The chair asked you to make sure your phones were turned off. I do hope you have, not least because the use of smartphones, the Internet and computers generally accounts for about 10% of global energy usage. By 2030 it’s [forecast](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06610-y) to amount to more than a fifth – 21% – of the energy produced in the world. That’s some carbon footprint.

Already, our computers and phones are sucking up the same amount of energy as air travel. I’m not saying don’t use the Internet. I’m just pointing out that there’s no such thing as an energy-free lunch.

Now, the title of this meeting is a tad ambitious: “How to protect the environment”. I haven’t got a magic formula. But I hope that a Marxist approach, a materialist approach, will shed some light.

First, though, a trigger warning. At some point in this speech I will talk in a non-hostile manner about nuclear power and GM foods.

You’d be forgiven for thinking there were just two sides to the debate about the environment: Extinction Rebellion on the one hand, and climate change deniers on the other.

If that really is the choice, we’ve lost the battle already.

Extinction Rebellion wants the government to [reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025](http://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/). Really.

Let’s look at the greenhouse gases, as [listed by NASA](https://climatekids.nasa.gov/greenhouse-cards/), in order, I think, [of abundance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenhouse_gas). That list starts with water vapour. Water vapour. So don’t boil water. It goes on to carbon dioxide, which, and I quote, “comes from decaying and living organisms”; so apart from abandoning fossil fuels altogether, don’t let plants decay, and try to avoid decaying yourself. Thirdly there’s methane: produced by a range of activity, including normally functioning wetlands, raising cattle, using natural gas, mining coal – oh, and farming rice, too; so drain the marshes, stop using gas, stop eating meat, cut out the coal and say no to risotto.

There is an agenda here, and it is explicitly **anti-growth**. The Green Party [calls for de-industrialisation](https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/in.html): “The scale of industrial production worldwide must reduce if we are to live in the UK and globally within environmental limits,” it says. Such Green opposition to the EU as there was (and there wasn’t much) centred around the misconception that the EU was dedicated to growth.

On the other side you have the giant global monopolies, dedicated to the pursuit of profit in an era where the rate of profit is falling. And their apologists, who claim that there is no climate change at all. Or at least, that any change is not being caused by human activity. Or if it is, then hardly at all.

Both extreme sides of this argument have a couple of things in common. First they are unscientific, however much they may cherry pick scientific findings that appear to back up their arguments. Second, they are both anti-people, anti-human.

**We say that the answers** to today’s and tomorrow’s environmental problems will be found in science, in a material approach to reality. But that doesn’t mean that everything any scientist says is right, nor that the scientific consensus is always right – especially about the future.

Science tells us that we have to reduce net carbon emissions to zero within the next 20 or 30 years or the likelihood is that global warming will become, in our lifetimes at least, irreversible.

The models used today to forecast climate have been tested thousands of times, refined, used on real data and real knowledge of global temperatures now and in the past, and they are the best guess we have.

So far the global projections made 20 years ago appear not to be too far out.

Science, by the way, does not tell us we have to stop using fossil fuels, or revert to a pre-industrial economy. And it talks about net carbon emissions, not zero carbon emissions. What it does say it that there is a simple equation: if an industry emits 1 tonne of carbon into the atmosphere, it has to find a way of taking 3.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide – [3.67 to be precise](https://thinkprogress.org/the-biggest-source-of-mistakes-c-vs-co2-c0b077313b/) – out of the atmosphere to achieve net zero emissions.

Can this be done? Absolutely. If you want an eloquent exposition of why, listen to the physicist who launched the idea that world has to reach net zero carbon emissions – Myles Allen last month on [Life Scientific on Radio 4](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000fgcn). It will take time, and it will cost money, but it can be done. Engineers will enjoy the challenge. Shareholders will bemoan the effect on dividends.

But it will only be done with a political understanding of the obstacles and political control of the process. The free market, monopoly capitalism, won’t do it. We need a number of technological revolutions, for sure. But we also need political revolution.

That’s not an abstract proposition. If the people of the world want to save the world, they are going to have to take it over, country by country.

Now, the subtitle of this meeting **is why the EU doesn’t help**.

First, let me state what is obvious to some but ignored by many. The EU is the only national or supranational government that has the principles of free market capitalism written into its founding charter. Its default approach is that the free market works.

And that is precisely why it has been a disaster for the environment. I want to show why because having left – formally at least – we absolutely must not repeat its mistakes.

