



NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



Climate change is accelerating – and so is climate denial. How should we respond?

As we go to press with this newsletter, COP30 is taking place in Brazil, at a time of both determination and desperation. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has [warned](#) the Conference that 'a temporary overshoot beyond the 1.5 limit – starting at the latest in the early 2030s – is inevitable', and that '[it's time for implementation](#)'.

Donald Trump will not be in Belém. In his September speech to the United Nations General Assembly he [dismissed](#) the scientific consensus on climate change as a 'green scam', 'the greatest con job ever perpetrated', and 'predictions made by stupid people'. His absence from COP30 may make it easier for the conference to reach agreement, but it's not just from the White House that climate change denial is being ramped up. Here in the UK, Reform-led local councils are [scrapping](#) climate action policies. And the political consensus on Net Zero targets is eroding, with the Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch [claiming](#) that they are

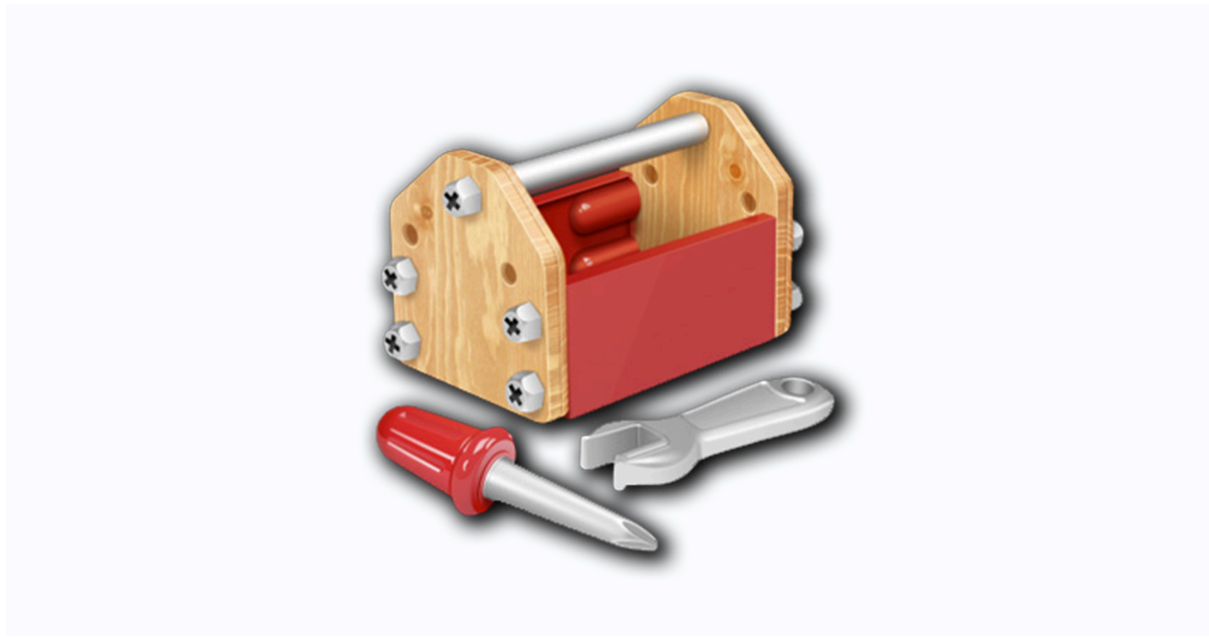
unaffordable, and the Labour Government [increasingly under pressure](#) to justify the cost of transition.

How can we best push back on the rising tide of climate denial? Our Humanist Climate Action [website](#) has facts and suggestions for how to challenge it. The [Royal Society website](#) is one usefully concise and authoritative summary of the scientific evidence. Our [July newsletter](#) included an article on how renewable energy sources are increasingly becoming cheaper than fossil fuels. However, confronting people with the evidence [may not be the best approach](#), especially if it comes across as an attempt to humiliate them and treat them as ignorant.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What works best in your experience? Have you tried talking to a climate denier, and what did you learn about how to do it? We'd love to hear from you. Contact us at climateaction@humanists.uk.

OUR ACTIVISM TOOLKIT



As humanists, we care about evidence, ethics, and the well-being of people and the planet. The climate crisis threatens the future we want to build: one based on reason, fairness, and shared prosperity. That's why Humanist Climate Action has launched the Climate Action Toolkit, designed to help humanist groups connect with climate initiatives, take meaningful action, and show that humanism is a movement that cares deeply for both people and the planet.

The toolkit, piloted at the recent *Humanism in Action* day in Sheffield, will have two distinct parts that can be used separately or sequentially.

