

Humanist Climate Action

HUMANIST CLIMATE ACTION

SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the September newsletter of Humanist Climate Action. This summer's heatwave has been a stark reminder of the urgency of the climate crisis.

It's been a reminder, too, that the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked. The parched landscapes and the dried-up rivers and lakes that we see around us, as the result of rising temperatures, also represent the loss of habitats. And the destruction of ecosystems, in turn, undermines the capacity of trees, grasslands, oceans, and wetlands to absorb carbon emissions and protect against extreme weather. Faced with this vicious circle, we continue to urge humanists to take action 'for the one planet we have'. This newsletter suggests some things you can do.

WILL THE GOVERNMENT KEEP 1.5 ALIVE?

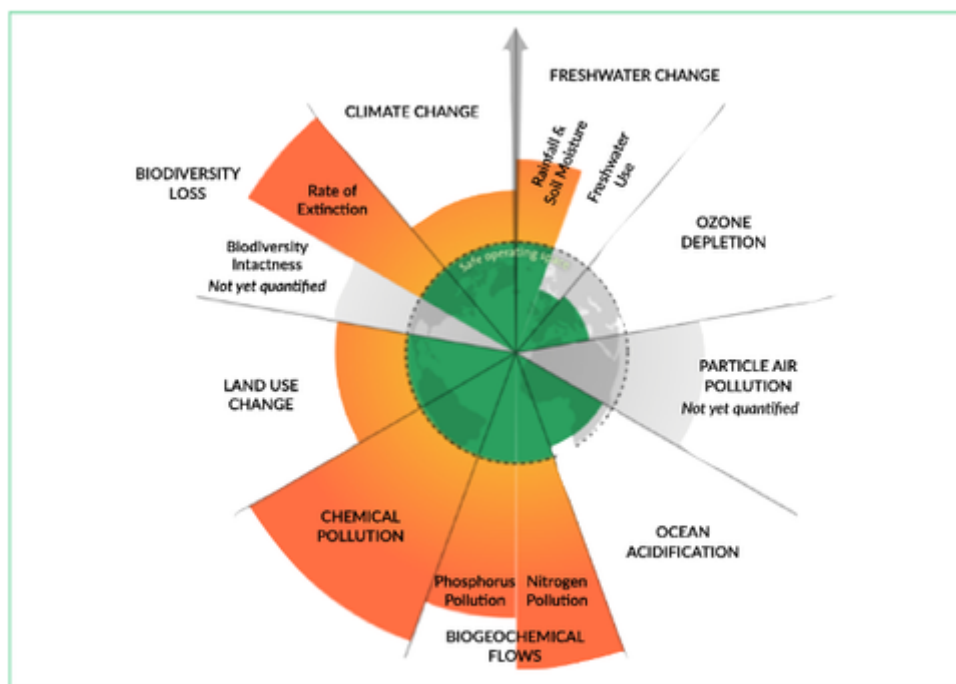
Last October the UK Government published its [strategy for Net Zero](#) in the lead-up to COP26. The Prime Minister declared that this would ‘set the example for other countries to build back greener... as we lead the charge towards global net zero’.

The strategy was criticised at the time by green campaigners as there was little to no commitment to decarbonise our homes, energy needs, or agriculture and meet our commitments within the Paris Climate Accords and our own obligations under the [Climate Change Act 2008](#).

Despite setting new targets to [slash our emissions by 78%](#), now progressively including our share of international shipping and aviation, without a proper plan to deliver these cuts we are still on a trajectory of 2.5-3C warming.

In July, just as we we’re facing our first red alert for record-breaking 40.2C heat, the High Court passed [judgment](#) on a case, brought by Friends of the Earth, ClientEarth, and the Good Law Project, that the strategy was inadequate and unlawful.

The Government is now [ordered](#) to flesh out the details necessary for Parliamentary and public scrutiny by April 2023.



Planetary Boundaries - showing 7 that have breached safe limits

Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre

ZeroHour published the [Ambition Gap report](#). This builds on the [UK Climate Change Committee](#) risk assessments and clearly shows that we need much more from a policy standpoint to limit the crisis and adapt to a climate for which our infrastructure and homes are not ready.

