

You, Me, the Government and our Environment

YOU, ME, THE GOVERNMENT AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

By Helen Robson

✘ The record-breaking heat of this summer should surely be enough to urge the government to act on the Environment, but will it?

The time has come for us all to work together for change. The future of Planet Earth and the whole of humanity is in danger so we need a peaceful revolution.

Our government has often boasted about its ambitious plans to reduce the country's carbon footprint, but it needs to speed up the change from fossil fuel to sustainable energy. The current price rises for gas and oil should be putting pressure on our leaders to rethink the way we live in the British Isles. There are increasing numbers of wind turbines on land and at sea as well as talk about better ways to insulate our homes, but we need more ways of producing sustainable power. Nuclear Power is not the answer.

In November last year many campaign groups came together to urge world leaders to agree to work together against disastrous climate change. Although there was some agreement the results of "Copt 26" were considered by many to be disappointing. Since then, other news headlines have pushed the climate and the environment down the list of priorities, but no- one who cares about the environment should allow that to happen. Everyone, who wants change, has a part to play. So

where do we start? Sometimes, a tragedy in the life of one person, or family, becomes a trigger for a campaign to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again. Just one person can stimulate a chain of events which results in a new governmental law to improve the lives of others. That one person, who began the campaign for change, has been strengthened by others who see the need for the same new law and with the help of the press and social media the pressure builds. The destruction of our environment is a tragedy which will have devastating results for all of us if it is not reversed.

We can all bombard central government with letters, emails and protest marches, but maybe the best way to start is by taking smaller steps. For example, our local authorities are often responsible for planning in their areas. Local residents are given the opportunity to comment on applications for both small scale and large new building plans. We can all object to any future fossil fuel powered central heating and we can urge all planning departments to insist that all new buildings are fitted with solar panels. As individuals, we can speak directly to our local MPs. Sometimes a seed can be planted in the mind of an MP, who acts on it and seeks a debate in parliament. Imagine a new law for all new buildings throughout the country because a few people spoke to their MPs or urged planning departments to introduce new regulations.

Internationally, our food system is broken and increasing numbers of people are going hungry. Here in the UK our fruit and vegetable growers struggle because of a lack of workers. They used to rely on seasonal staff from Europe, but since Brexit they are no longer available and sadly, the employers cannot persuade British residents to work on the land. Meanwhile, asylum seekers are not allowed to work, often for years, while they wait for their applications to be considered. It seems logical to urge the government to pass new laws allowing legal immigrants to earn a living on the

land. Their ability to earn a living would benefit everyone. The government has already spoken of the need for this country to provide more of its own food, but without people who are willing to work on the land, this would seem to be impossible. So perhaps the time has come for all of our fruit and vegetable growers, plus refugee agencies and the general public to work together to urge the government to pass a law enabling those from overseas, who wish to live here to be allowed to work on the land while they wait for permission to stay.

As a growing number of people are having difficulties paying their food bills, Community Gardens are becoming popular. Way back in the 1940's we were told to "Dig for Victory" and laws were introduced setting aside land for food production. Now, it would help us all to eat more healthily if there were laws ensuring that all towns, cities and urban areas set aside land for local people to come together to grow good, fresh food which is affordable. These green areas would also be good for the environment, so every community would benefit if central government and local authorities were urged to "level up" society in a good environmentally friendly way.

It is time for us all to start a peaceful revolution, which urges our Government to act. From small beginnings, we can persuade others to join us in whatever way they can. Our leaders often promise to listen to what we have to say. They need to be reminded of that commitment as we inspire others to join us in a movement for change. Some of us can remember the war time spirit and most are aware of the community actions at the height of the Covid pandemic. Now is the time for us to work together to urge the Government to act now for the sake of the future of our environment.