

Rachel Berger – Written Evidence (LBC0104)

I write from the perspective of someone who has had a lifetime of work in the field of environment, both professionally as a town planner and landscape architect, and latterly in food security in international development, and in my spare time being actively involved with wildlife conservation and latterly campaigning for strong action at government level on climate change.

The positives I experienced during lockdown were those I have seen and heard shared by many :

- The quiet from less traffic and aircraft
- The cleaner air
- The abundance of birdsong, seemingly more than normal or perhaps we all had more time to appreciate it
- Reduced travel so more time for reading and reflection (I am retired)
- More time to prepare food from fresh ingredients
- Shopping more locally, and appreciating what was available locally
- Communities forming amongst neighbours to support each other, and more widely in towns
- The swift action of the government in developing financial support packages showed that transformation of the economy is possible, and also showed (perhaps) that people can be valued as people, not merely for their role in the economy.

The concerns I felt, besides the grief for those who died from Covid-19 were:

- Those whom we all depended upon are those who are very poorly paid, and also as a consequence of their work to support society they have been more susceptible to infection.
- The lockdown led to a marked fall in greenhouse gas emissions, but even so, as this return to 'normal' this year is likely only to show the kind of drop in emissions needed year on year if we in the UK are to meet our own climate target, and if globally we are to avert catastrophe
- Despite government support for businesses to retain staff, and for self-employed, it is the lowest paid staff in the hospitality sector, and freelance artists, actors and musicians who have suffered
- The government proposals for recovery are not focused, as they could have been on transformative ways of creating jobs for a low carbon economy

The long term changes that I believe the pandemic could still enable to happen more easily, following the changes we have all had to make are:

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