

A conservative green revolution

Yesterday I pointed to the dangers of net zero enthusiasts backing ways of life and products they do not adopt themselves but require others to do. Today I ask, what does make sense and what is a saleable green policy?

The UK has advanced on the road to net zero for electricity generation. This should be one of the easiest ways to journey to less fossil fuel use. It is not however a good idea to do so by coming to rely more and more on imports from the EU, when they in turn rest heavily on Russian gas and German and Polish coal. Our first aim should be to get back to self sufficiency in electrical power for environmental and strategic reasons.

We should also have more uninterruptible renewable power in the mix and less unreliable wind and solar. Another pump storage scheme would greatly help flexibility and avoidance of power cuts. Water power more generally is more reliable and wind by harnessing water flows down rivers or the power of the regular tides and waves. We need much more capacity if the government's ambition electrical revolution is to sweep on. I doubt we can make do without combined cycle gas, especially now there are difficulties in replacing our old nuclear stations let alone expanding nuclear.

The advance in domestic heating and cooling will come first from better insulation. More help to exclude draughts, include better standards of insulation and ensure hot water systems are well protected would lower costs and demands for fuel to heat. Anything which lowers energy use and energy bills is a very saleable proposition.

We can do more to recycle and control waste, to protect farmland and woods and to look after our landscape. Conserve and recycle is good. Forcing premature replacement of existing heating systems and vehicles with new products that are dear or not so good may not even help to net zero, given the resource cost of scrap and replace.