



December 2013

2013 It has been a very varied year for JCAN. We started in January with a well attended talk by Kevin Sharpe of Zero Carbon World. While here he also did interviews with the local press and the JEC.

Later in the year I was on the panel of the Jersey Construction Council annual debate on sustainable versus affordable housing. Again this generated a few press opportunities. I was pleasantly surprised to hear the audience at the event were rather more amenable to sustainability issues that might have been expected.

The States Energy Pathway 2050 paper went to scrutiny, and I was called as a witness. The paper makes specific policies regarding reduction of CO2 emissions in line with Kyoto accord. Our stance has always been that this is a reasonable initial step, but cautioned it may prove not to be enough. Barring some intervention, such as the ousting of the environment minister, it now seems a near certainty the States will debate and adopt this in the coming year.

Globally the news on climate change over the year has not been good. CO2 now stands a fraction short of 400 ppm in the atmosphere. The best estimate of a 'safe level' has usually been given as 350 ppm. It has never been this high in the thousands of years that humans have had settled communities and farming. Add to that reports that ocean acidification has been happening much faster than predicted, that there are unprecedented large out-gassings of methane in the Arctic, and the US has been seriously underestimating its methane emissions, there is every reason to act with urgency.

Unfortunately the UN climate change talks in Warsaw in November failed to reach any agreement on how to proceed. It seems world leaders would rather be seen to be economic lemmings than ecological lions.

But it gets worse: there are comments in some quarters that the latest modelling suggests the Kyoto targets themselves are not aggressive enough to meet the 2 degrees target, and in all probability we are locked onto a course for 4 degrees C warming.

Every organisation has occasionally to look at itself, the world about it and ask if its goals and aims still are valid? Should they be amended, or perhaps the aims have been fulfilled and it should disband.

We have achieved a major goal in seeing a policy coming forward to the States, but there is a great difference between introducing a policy and actually implementing it, especially over decades as we are looking at here. We haven't mentioned oil dependency, one our other aims. So no, I don't think our job is done.

It has been suggested, albeit ever so tentatively that if the pessimists are right, then there is no point in carrying on as the inevitable is already programmed in. We might just as well party like it really is the end of the world. That would be a self fulfilling prophecy, and also ignores the fact that there is some uncertainty in all the predictions of effects - it may not be too late. Perhaps the best response is to step up our campaigning and get more directly active? It is lining up to be a very interesting lively AGM at **8.00 p.m. on Tuesday 11th February in Room 2, Arts Centre, Phillips Street, St. Helier.**

A happy low carbon New Year to you all.

Mark

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