

# Campaigning against carbon dioxide

The UK has many campaigners against carbon dioxide who worry about levels of man made gas being put into the atmosphere. I suggest today to them that the UK has been one of the most successful countries at getting its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions down. They should now divert their energies to cutting CO<sub>2</sub> in places putting out much more and not cutting in the way the UK has.

They should start with China. China adds around around 30 times more CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere each year than the UK. It also puts out considerably more per head. At around 30% of world new CO<sub>2</sub> output it is surely the place to start, as its output is still increasing.

If that is too difficult then surely they could turn their talents to changing the EU. After our departure they account for around 8 times our output with a higher output per head. They still mine and burn a lot of coal, which we have stopped doing,

Germany in particular needs attention. At more than double our CO<sub>2</sub> output there could be quick wins. They might also like to campaign about the German motor industry which is still based around fossil fuels for most of its output.

Clearly it is much easier and cheaper to cut CO<sub>2</sub> output in a country like China where there are quick wins and easy changes the UK has already made. It should also be welcome to the EU if we offer them advice on how we got to much lower levels per head than them, as their whole new economic and regulatory policy is based around CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.

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## Visit to Arborfield Green

On Friday I visited new homes under construction by Crest at Arborfield Green, in order to accompany the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He was on a visit to launch the government's new policy of promoting more affordable homes for purchase.

He used his visit to Wokingham to launch a new scheme which can offer a discount of up to 30% on the price of a new home for a first time buyer from the locality or a key worker like an NHS medical professional or teacher.

I also talked to the Crest staff about local issues connected to traffic, water management and pace of development.

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## Catching criminals

The new government is allocating more money to the police and recruiting more police personnel. At the same time figures have emerged showing a current low level of clear up of many reported crimes. I would be interested in your views on what the police priorities should be, as they set about deploying the additional police that become available to them.

Some say there is currently insufficient attention to burglary, breaking and entering and car theft. Others counter that social media hate crime can lead to crimes of violence, and that on line fraud is now a more serious source of theft than break ins. Given that the police cannot be everywhere and have to prioritise their energy and time, what would be a good balance?

How much attention should be given to traffic offences? How can the police prevent domestic violence without getting dragged into many family disputes that will not end in violence? Can we get better at spending the big sums the state as a whole spends on troubled families? Then there could be less need for police intervention as social services and welfare have found ways to get people through their problems that could otherwise spark anti social behaviour and worse.

Nationally there is considerable concern about knife crime, and a clear wish to see convicted terrorists kept away from harming the public more. There is also a strong wish to police our borders better once fully out of the EU so we do not admit additional criminals in the first place.

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## Congestion issues

Out and about and on doorsteps I find congestion is the most common concern. The combination of new traffic lights, road closures for utility renewal and road closures for new homes and related works are delaying too many people trying to take children to school, to get to work or get to the shops.

The advent of new lights on King Street Lane for the junction with the Winnersh by pass has created new delays. I have asked the Council to rephrase those lights from four way to two way with filters, with the main flow north south having the longest time in the complete phase to reflect traffic patterns.

The main crossroad lights in Winnersh with the A 329 and B3030 should be converted to two way with filters from four way, which would increase the capacity of the junction considerably. The Council should also consider re

phasing of the lights on Wellington Road and by the station as this too is a bottleneck.

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## The price of green policies

Yesterday I heard a short discussion on the media about the rising cost of renewables on the typical electricity bill. Some think it unfair that low income consumers have to pay the renewable surcharge alongside better off consumers. Others think it right as we are all users of power, and the cost has risen thanks to the renewable surcharge. Those who want to take the surcharge off lower income consumers either want the whole charge put onto general taxation as a subsidy to the power industry, or want means testing of the bills with reductions for low incomes.

This raises the bigger question of how much are people prepared to pay to go green. In Chile there were riots over higher charges that led to the last global climate change conference having to move to a different country to avoid the protests. In France the jilets jaune movement started as a protest over high fuel taxes imposed for green policy reasons. In the UK it was popular politics to suspend or cancel planned fuel tax increases.

As governments consider new tough targets for the next fifteen years they start to have more reality. They do mean according to their advocates the end of all diesel and petrol cars, the wholesale replacement of all conventional heating systems in people's homes, the complete electrification of the railways and the total greening of the electricity generation system within a few years. Given the increasing reliance on electrical power it will also require a substantial increase in generating capacity.

I would be interested to hear views on how much of these big investment and spending programmes should be paid for by the users and consumers, and how much from higher taxes on those same consumers. The polling points to a tension between the numbers who think we should do all these things, and the numbers who think they should help pay for it. This also has a bearing on the pace of change people want.