Let’s start with global warming (what else!). The EU loves global warming because the emissions that contribute to it cross national boundaries. That allows it to muscle in and take over from national governments. And that’s what happened with carbon dioxide, CO2, emissions and the dieselgate scandal.

The origins of the diesel scandal go back to the 1970s, when the European market for heavier oil products was shrinking as households turned to natural gas for heating, and a raft of French nuclear power stations started coming onstream. Desperate for new markets, the oil industry started looking at the market for diesel cars.

As luck would have it – luck for the oil companies, that is – emission-led global warming started to become a political issue in the 1980s (it had been a scientific issue for at least a century), leading to [the formation of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](https://www.ipcc.ch/about/history/) (the IPCC) in 1988.

I say luck because from an oil industry perspective it was: all the focus at the time as on CO2. There was no attempt to control so-called “[black carbon](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Black-Carbon-Web-Single_1.pdf)”, sooty particles, known at the time to be harmful to health but not identified as a greenhouse emissions, nor nitrogen oxides.

But with the climate panic in full swing, human health took a back seat. The EU duly switched to encouraging diesel in a big way.

That brought us rising quantities of black carbon, which wasn’t even listed as a climate problem in the UN’s Kyoto Protocol when it was adopted in 1997. Scientists [now believe](https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jgrd.50171) that that black carbon from a variety of sources is second only to carbon dioxide as a contributor to global warming. It’s a killer, too.

And then there’s NOx (nitric oxide and nitrogen oxide, also nitrous oxide). For years (2000 to 2014) EU [regulations](https://dieselnet.com/standards/eu/ld.php#stds) and the standards known as Euro 3, 4 and 5 allowed diesels to emit three times as much NOx as petrol cars. Now – we’re on to Euro 6 – it’s just 33% more. That has consequences for health and the environment. Nitric oxide and nitrogen oxide are serious atmospheric pollutants, leading to smog and acid rain. Nitrous oxide is a powerful greenhouse gas.

But hey, 20 years ago the EU confidently dictating policy. Diesel was given tax advantages by governments across the EU (though not in Britain), and diesel car use rocketed: in Western Europe it rose from 13.8% of passenger car registrations in 1990 to 53.1% in 2014.

Even now, with diesel mired in scandal, the latest figures from European car makers say it accounted for [35.1% of new car sales](https://www.acea.be/statistics/tag/category/share-of-diesel-in-new-passenger-cars) in the EU as a whole in 2018.

And so **did the EU’s shift to diesel help to reduce global warming?** No, not according to two researchers from Luxembourg and Germany who looked at the total figures: they say it added to the problem, mainly because of the large number of diesels that entered the market not fitted with particulate filters (also, they point to the higher carbon footprint involved in the production and transport of diesel).

And all the while, it turned out, the car manufacturers were fiddling their figures. We’ve written about this in [*Workers*](https://www.cpbml.org.uk/news/volkswagen-scandal-exposes-deadly-consequences-loss-sovereignty). Briefly: even without the cheating devices designed to know when the a car was being tested, the EU testing regime was absurdly lax. Manufacturers could even conduct the tests in their own facilities.

What wonderful tests these were! Cars could be stationary for 24% of the test time, and decelerating for 16% of the time! And once an authoriser tester anywhere in the EU had produced a set of figures, they had to be accepted in all the other 27 countries of the EU. That’s the single market for you.

Still, the oil companies are happy. And so are the European car companies, because overwhelmingly the diesel cars sold were produced by them. Japan turned to hybrid cars instead, and achieved much greater CO2 savings. Not only that, but with hybrid and electric cars the future, they gained a march in technology development. After making hay for a couple of decades, the European car manufacturers are now desperately trying to catch up.

The EU banned cheat devices in 2007, but never checked to see whether they were being used. It said it left that up to national governments. UK governments have never said whether they carried out any checks. Germany, Spain, Slovakia and the Czech Republic all said they had not done so.

Unbelievably, it was left to the US’s Environmental Protection Agency across the Atlantic to conduct the independent tests on VWs which showed overall emission levels upwards of 40% higher than the official levels. And NOx emissions 40 times the US limit.

It wasn’t just VW. Mercedes, too. That’s German efficiency for you.

