

THE BY BROOK SUSTAINABILITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER – INFLUENCE

These articles have focussed largely on how each of us can reduce our own negative impacts as we go about our daily lives. We finish the year by considering how we can best use our voice to influence more sustainable outcomes.

I write this article during the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 27). The effects of climate change since last year's conference have been profound, and with atmospheric concentrations of CO2 and other greenhouse gases continuing to rise, Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN told delegates that 'we are on the highway to climate hell'.

Given such an unequivocal statement, it feels like it shouldn't be necessary to tell those in positions of power that we want to see more action more quickly, but the majority continue to fiddle as the planet burns. So here are some ideas as to how you might raise your voice.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
— Margaret Mead

Get Political

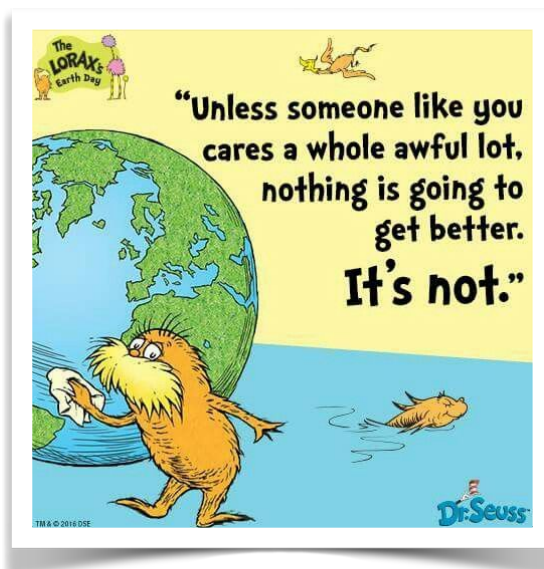
Many of us may never have been terribly interested in politics, but letting our elected members know our views is an important part of our democracy.

Both our MP and our Ward Councillor for Wiltshire Council should respond to you if you write to them. You should provide your name and address so that they can see that they are your representative, be clear in your message, and of course, be polite.

Contact details are as follows;

James Gray MP jamesgraymp@parliament.uk Address as James Gray. You can see James's voting record at www.theyworkforyou.com . You need to scroll down to see how he has voted on the Environment.

Councillor Nick Botterill nick.botterill@wiltshire.gov.uk Nick is Cabinet member for Climate Change at Wiltshire Council.



Become a Keyboard Warrior

There are many petitions on environmental matters. Do they make any difference, well who really knows? However, they are generally extremely quick and easy to sign online. You need to know about the petitions, so it is worth taking a few minutes to sign up on some platforms that tend to generate the most meaningful environmental petitions-all free and quick.

Our suggestions are as follows;

www.avaaz.org – ‘Avaaz—meaning "voice" in several European, Middle Eastern and Asian languages—launched in 2007 with a simple democratic mission: organize citizens of all nations to close the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want.’

www.change.org – ‘ On Change.org, people everywhere are starting campaigns, mobilising supporters, and working with decision makers to drive solutions.’

www.350.org - ‘We are building a global grassroots movement to take on the entire fossil fuel industry. But we need you in the fight with us.’

All of the environmental charities and campaigning organisations start or promote petitions, but a special mention goes to Chris Packham’s Wild Justice www.wildjustice.org.uk- ‘We challenge government decisions in the courts. We campaign for better laws and better policies. We’ll give you opportunities to speak up for our wildlife.’

Join a Chorus

Joining together with others will often be more impactful. You could join an environmental campaigning group like Friends of the Earth or Extinction Rebellion or you could persuade your club, society or church to use their collective voice in demanding change.

Shift Your Supplier

The companies that you spend your money with want you to keep on doing it, so you need to tell them that you will take your business elsewhere if they don’t change for the better. So, if you are inflamed by your favourite fashion chain’s use of child labour, bothered by your bank’s funding of fossil fuel projects, seething at your supermarket’s failure to reduce packaging and waste, or enraged by your energy provider’s greenwashing, let them know.

You can find out the email addresses of many bosses at www.ceoemail.com.

We all know that shift happens-but only if we work at it.

Share Your Stories

Whenever you make a positive change, tell your friends and family so that they can be inspired by your actions. Hopefully they will reciprocate with ideas of their own and together we can all move forward.

What can we do now?

All of the above, but here is a final tip for the year. Switch your internet search engine to Ecosia. Instead of lining the pockets of Google’s investors even more, you can enable Ecosia to plant more trees. They use all their profits for climate action, with at least 80% financing tree-planting projects around the world. At the time of writing this article, the Ecosia community has planted over 162 million trees, and you can track your own contribution search by search.

Thank you for reading and for your support and interest over the course of the year.

“It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Get in touch at mike@vertigosdc.com

MIKE ROBERTS