

Net Zero Strategy in Worthing and Nationally

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Worthing Herald Article

21st October 2021

Ahead of Glasgow's Conference of Parties, COP26, campaigners are building on progress already made by national and local government. Zero Hour, the science-led climate and nature campaign, has gained my agreement to call for three COP outcomes as part of the UK's efforts at the climate summit and at the United Nations biodiversity summit.

1. Create a joint strategy for climate and nature
2. Commit to the carbon budget for 1.5 degrees C, and
3. Going nature positive by 2030.

Worthing is one of many towns dedicated to becoming carbon neutral as soon as possible.

Nationally, serious discussion was started by Margaret Thatcher, following the work of Sir Crispin Tickell. Labour government did much in 2008. Since then, greater progress has been made: there is much more to do.

The economy grew by three quarters over the past thirty years; emissions fell by over 40%. Carbon emission in power generation is down by two thirds in ten years; renewable electricity generation is up four times.

Environmental transition and economic change will match the scale of the industrial revolution over two hundred years ago. Change has happened before.

Before my grandparents were born, most people working for money outside the home were in one of three occupations that just about vanished: agricultural labouring, domestic service and the transport industry looking after horses.

In a lifetime, 600,000 deep coal mining jobs went, and equivalent numbers in town gas production and in mechanical telephone exchanges. Two million posts in typing pools evaporated when the personal computer turned us all into type writers, with no strike nor newspaper article.

The green economy will support up to half a million jobs in the next ten years. Believe the costs of key technologies will reduce, just as offshore wind has become economic. Electric vehicles and heat pumps will soon be more affordable, with subsidies in the short term, not forever.

Progressive change in home heating will become affordable. Appropriate technologies are needed for flats, homes with gardens and for places where district heating is possible. Change should be within your means and fair.

It may be easy to write about our county and our country becoming cleaner, greener and more innovative. The hard work will be in our commercial companies, colleges and training courses.

Air source and ground source heating requires new skills, new technologies and changing the way business is done. Over the next twenty years, just about every car and every boiler will be replaced. Nature's survival requires those changes in countries around the world.

Our eco systems need it. Succeeding generations can criticise us and our predecessors for doing too little, too late. Now we know what needs doing.

I may be ahead of some in what I say. Others can accuse me of being behind. It was always thus. Let us learn from each other and encourage each other.

Natural disasters in our country can be bad. Coastal or inland flooding and devastating storms might come our way. In the past there were ice ages. Countries abroad risk being wrecked by sea level rise, droughts, cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes and earthquakes. Climate change deniers have reduced the volume of their doubts.

Life for most was more risky and less certain before the industrial revolution and before the prosperity and relative security of the social market economy and open democracy. Population growth has added to the strains on our natural world. That growth comes from longer lives and from lower childhood mortality.

The Net Zero strategy must succeed. Let us work together.