There’s a wonderful – or should I say disgraceful – chart in the [European Court of Auditors’ report](https://www.eca.europa.eu/lists/ecadocuments/brp_vehicle_emissions/brp_vehicle_emissions_en.pdf) on the scandal. It shows the divergence between test results for CO2 emissions and real world results for new passenger cars from 2001 to 2016. In 2001, real world emissions were 7% above the results from official testing. By 2016 that gap had soared to 40%.

So what are we left with after 20-odd years of the EU’s flagship environmental policy? An avoidable increase in global warming. A growing technological gap with Japan. Untold damage to human health.

And large numbers of car owners in places like London who from October next year, if they live between the North and South Circular Roads and run a diesel made before 2015, will effectively be unable to able to drive the cars the government encouraged them to buy – unless they pay £4450 a year for the privilege.

Oh, and we’re left with cities like London falling foul of the EU’s pollution standards because their streets are full of cars produced and tested under the lax EU regime belching out levels of pollutants way above what the tests said they were. 60% of the roads in Britain exceed WHO pollution standards. If you live in a town or city in Britain you are [25 times as likely](https://www.itv.com/news/2020-01-27/more-people-die-from-polluted-air-than-car-crashes-in-uk-towns-and-cities/) to die from exposure to air pollution as in a car crash.

Meanwhile, the EU poses as an ecowarrier holding Britain to account over its pollution record. It’s truly sickening. It even initiated [legal action against Britain](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/IP_17_1288), and other countries, for failing to fine Volkswagen!

This is a public health scandal, an environmental scandal and it is a perfect image of capitalism. Volkswagen’s Michael Horn [told a congressional hearing](https://www.latimes.com/business/autos/la-fi-hy-vw-hearing-20151009-story.html) in Washington that it was wrong for companies to put profits before people. But calling on capitalism to put people before profit is, as we wrote in [Workers](https://www.latimes.com/business/autos/la-fi-hy-vw-hearing-20151009-story.html), like calling on gravity to push water uphill.

**So here is one clear lesson** about how to control pollution and threats to the environment: never, ever rely on the corporations who make or sell a product to produce accurate real-world figures about their effect on the environment.

**And another:** a sovereign state charged with maintaining the health and safety of its people can never, ever outsource its responsibilities to companies or supranational bodies – especially the EU, which has capitalism written into its constitution.

OK. Enough about Volkswagen.

Now, who said this?

“80% of our environmental laws come from the European Union (EU). These laws may be weakened, removed, or harder to enforce if we’re outside the EU. Therefore, Brexit could pose a serious threat to our natural environment and our health.” Unbelievably, it was [Friends of the Earth](https://friendsoftheearth.uk/brexit).

They obviously haven’t been reading the columns written by self-proclaimed remainer George Monbiot. Here’s a selection of his thoughts on the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy: [June 2016](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/21/waste-cash-leavers-in-out-land-subsidie) – “All the good things the EU has done for nature are more than counteracted by this bureaucratic idiocy.” [10 October 2018](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/10/brexit-leaving-eu-farming-agriculture): “I’m a remainer, but there’s one result of Brexit I can’t wait to see: leaving the EU’s common agricultural policy. This is the farm subsidy system that spends [€50bn (£44bn) a year on achieving none of its objectives](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/cap-post-2013/graphs/graph1_en.pdf). It is among the most powerful drivers of environmental destruction in the northern hemisphere.”

In a nutshell, the EU subsidises landowners by paying them for owning or using land. Just as long as they are not smallholders: you need to own at least 5 hectares, about 12 acres. Note it has to be open land, so get rid of ponds, wide hedges, trees big enough to form a canopy. As Monbiot says, it’s “a €55 billion incentive to destroy wildlife habitats”.

[A joint document](https://www.theriverstrust.org/media/2016/10/Joint_Brexit_Paper_Final-2.pdf) from among others the Rivers Trust and the Countryside Alliance produced three months after the 2016 referendum makes more or less the same point. The Common Agricultural Policy has seen “high costs to consumers, inefficient land use, subsidies for land ownership and serious environmental damage…”.

They go on to criticise the central thrust of the CAP: “Many of the current subsidy payments are to compensate farmers and land managers for reducing greater levels of pollution and habitat destruction,” they note. “This is an absurdity […] in any other industry, polluters, rather than the polluted, should pay. Environmental damage should be subject to regulatory restraints and criminal penalties. Subsidies should be paid for delivery of additional services to society.” Quite.