The [first module](#) launches today. It provides materials for local groups to have flexible self-led discussions about the environment. The idea is that the sessions explore some data to promote greater understanding about the issues we face, and to think about whether there are any individual actions that participants have not previously considered. The final part of that session could be a discussion about whether there is willingness to become more active, in which case a follow-up session on activism could be arranged.

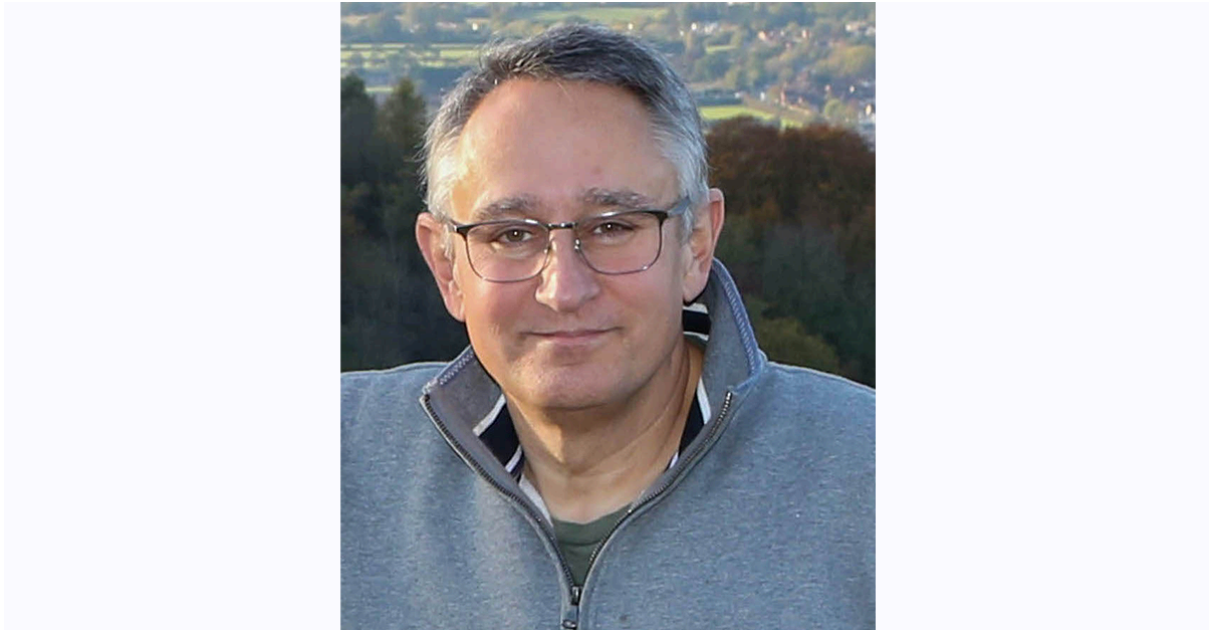
The second module – coming soon – is the activism toolkit. Some groups may be involved in activism already on other issues or feel ready to start with this step. Humanism is about making a difference. While discussion is valuable, real change happens when we take action. By getting involved, your group can show that humanists are active and compassionate and want to learn new skills and strengthen communities.

[Process guidance for humanist group meetings](#), the first module of the toolkit, is available now! If you are a Humanists UK Local Group, you can find it in the Local Groups Resource Hub, so dive in, take action, and let's build a greener, fairer future together.

If you don't want to wait until the new year for the second module and would like to find out how your group can take action on the climate crisis, contact Clare James at clare.james@humanists.uk.

Pauline Element, Clare James, Lori Marriott

INTERVIEW WITH A HUMANIST



Pictured: Martin Horwood. Photo credit: Anna Lythgoe

September is the political party conference season, and this year it gave us a valuable opportunity to talk to **Martin Horwood**, Honorary President of Green Liberal Democrats. Martin was elected as MP for Cheltenham in 2005 and served for ten years. In that time he was active within the Liberal Democrat Party and in Parliament on climate change and environmental issues as well as on other issues of global justice and international affairs. He represented South West England and Gibraltar as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from 2019 until Brexit in 2020, and is now a local councillor in Leckhampton. His career has also included working for what was then the British Humanist Association, as well as spells working for Oxfam and for the Alzheimer's Society.

Martin, tell us a bit about yourself – how long have you been a humanist?

I'm a serial politician: MP, MEP, local councillor. But I've also tended to have jobs that tried to change the world for the better too – from Oxfam to the Alzheimer's Society and long ago for Humanists UK (before it was called that).

I had whatever the equivalent is of an epiphany as a teenager. One crystal clear night, I was staring out into the immense vastness of space from our tiny little spinning mudball. It hit me that, knowing what we now know, how wildly improbable it was that any of the various events or gods revealed to religions on this one little mite of a planet could really have shaped or even understood that vast universe. But also that this idea wasn't incompatible with the real sense of awe and wonder and beauty that I was experiencing.

