

Greenwash is not the answer

Like some other media driven campaigns, the anti global warming movement is being damaged by its share of hypocrites. Some grandstand on the issue yet live their own lives ignoring the imperatives they set for others.

It is most important that those who lecture the rest of us to change our lifestyles to lower our carbon footprint show us by example how to do it. It is true that Miss Thunberg's supporters and funders have been very keen to show she will use trains and sail boats, though it has led to questions about how realistic it is to sail across the Atlantic and how green it is to need so many people to support one traveller's journey.

Others in government and the business world seem to think the rules should not apply to them. Attending important environmental or business conferences apparently justifies international jet travel and chauffeured cars whilst telling others they should not take a plane for a holiday and should leave the car at home. Nor should we regard diesel trains or even electric trains fed by the general grid with fossil fuel power as necessarily the answer. Trains with few passengers may be a high carbon way of travelling. The idea that carbon dioxide emissions should be the prerogative of those able and willing to pay premium prices for their comforts is not a good way to promote the cause. Many of the green answers are higher taxes on normal behaviours for personal transport and domestic heating, which the rich can afford.

There is also the position of some countries that talk the talk on cutting carbon dioxide but do not cut their output in the way the UK has done. China for example buys into the problem yet keeps on increasing its own carbon dioxide output. It has been able to use the argument that as an emerging economy it needs leeway to increase its use of fossil fuels. Now it is better off and more successful surely it should ask itself if its conduct conforms with its concerns. It opens new coal mines and is very reliant on fossil fuels for its industrial activity. It is the largest source of manmade CO2 in the world. Germany closer to home and much richer than China also is a heavy user of coal and gas to generate electricity, and a big user of fossil fuels in homes and factories for heating and power.

There is also a question of whether it works well enough to sell pardons in the form of offsets. There is now a market in various assets and activities thought to provide some offset to more carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, which again allows those with the money to continue with fossil fuel comforts whilst paying for an offset.

I do not wish to publish personalised attacks on named individuals in reply.