Here’s another quote to savour: “It is largely thanks to 45 years of European laws on industrial pollution, water quality, nature protection and clean air that the environment we live in has improved.” That’s Friends of the Earth Scotland, by the way. Idiocy devolved is still idiocy.

So how come [a *Times* investigation](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pollution-no-river-in-england-is-safe-for-swimming-q8thdx678) last year reported that “Dangerous pollutants in England’s waterways have reached their highest levels since modern testing began…with no river in the country now certified as safe for swimmers.” All thanks to European laws (!).

If that’s so, how come greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in the EU overall have been rising since 2012, with the latest [official EU figures](https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-union-greenhouse-gas-inventory-2019), for 2017, (Table ES. 5) showing emissions higher than they’ve been since 2005?

Reflect on that a little. Globally, [around a third of all greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture](https://www.nature.com/news/one-third-of-our-greenhouse-gas-emissions-come-from-agriculture-1.11708). Unless we get to grips with that, low or zero net carbon will remain a pipe dream. That means using all the tools at our disposal, including GM crops and gene editing.

But irrational fears – and they are irrational; thirty years ago, when GM was new, the fears were more understandable; not now – irrational fears have held up progress in the application of GM technology.

Outside Europe, GM crops have been widely planted over the past couple of decades. Currently they are used in about 12% of the world’s cropland. Billions of people have eaten GM crops, multiple times, and scientists have conducted [more than 130,000 studies](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=GM+%2B+gene) on GM technologies, and there is [**no evidence of physical harm**, no evidence of changes to human chromosomes](http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2015/will-gmos-hurt-my-body/), from eating GM food.

(It’s hard to see how there could be. Every time you eat a banana, you ingest literally thousands of billions of genes, more than half of which are completely foreign to humans.)

**GM crops could significantly lower farming’s carbon and greenhouse footprint**. Yet we’re still living with the EU’s ancient, 17-year-old directive on GM foods – and with the European Court of Justice’s [unscientific ruling](https://www.cpbml.org.uk/news/take-control-future-biotech) that the new CRISP-R gene editing technique falls within orbit of that directive.

I’ll say it again: if you want to look at real, proven damage to the environment, look at the EU. If EU environmental policy is so great, how come populations of Europe’s farmland birds are [in freefall](https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/vanishing-europe%E2%80%99s-farmland-birds)– down 55% in the past three decades and at their lowest since records began?

Part of the problem – just a part but an important one – is the EU’s approach to companies that transgress its laws: the remedy with the water companies is to impose financial penalties – such as the record [£126 million](https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ofwat%E2%80%99s-final-decision-to-impose-a-financial-penalty-on-Southern-Water-S....pdf) imposed by Ofwat on Southern Water in June last year for dumping sewage into beaches, rivers and streams.

The EU loves fines. They garner headlines and give the impression, the illusion, that it is doing something about pollution. Not so. Companies just treat the fines as part of the cost of doing business – and pass that cost on to the consumer. Once again, the consumer pays.

Fines don’t deter large companies. Moving away from the environment for a second, the EU has fined Google a total of $9 billion [since 2017](https://www.wired.com/story/eu-hits-google-third-billion-dollar-fine-so-what/). No problem.

**There’s a lesson** for the environment here. Stop fining companies, or at least stop just fining. Instead, make pollution or Volkswagen-style environmental cheating by a company a criminal offence. Lock up boards of directors. Take the profit motive out of the provision of water.

Now I want to **look at some aspects of risk**.

Is the environment, including action to mitigate the effects of climate change, at risk following Britain’s withdrawal from the EU? The straight, commonsense answer is not at all. That should be obvious, yet to many it’s not.

But **let’s be scientific about this**. Given that after 45 years of EU membership most of our environmental legislation has come through EU directives and regulations, is there a risk that not all of it will be transposed into or preserved in UK law and will be properly enforced?

Forget for a second that much of this legislation failed to achieve its stated objectives. Forget for a second how polluting the EU is. Scientifically, you can’t say there’s no risk at all. But just talking about risk in the abstract is absurd. How great is the risk?

The environmental catastrophists love to talk about risk in the abstract, especially the risks of Brexit. Friends of the Earth (those false friends, again) paid good money in 2018 [for a “risk analysis”](https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Environment%20and%20Brexit%2C%20C%20Burns%20Et%20al%2C%20March%202018%20web_0.pdf) of UK environmental policy post-Brexit. Note, **there was no opportunity analysis**.

