is on TOP of any other causes such as changes in the strength of the sun, hence risking even more extreme future climate.
- Consider the amount of greenhouse gas we have already added to the atmosphere since the industrial revolution: one-third more carbon dioxide and double the methane (plus nitrous oxide and various new industrial gases) and accelerating. A powerful phrase is "the largest uncontrolled scientific experiment in history".

Also see our web pages [www.climate-concern.com/answering\\_scepticism.htm](http://www.climate-concern.com/answering_scepticism.htm) and [http://climate-concern.com/is\\_it\\_our\\_fault.htm](http://climate-concern.com/is_it_our_fault.htm), also download sheet "Answering Scepticism": <http://www.climate-concern.com/PDFs/Answering%20Scepticism.pdf>

### **Sceptic Science in Perspective:**

It is important to realise what it is that sceptic climate scientists are saying (e.g. the ones who sometimes take part in climate change discussions on radio or TV). They cannot deny the large increases in atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide, methane, and the various other greenhouse gases due to our emissions. Neither are they arguing that our emissions don't contribute

to global warming (by definition, greenhouse gas does!). Their emphasis is on the uncertainty of the *extent* of our contribution to warming as against natural climate variability, as above.

### **A Bit of History**

Irish scientist John Tyndall first demonstrated in 1863 that molecules of water and carbon dioxide were opaque to infrared radiation (i.e. greenhouse gases) and argued that trace amounts in the atmosphere maintained the earth at a pleasantly warm temperature.

Swedish physicist Svante Arrhenius calculated during the 1890s the sensitivity (rise) of atmospheric temperature to a doubling of carbon dioxide to be 4°C to 6°C. This is of the same order as current predictions from computer models!

### **Climate Change Science:**

For those interested in the background science, suggest browse these:

- 1) A very easy-to-read analysis, produced by an independent British amateur scientist, can be viewed at: <http://www.brighton73.freemove.co.uk/gw/globalwarmingfaq.htm>
- 2) The New Scientist magazine website has a lot of useful info: <http://www.newscientist.com/channel/earth/climate-change>

### **Saving Energy:**

One of the best things you can do at home to contribute to CO2 reduction (12 times more "carbon points" than changing to low energy light bulbs!), if you haven't already, is to change to a "green" electricity supplier, e.g. [www.ecotricity.co.uk](http://www.ecotricity.co.uk), or [www.good-energy.co.uk](http://www.good-energy.co.uk). Or if you are with nPower, ask them to change you over to "Juice". These companies invest in renewable energy. For other ideas, our list "Saving Energy - Doing Your Bit" can be downloaded.

### **Three Good Reads:**

*"How We Can Save The Planet"*: This is the title of a book about climate change by academic and environmentalist Mayer Hillman, published May 2004 in Penguin. It gives a very comprehensive summary of many aspects of the subject with lots of facts and figures, along with carbon rationing plans.

*"High Tide - News from a Warming World"*: Mark Lynas, Flamingo, £6.39 from Amazon. Published last year, the UK's leading climate change journalist travelled to several parts of the world suffering the effects of climate change; UK, Alaska, Tuvalu, China, USA, Peru, and obtained descriptions of the problems from many local people. Very interesting and well written.  
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/search-handle-form/026-8450080-4452424>

*"Reduce, Re-use, Recycle"*: Nicky Scott, Green Books, £3.95: A very informative guide, especially the A-Z section which explains the disposal/recycle possibilities for a wide range of household items including plastics.  
[www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk)

**Wind Power at Whinash:** Interesting will be the result of the Whinash wind farm inquiry, now closed. In the interests of perspective, although Whinash would be the largest onshore UK wind farm to date, someone pointed out in the press that just one daily return flight to the US (Miami) creates three times as much greenhouse gas as Whinash would save! More important than wind power are energy savings and efficiency!

### **Your Own Rooftop Wind Turbine?:**

Many people visiting our campaign stall have asked about domestic wind turbines. There appear to be two main brands of rooftop turbine to give substantial power outputs; Swift and Windsave.

The Swift is rated at 1.5kW and is claimed to produce over 4000kWh/yr at an average site, which is more electricity than a typical household requires - excess goes into the grid and you get paid for it. The manufacturer estimates that the Swift price will reduce to around £2500 during 2006. A smaller 1kW model is also to be released. <http://www.renewabledevices.com/>.

The Windsave brand is rated at 1kW - this looks a less well designed product but their current price is said to be around £1000. I have heard a couple of negative comments - lack of test data and an

instance of a Windsave customer having had his turbine installed one year ago but still awaiting the control box. <http://www.windsave.com/>

Marvellous developments - need to be the new status symbol!

**Campaigning on-street or at events:**

Don't forget we can provide the layout and advise on getting vinyl signs made to any dimensions to suit a table or stall (similar to those in photo on our Campaigning page), also high quality white metal "A-boards" 1m high, with our colour graphics and wording.

**Speak to Your Council?:**

Where does your local council (borough, district or county) stand on climate change? Most, if not all, councils have a Sustainable Development Officer (although, in my experience, the telephone receptionist has never heard of him/her!) and some larger ones have an officer dedicated to climate change. Enquire how much of the electricity used in their premises is purchased from a "green" supplier, and whether their vehicles are fuel efficient or use biodiesel.

The shining example of a council with an advanced climate change strategy is Woking:  
<http://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/climatechangestrategy>

Hope you are all finding extra ways to Do Your Bit (all now on "green" electricity?!).  
Spread the word wherever you can - e.g. if you have friends or contacts who may be sympathetic to the cause, forward this e-mail to them!

Do keep in touch with any feedback or comment and let us know if we can provide any assistance.

Regards  
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