

Solar-enhanced Biodiversity!

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So who'd have thought it: solar power is good for biodiversity!

Or, to be a little bit more accurate, 'well-designed and well-managed' solar parks are good for biodiversity.

I know that as a result of reading the latest report from the Solar Trade Association – '[The Natural Capital Value of Solar](#)'.

This is such an enjoyably upbeat report, focusing on opportunities for designing hedgerows, field margins and wildflower meadows; supporting wetlands and better drainage and water management systems; creating an enhancing habitats for wildlife; and promoting best practice for on-site grazing.

What I love about this stuff is its practicality. It's real, on the ground, delivering now – with literally no downsides, no regrets. And it's big.

'The rise of solar PV in Britain over the past decade is a remarkable success story, with the industry growing from less than 100MW installed capacity in 2010 to more than 13,200MW in 2019. Over the past 12 months, solar PV has contributed 4% of Britain's total electricity generation (surpassing coal, at 3.5%), in the process preventing almost 2.7 million tonnes of CO₂e from entering the atmosphere.'

And there's no reason why that rate of growth shouldn't carry on indefinitely into the future. But it won't. And the reason why it won't is that this Government is not just indifferent to the future of solar – it is implacably, aggressively hostile. One destructive decision after another, over the

course of the last three years, tells me that this Government would basically like to kill the UK's solar industry.

Perish the thought, after all, that solar (together with wind) might offer a far better prospect for this country's energy future than its near-insane nuclear fantasies.

So you would have thought that the Green Movement would have been up in arms to defend solar from this demolition campaign over the last few years. But apart from the indefatigable Solar Trade Association, and the Renewable Energy Association, it would appear not.

I don't really get the Environment Movement at the moment. Last week, lots of leading greenies and organisations were falling over themselves to congratulate Theresa May and Government Ministers for committing to a 'net zero by 2050' target for the UK, a commitment which is, in itself, as we all know, 1% substance and 99% empty symbolism.

Forget all that posturing. There's real work to be done out there – rather than sycophantically recycling the Government's phoney rhetoric.

And the Committee on Climate Change is no better. It can barely bring itself to acknowledge the massive future potential for solar in the UK, captured as it is by its very own nuclear fantasies, and still in thrall to the malign influence of David Mackay, the erstwhile Chief Scientific Advisor at DECC, whose 'Sustainable Energy: Without the Hot Air' was informed by such an ignorant and biased view of solar power as to be positively embarrassing just four years on from its publication in 2015.

This is such a simple and inspiring story. If anyone is even halfway serious about today's climate emergency, focus on solar. Focus on solar now, and focus on solar big. And just watch our biodiversity flourish at the same time!