This so-called analysis concluded, among other things, that under any Brexit scenario – from crashing out to a Canada-style deal – Habitats and Birds were at “very high risk”. How come? (Especially given that birds and habitats are demonstrably at extremely high risk inside the EU.)

Dig into the report and you will see that the “very high risk” status is not because there are any plans to tear up environmental legislation, or withdraw from the intergovernmental [Ramsar Convention](https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ramsar-convention/) on wild birds. No, the authors claim “very high risk” partly because the Conservative party is deemed to be environmentally unfriendly but mainly because the EU is not there to police our government!

That’s not a scientifically determined risk. It’s just political prejudice coupled with an assumption that the people of Britain will never demand and enforce higher environmental standards than the EU.

The catastrophists play fast and loose with risk in other areas. **Take nuclear power**. How risky is it, actually?

There are lots of statistics around, some more sound than others. But let’s take an [analysis](https://doi.org/10.1021/es3051197) by Pushker Kharecha and James E. Hansen published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2013.

I’m using this partly because James E. Hansen is famous for kick-starting US awareness about global warming in a landmark presentation to a Congressional committee in 1988. Whatever he is, he’s not a climate change denier.

What the two researchers found, assuming quite reasonably that fossil fuels would have been used instead, is that between 1970 and 2009 the use of nuclear power around the world prevented around 1.8 million human deaths.

They note, incidentally, that had Germany never used nuclear power, pollution from other power sources would have killed 117,000 Germans up to 2009. (According to the European Commission’s [latest report](https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-union-greenhouse-gas-inventory-2019), in 2017 Germany alone was responsible for over a quarter – 26.4% – of the EU’s entire energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. France, with its raft of nuclear stations: 4.2%.)

Yet in response to the Fukushima disaster in 2011 Germany – a country with form in irrationality – stopped all nuclear development, closed 8 of its 17 nuclear power stations and is set to close all of them by the end of 2022.

I say Fukushima disaster. And it was a disaster, an underwater earthquake, whose resulting tsunami killed an estimated 15,000 people. The tsunami, or should I say poor practice at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, led to an exposed core and the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1988.

That’s a serious nuclear incident. But it was hardly a massive nuclear disaster. By 2015, according to the World Health Organization, [an estimated 574 people](https://ourworldindata.org/what-was-the-death-toll-from-chernobyl-and-fukushima) who had been living near the plant or working at the plant died – 573 of them from stress and privation incurred through a botched evacuation.

I say botched. Three days after the tsunami, and with a government evacuation order in place, 800 hospital patients were put on buses without medical care, water or food. For some the bus ride lasted 48 hours. [50 elderly patients](https://www.clinicaloncologyonline.net/article/S0936-6555%2816%2900005-4/pdf) died during that evacuation alone of hypothermia, deterioration of existing conditions, and dehydration.

Only one of the 574 deaths was caused by radiation. (A further radiation death of a worker was reported in 2018. More workers at the plant might still die prematurely; but as yet there is no evidence of elevated radiation-related mortality, now or in the future, in the general population.)

**There’s a lesson here, too:** don’t follow the newspaper headlines or social media hysteria – look at the science, look at the facts.

How to protect the environment? When it comes to energy, **keep on with nuclear**, or the task will be impossible. Build more nuclear stations. Put money behind the idea of small nuclear reactors, where Britain – and [Rolls Royce in particular](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-7924867/Rolls-Royce-aims-mini-nuclear-reactors-running-2029.html) – is a pioneer. Invest in carbon capture and storage for coal, free of endless bureaucracy involved in getting the EU’s permission for it.

**There are many calls to decarbonise the UK economy**, in other words, to become a net zero-emitter of carbon. Labour Party policy is to do this by 2030. And, what’s more to do it without nuclear. It doesn’t say without nuclear, but with all Britain’s working reactors set to end their lifetimes by 2030 and [Labour opposed to building a fleet of new ones](https://www.energyvoice.com/otherenergy/nuclear/208452/limited-future-for-nuclear-if-labour-gets-in/), yes, without nuclear.

By any stretch of the imagination, that is lunacy, as the industrial union GMB has pointed out. (Though, shamefully, not Unite.) Full decarbonisation just won’t happen by 2050 without nuclear.

OK, it could happen without nuclear. But only if we stop driving anything at all, even electric cars, wash just once a week, ban all power showers, replace all gas cookers with electric and stop gas and oil central heating. For starters.

