

2. Some Solutions

The issue: we have put a layer of gases into the atmosphere which reflects heat radiating from Earth.

The solution is to reduce these gas emissions as much as possible and draw down the gases we have already put up there. Whilst we reduce fossil fuel use everywhere until alternatives are in use we must also adapt to the changes that are now bound to happen.

Despite this view being no longer controversial emissions are still expected to rise above the current 50bn tonnes pa and be 16% higher by 2030. All solutions are needed and include:-

Regulation and funding through international agreements and individual government decisions;

The UN appointed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to provide evidence on climate science, emissions mitigation and adaptation measures. It recently summarised 14,000 studies on the changing climate and its report will inform negotiations at the COP26 in Glasgow. It is hoped that at this conference countries will agree on ways to commit to reduction and adaptation measures including funding for poorer countries, especially as they have barely contributed to the problem.

Individual countries also make their own internal decisions such as banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, permitting the development of renewable energy, amending tax rules, investing in hydrogen R&D, deciding not to fund coal power plants (China) etc. etc.

Technical developments are numerous. They include renewable energies (wind, solar, hydro etc) which are now the cheapest source of energy in most parts of the world. Floating wind farms have recently been developed which creates many more potential sites. Alongside this battery storage is increasing e.g. the UK has more than 16 GW capacity operating, under construction or being planned along with a target of 5GW of low-carbon hydrogen by 2030. (the av. UK electricity demand was 30GW in 2020)

Carbon Capture - a way of drawing down the gases has just started in Iceland. Units work like air-conditioners in reverse collecting carbon on filters which is then dissolved in water and pumped underground where it naturally solidifies. In Texas artificial trees of resin will be built this year which collect carbon 1000 x more efficiently than trees and once saturated only require immersion in water before reuse. The carbon can become fuel by adding hydrogen or used to create carbon fibres to replace energy-intensive cement.

Individual actions by authorities, NGO's and companies. Individual actions have an essential part to play. Awareness and willingness is high (73% of G20 adults think we are reaching 'tipping points' and e.g. over 90% of people in Indonesia, South Africa and China are 'willing to do more to protect nature and climate'. (Ipsos Mori May 2021)). In the UK we must burn less energy, eat less meat (UK down 17% in 10 years), travel less (or actively) and buy fewer new items. Choosing how we spend our money will direct commerce the way we want it to go and campaigning, which is essential, will influence power.

Organisations everywhere are creating other solutions. Here are a few:

In Columbia, Canada they have introduced a carbon tax on transport, heating and electricity for all users to reduce consumption but returns all the money back to its citizens via its tax rates.

Friends of the Earth and other litigants took Royal Dutch Shell to court in the Hague which ordered it to cut its global carbon emissions by 45% by the end of 2030 compared with 2019 levels.

Infinite Power, a British-Australian company is producing energy from decaying radioisotopes at Sellafield, Cumbria which could become the cheapest electricity on the planet.

Andrew 'Twiggy' Forest, an Australian metals magnate, is on target to provide 270GW of renewable energy worldwide through one of his companies

The Mekong Delta authorities are re-training farmers whose land will be submerged
HAV a company in Bedford UK has developed a 100-seater airship that is commercially viable for inter-city travel. It will take off and land near urban areas and cut emissions by 90% compared with jets.

The rate and range of developments give me hope that we will avoid the worst outcomes of this crisis.