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Parliamentary and Scientific Committee

Bringing Science and Parliament together

Climate Change: Is there a Plan B?

Educate, Inform, Empower.

Climate change is an issue which has recently been making headlines across the globe, with 16-year-old environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, leading the charge and voicing the concerns millions. The climate strike in September 2019 saw 7.6 million people from across 185 countries demand for action to be taken to address climate change. This month's discussion meeting took on this topical, yet alarming subject.

The first step in addressing the issue of climate change to raise awareness. It's clear from the recent strikes that this has been achieved however, there are concerns about many "Trumps of this world" who are still not acknowledging or understanding this frightening situation. This ignorance towards climate change could be addressed by scientists taking off their white coats and speaking as well-informed members of the public. Education on the importance and urgency of making a change is key. This has been proved by the thousands of young people this year, who became educated which empowered them to stand up for the future of their planet. But it is vital that severity of this issue is recognised by everyone, not just the youths of today.

From global companies to a trip to the shops, almost everything has a carbon footprint. Most people when shopping, make their choices based on price, but is that always the best thing environmentally? The answer is; definitely not! Encouraging people to shop and travel as environmentally conscious as possible starts with companies ensuring the carbon footprint of their products is clear to customers. Whether it's booking flights or clothes shopping online, it's important everyone is made aware of the true

environmental cost of their decisions and purchases.

In 2015 the plastic bag fee came into effect in the UK which is estimated to have reduced the use of one-time plastic bags by 85%. Small initiatives such as the '5p bag charge' all help towards the bigger environmental cause. More ideas were put forward, such as stopping frequent flyer points, but a main discussion point was carbon tax. The aim of this tax would not only be to reduce carbon emissions, but also to make carbon traceable. One of the main obstacles for introducing a carbon tax is simply getting the public and companies to view this as a positive, and not resist this eco-friendly change.

It's important that the Government pushes for these initiatives as well as providing the well needed funding for research. However, they must also lead the way to a green future by example. Small acts such as turning off lights within the Houses of Parliament or MP's using public transport can make a big statement. It must be made clear to those with concerns or demands that Parliament is listening and will be continuing to address the issue of climate change.

The topic of climate change is one of genuine interest, it made for a discussion meeting full of refreshing ideas and thought-provoking questions. There are obviously still many more discussion and debates to be had but the first steps towards a positive change have been made.

Charlotte Hall

P&SC Discussion meeting, 'Climate Change: Is there a Plan B?', 14th Oct 2019