

Santa's little helpers go green

Ho Ho Ho said Santa. No, No, No said the elves. They were fed up with such a predictable opening line to the 50 th weekly Zoom meeting to plan Christmas. It was the same every time.

The elves had got more unco-operative since they worked from home. The camaraderie and cold of the North Pole used to keep them together more. The work rooms were warm so they had used them a lot.

It's true they were not planning a strike, but they had refused to make trips to the North Pole for a trial run in the days before the big event. They pointed out that they needed rest days before Christmas, not stressful flights burning up lots of aviation fuel to arrive in Lapland on their way north. If Santa expected them to work hard and long hours to prepare the presents he should not complain if they wished to do much of the work at home. They expected the reindeer to pick it up from them in good time.

Santa told them today they had at last got to the question of what presents to deliver to all those who worked in politics. Oh dear, said elf Wunorse Openslae, they are always difficult. What do you give to people who have so many opinions? And what do you give to the ones who have big ideas about what they want? We do need to think about how much the reindeer can haul you know. The politicians are all so used to spending other people's money on big things like new trainlines.

Bushy Green who liked to show off a bit said these days people in the political world were very ESG. So what does that mean asked Santa? Well it means they want presents that help them green the planet. They would like electric cars or a wind turbine for their gardens. That's not fair or practical, said Santa. We need to offer smaller gifts that fit on the sleigh, and do not cost the earth.

We could tell them we were just sending them love and good wishes said Pepper Minstix, as this year we are going to spare the planet all those things with wrappings that are just dumped. After all they are always complaining about too much packaging. No-one likes a clever clogs said Santa, and anyway that's very negative. We need to try harder.

How about a smart meter for their home asked Alabaster Snowball, ever ready with an intelligent way round things. I doubt they would be very pleased with that said Santa. Most of them must have them by now as they've been available free for several years. They don't need another one.

They thought about sending them a beautiful bound copy of the world net zero plan as they heard that is mainly what they read these days. Apparently that is what gets them motivated. That sounds too much like work said Sugarplum Mary who would rather send them some chocolates.

Why not offer them a four day week said Shinny Upatree who thought that would be a good idea for himself. Don't be silly, said Santa. We do not interfere in how people's jobs are organised. More's the pity said the elf.

Eventually the meeting reached a great conclusion. They should send them a small wood burning stove to keep them warm as they economised on fossil fuels. Someone had objected that burning wood did not sound very green. On the contrary said Bushey Green, it's not called wood you know if you do the right thing. We will buy them a biomass stove. There is no carbon to account for as long as they import all the biomass from abroad. The politicians will get that, as they want us to import all our energy to cut the carbon count. What a relief they all thought. At last a gift that will make the politicians feel good about themselves whilst being practical. It will keep them warm as they wrestle with the windless days that stills the turbines.