**Cars**. The government now wants to ban the sale of all new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2035. It’s a great idea. On the side of the angels. But it will never happen. Certainly not by 2035. Or if it does, only the very rich will be able to buy an electric car.

In June last year the head of earth sciences at the Natural History Museum and his colleagues [wrote to the Committee on Climate Change](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/press-office/press-releases/leading-scientists-set-out-resource-challenge-of-meeting-net-zer.html), the UK government’s official advisory body. They said that to convert all road use to electric cars “we would need to produce just under two times the current total annual world cobalt production, nearly the entire world production of neodymium, three quarters the world’s lithium production and at least half of the world’s copper production”.

Oh, and increase electricity generation by 20%. Do this through wind farms and you use up another year’s global production of copper and 10 years’ worth of global supply of neodymium and dysprosium. Do it through solar power and you’ll need five times the current installed capacity and use up thirty years of tellurium production.

And the cost would be staggering, even without estimating how much demand for these metals on such a scale would increase global prices. Better to put real money into hydrogen fuel cell technology.

We know how not to decarbonise the economy: **by exporting the carbon footprint**, getting goods made abroad. That’s cheating the figures, looking good while adding hugely to the real carbon footprint.

The BBC website has a [fascinating story](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35521559) from 2016 headlined “Can an English suit be made in Cambodia?”. It tells how the suits for the English football team at Euro 2016 were made. English suits. Listen carefully. You couldn’t make this up.

The suits were actually designed by M&S in England. But even before M&S suits get made in Cambodia they travel round the world. The wool comes from Australia, and typically is then sent to China for processing, then on to Italy to be dyed, then to Romania or Poland to be spun into yarn. Then it comes to Yorkshire to be woven into cloth. The cloth is then sent to Cambodia to be made into a suit, and then shipped back to Britain where it’s sold as a “100% British cloth suit”. Yes, 100% British cloth because the cloth was woven in Britain.

Why Cambodia? Because it’s cheap. And because it’s one of the poorest 48 countries in the world and so makes the EU’s list of countries that are allowed to export [anything except arms](https://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/everything-arms) to the EU without tariffs of any kind and without any restriction on quantity.

It’s a policy that has allowed the EU to pose as the friend of developing countries while making it uneconomic to make clothes in Europe and exporting its carbon footprint.

(It goes without saying, or should do, that most of these countries, including Cambodia, are among the most corrupt in the world, with [the worst labour and health and safety standards](https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/11/cambodia-labor-laws-fail-protect-garment-workers). And [pay well below a living wage](https://labourbehindthelabel.net/campaigns/living-wage/), even for Cambodia.)

**So, how do we protect the environment?** In his broadcast on Radio 4 climate scientist Myles Allen was crystal clear. Individualism is no solution: the world will never achieve net zero carbon by relying on changing the habits and attitudes of its 8 billion inhabitants. **That sounds right to me.**

It will take political action to force the energy companies, for example, to offset all their emissions and factor that into their prices and into lower profits – after all, as he said, nuclear power operators have to factor in disposal and storage of their waste products for thousands of years…so do the same for fossil fuels.

But remember dieselgate. Leave it to the EU and its capital-friendly testing regimes and we’ll get official zero carbon but in reality pump out more of the stuff. It will take independent testing, repeated at random intervals, combined with real penalties for infringement.

And, I would add, stop relying on carbon-heavy global supply chains. Cut down the food miles, the clothing miles, the white goods miles. **Make things here**.

And for goodness sake **grow stuff here** – especially crops that need a lot of water, because quite a lot of water literally drops from the skies over Britain. Use science to grow stuff better, with fewer nitrate fertilisers and pesticides, something that will be much easier away from the EU and its anti-GM, anti-gene editing, backward, reactionary, anti-science, anti-trade union Court of Justice.

**Take some simple political decisions**, like not importing manufactured goods from any country where the energy used is produced in a carbon-neutral fashion.

Make companies responsible for all the emissions (and water use) in their products. Make it illegal to sell a product where the carbon emitted in its manufacture has not been offset. It’s very simple.

**To sum up: How do we protect the enviroment?** Easy. Use reason not hysteria. Science not superstition. Steer clear of the EU’s regulatory clutches. Never trust a capitalist monopoly. Take control. **Take control.** Take it back from the EU. Take it back from capitalism. **Take control for ourselves.**

In other words, dear listeners, make a revolution.