

# THERE IS NO VACCINE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Dear Mr Clark, Mr Gough and Mr McDermott,

As our MP and Leaders of Kent County Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council respectively, we seek your attention for the following.

Now that the Government has presented plans to start easing lockdown and structure the economic recovery from the tragic Covid-19 crisis, we should be careful not to lose the few 'silver linings' that have emerged and take the opportunity to make improvements while restarting.

We have had a glimpse of a more environmentally sustainable way of living through the significant adjustments to our lives. A life with much less road traffic, cleaner air, a stronger community and a greater appreciation of local living. Lifting the lockdown provides a window of opportunity to make practical adjustments to build on positive changes and implement a greener local and national economic development plan.

## **There is no vaccine for climate change!**

We acknowledge that there are many challenges we need to address but urge you to commit *now* to the areas below as key starting points.

### **Local Economic Development-**

The path to sustainable economic growth is through a thriving local economy with short supply lines, powered by locally generated renewable energy or sourced from green energy providers. Support for businesses needs to extend beyond lockdown. Recovery investment must include significant funding targeted at local economic development to encourage sustainable operation, promote domestic tourism, create green jobs and retain money within the community.

- **We ask that you commit significant economic development funding to local businesses, providing clear time-bound targets to fuel growth aimed at creating a greener, circular economy.**

### **New Ways to Travel-**

Road travel is the biggest contributor to carbon emissions and air pollution in Kent. It is also hugely detrimental to our health. The lockdown has shown what can be achieved with a reduction in petrol and diesel vehicle use. A 'business as usual' approach will perpetuate the old problems of polluted air, noise and heavily congested roads.

When there is visible evidence of new infrastructure for alternative low emission travel, including car sharing (once it is safe to do so), walking, cycling and affordable, regular and clean public transport; many of the public's reservations on this matter will disappear.

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Alex Green  
CEO  
**Trinity Theatre**

Alex Grieg  
Owner  
**Fuggles Beer Cafe**

In addition, the Government has made funding available for restructuring and expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians.

- **We ask that you make significant investment in clean transport and active travel, setting clear time-bound targets to promote green initiatives while reducing petrol and diesel vehicle use.**

#### **Smarter Working-**

The lockdown has shown that home working is a productive and practical option for many people. Commuting can be stressful, time consuming and costly, increase road-traffic congestion, and result in overcrowded trains. The average time spent commuting increases each year, which impacts on people's wellbeing.

- **We ask that KCC and TWBC commit to enabling flexible home-working practices where possible. This should be part of a wider initiative to stop unnecessary council journeys of any form. Additionally, incentives and support should be given for local businesses to do the same.**

#### **Climate Emergency declaration-**

All tiers of Government have recognised that we are in a climate emergency. However, with the current slow pace of actions, the promised targets for net zero carbon emissions by 2030 will not be achieved. Any recovery plan must fully recognise the climate emergency and set out proposals within a framework of targeted metrics and timelines. Tackling climate change will require adjustment by everyone in our society and therefore significant consultation must occur to enable practical introduction.

The United Kingdom committed to the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, leading to ambitious climate change goals, and local action should be focused on meeting those goals.

- **We ask that you commit significant investment to meeting promised environmental targets. Consultation is key to the adoption of changes, and to achieve this KCC and TWBC should commit to the funding and creation of a Citizens' Assembly by 2021.**

Many of us have had conversations with colleagues, friends and family during lockdown that show we are at a tipping point of public opinion. It doesn't have to be 'how it's always been'. It is time for national Government to work with local authorities so they can all play a part in 'building back' in a better way.

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Caroline Auckland  
President Elect, Soroptimists  
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Leonie Barker  
Founding Member  
**Southborough SOS**

#### **Supported by-**

Adrian Thorne  
Gardener and Owner  
**Peerless Gardening**

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#### **Green Party TW**

Chris Dodge  
Head Teacher

**The Wells Free School**

Steve Walter  
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**Making Connections Matter**

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Tunbridge Wells**

Martin Betts  
Acting Chair  
**Tunbridge Wells Labour Party**

**Yours sincerely,**

*David Mooney*

*Luke Everitt*

*Marieke de Jonge*

*Marguerita Morton*

*Peter Lidstone*

TW Green Party

Labour Councillor  
Southborough and  
High Brooms  
TWBC Labour  
Group

Local Coordinator  
Tunbridge Wells  
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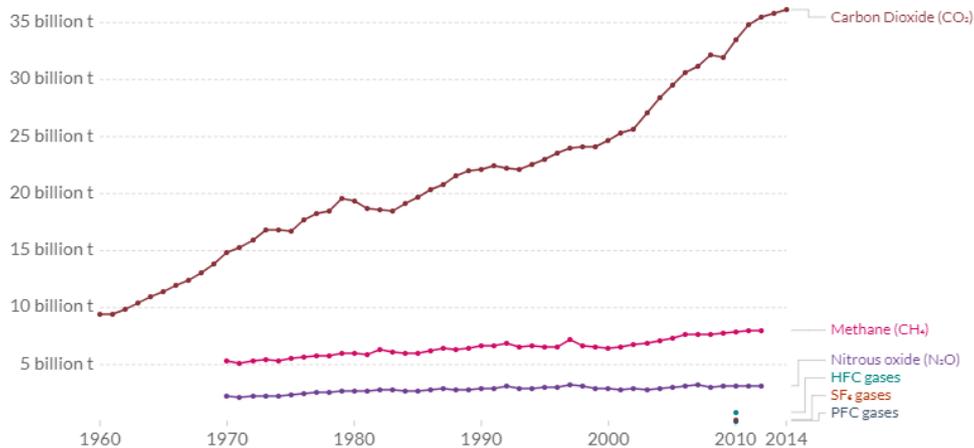
Liberal Democrat  
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### Greenhouse gas emissions by gas, World, 1960 to 2014

Global greenhouse gas emissions by gas source, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). Gases are converted to their CO<sub>2</sub>e values based on their global warming potential factors. HFC, PFC and SF<sub>6</sub> are collectively known as 'F-gases'.

Our World  
in Data



Source: European Commission (JRC); Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL); EDGAR

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▶ 1960 2014