With so much of Net Zero relying on as yet undeveloped carbon capture technologies, the Government's own assessment of the strategy gives only a 50% chance of success. The IPCC has called for rapid reductions in greenhouse gases as cumulative emissions matter. A high emission pathway presents greater risk of breaching catastrophic climate tipping points.

As our new Prime Minister will be announced on 5 September, it is vitally important that climate policy is put top of the agenda. Genuine build back greener policies give hope to address the cost-of-living crisis, proper home insulation, protection from fossil fuel markets, and sustainable agriculture.

Tom McMillen

[WRITE TO YOUR MP](#)

Ask them to press the Government for serious and effective policies to achieve Net Zero. You could refer them to the [Zero Hour](#) campaign for a Climate and Ecology Bill – the legislation that has been proposed in the UK Parliament to address the full extent of the climate and nature crisis.

TAKE ACTION IN THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK



While we must wait for the Government to publish its new strategy, we can still take our own actions to save the planet. While we must be wary of climate tipping points, we can speak up and create societal tipping points for the good of humanity.

We are encouraging humanists to join activities as part of [the Great Big Green Week](#). If there's no event near you, there's lots of help on [how to organise your own community action](#).

When reports say UK emissions have fallen by 44%, we have exported over half those emissions. What changes can you commit to next year to really make a difference?

One of the best ways to create change, and help others to adapt, is to talk about what you are doing. Can you go meat free? Can you holiday by train? Is your home insulated? Can you cycle to work? Can you help biodiversity in your garden?

We're always keen to hear what you're doing, so let us know on our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

...and in London

Some of the members of the Steering Committee of Humanist Climate Action will be getting together in the Great Big Green Week for a humanist-themed event in London. It will be a litter pick, on Saturday 1 October, starting at 14:00 in the south corner of Tavistock Square Gardens and finishing at about 16:00 in Red Lion Square.

We'll be celebrating some of London's precious green spaces – Tavistock Square, Russell Square, Bloomsbury Square and Red Lion Square. We'll also be celebrating some famous humanists, as we meet up at [the sculptured bust of Virginia Woolf](#) in Tavistock Square Gardens and walk, litter picking as we go, to the [bust of Bertrand Russell and the statue of Fenner Brockway](#) in Red Lion Square. And at the end of the walk, Maddy Goodall, the Coordinator of Humanists UK's fantastic [Humanist Heritage](#) project, will give us a talk about some humanist environmentalists.

If you're free then and in striking distance of London, do join us. It will be an opportunity for supporters of Humanist Climate Action to meet one another. Bring your own litter picking equipment if you have any – we can provide some but not a lot. For updates on the arrangements, look on the Facebook page of [Humanist Climate Action Volunteers](#).



INTERVIEW WITH A HUMANIST



In this issue we launch what is intended to be a regular series of interviews with humanists who are involved with or concerned about environmental issues and the climate crisis. To kick off, Lori Marriott, Coordinator of Humanist Climate Action, puts the questions to Richard Norman [pictured], a patron of Humanists UK, author of the book *On Humanism*, and a member of Humanist Climate Action.

Tell us a bit about yourself – how long have you been a humanist?

About 60 years (which tells you my age!). In my first year at university I finally recognised that I couldn't make a coherent case for the Christianity I'd grown up with, and that I needed to work out what I did believe.

How did you come to be interested in environmental concerns?

I think I always have been. In my youthful struggles with religious belief, and my search for a 'religious experience', the closest thing I found was a sense of the wonder and beauty of the natural world.

How do your humanist values lead you to want to take environmental action?

It's grounded in the recognition that we are an integral part of the natural world, and the awareness that our individual lives are part of an ongoing human story – so it matters what kind of world we bequeath to those who will come after us.

Why do you think Humanist Climate Action is an important group?

As humanists we talk a lot about not needing religious belief in order to have ethical values. To be convincing, we need to demonstrate those values in action.

What's your biggest environmental concern?

All the different concerns converge. Climate change leads to species loss, and the loss of trees and green spaces accelerates global heating, so what we need are nature-based solutions to climate change.

What one thing would you encourage people to do to live a greener lifestyle?

It has to be three things: drive cars less, fly less, and buy less stuff.