How did you come to be interested in environmental concerns?

I guess my generation's awareness of just what a vulnerable little thing our planet was coincided with growing political reactions against increasing waste and pollution and alarming news of species loss from around the world. The even more alarming science on climate was still a bit of a footnote in the 80s but safeguarding nature, using clean energy and wasting less all just seemed obviously good anyway. Locally my father helped to launch a campaign to save some precious local green spaces from careless development - a battle we're still fighting today - and with that came the realisation that we can't continue with relentless growth everywhere without losing some of the things that make our neighbourhoods and communities worth living in.

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

Humanists are driven by a love of the people and planet we inhabit here and now and the beauty and variety of life that we see and which science increasingly reveals to us. We can't set that aside in the pursuit of power or material wealth, or seek consolation in another life. So we have to nurture and understand that planet. If the science and our own eyes tell us things are going badly wrong, we're morally obliged to act.

Do you think it is important for Humanist Climate Action to exist as a part of Humanists UK?

It can't be a bad thing!

What's your biggest environmental concern?

I'm getting really alarmed by the rate of acceleration being seen in the climate science now and the threat this poses to us and the natural systems we and other species depend on for life. Obviously that means mitigation needs to be stepped up even faster than we thought but the penny still hasn't dropped amongst decision-makers that it also means adaptation planning doesn't just need to be in place for the climate impacts we see today but needs to start preparing us for an even more volatile future.

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

Try out more buses and trains. Cars and planes contribute more to most people's personal pollution than anything else and corrupt our planning and economy, damaging our ecology and human health. But I've surprised myself at how quick and how much more relaxing buses are to take into our congested town centre and how much more enjoyable and productive it is to take a long train journey instead of a plane flight. Enjoy!

BOOK REVIEW



Blue Machine, by Helen Czerski

Penguin Random House, 2023

ISBN: 9781804991961

In *Blue Machine* Helen Czerski uses a series of fascinating and beautifully told stories to delve into deep seas and vast oceans. The overarching theme of the book presents the earth not as a series of land masses surrounded by water but as an ocean planet, where the animals, weather and everything that humans do is influenced by our watery environment, whether we know it or not.

Czerski's accounts of various ocean research projects are compelling and terrifying in equal measure, as you begin to understand the sheer power and impact that this planet-wide interconnected system has. Part one focuses on how the blue machine works – luckily you don't need to brush up on your physics, chemistry and biology as the science, though complex, is accessible. Part two centres on the messengers, passengers and voyagers of the ocean – from tiny organisms like phytoplankton to the largest creatures on earth. Finally in part three, Czerski draws our attention to our own relationship with the ocean and what that could and should look like in the future. Ultimately she calls for greater understanding and greater care for the engine that drives so many of the processes of life on our planet.

'You can't protect what you don't understand. And you won't, if you don't care.' *Lacy Veach, Nasa astronaut, quoted on page 363*

Reading this book, you will travel the world. While this usually means far flung cities, jungles and mountain ranges, this time you will be travelling the vast environments that make up the majority of our pale blue dot.

Lori Marriott

Helen Czerski is a patron of Humanists UK, and spoke about her book at the Humanists UK Convention this year.

ONE SMALL THING

Don't buy something - Do something



For most of us Christmas will be a time spent with those we love and wish to spoil. The last thing I want to do is stop the fun, but the impact of the season can be reduced with a little thought.

Often Christmas is a time when families ask for items they really need, so the environment is only one consideration. However, where this is not the case my experience is that adults and children appreciate the time they spend with you doing something together.

Parents are constrained by taking their kids somewhere they will all like, but you could tailor a day out to one child reflecting their individual interests.

Adults have individual interests that are subsumed in family life. The outing that reminds them that they have specific passions will be remembered with joy.

The people who may prefer not to do something with you are parents of young children. For them the treat is having time together. Offer to have the kids stay overnight or babysit for an evening and contribute to the cost of a meal out if you are able.

There are so many ways to celebrate without us all filling our rubbish bins and charity shops with gifts that are not needed and frequently not appreciated. Now is the time to start plotting.

Pauline Element

YOUR FEEDBACK

We welcome feedback and responses to HCA newsletters. We aim to exemplify the humanist commitment to rational discussion and debate. You can contact us at climateaction@humanists.uk. All newsletters to date can be found on the [Humanist Climate Action website](#). We aim to produce a newsletter every two months.

As always, all signed contributions to the newsletter represent simply the views of the individual writers and are not necessarily endorsed by either Humanist Climate Action or Humanists UK.