

Environmental Group

Chaddesley cares about Planet Earth

Politicians – don't we love them ? – are keen to focus on 4x4 cars and aeroplanes to better control our CO2 emissions. However just **22%** of CO2 emissions are associated with **road transport** and just **3%** of CO2 emissions relate to **air transport**. The **energy supply sector** (power stations 40%), **business** (factory and offices 17%) and **residential** (heating our homes 15%) collectively account for more than **72%** of our CO2 emissions. So why the focus on transport ? – pardon my cynicism, but could it be because they are easier to tax ?

Anyhow, every little helps, but next time you are speaking with a politician about environmental matters - maybe a focus on our lack of foresight as a nation to invest adequately in nuclear power stations over the last decades, the obvious continuing waste in heating and lighting of public buildings and help for some of our poorest to adequately insulate their homes may help to balance the agenda.

On the subject of waste, I would like to turn to **food**, our ability to feed the ever expanding world population, must be one of the biggest challenges of our times. In our society, problems arise when manufacturers “use by” category foods print a date that reflects when they think a product will be past its prime, but is still a long way from being unsafe to eat. Meanwhile “sell-by” or “display-until” labels are not mandatory: they are meant to help staff manage stock – and consumers should ignore them. Despite the fact that this dating system has been in place for nearly 30 years, the public is still confused about what it means. According to one survey, more than one third of Britons believe that any product past its “best-before” date is liable to poison them and should never be eaten. Since the dating system is enshrined in law, governments should bear some responsibility for telling the public how it works.

“Waste: Uncovering the Global Food Scandal” is a new book written by Tristram Stuart, published by Penguin. Some interesting facts contained within the book are : 50% of food disappears between the plough and the plate; 35% of school lunches end up in the bin; 25% of food products purchased are eventually binned; 484 million pots of yogurt are thrown away every year in Britain alone. Whatever we can buy locally, freshly produced close to home will certainly improve this awful situation.

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