

During this process you will have heard many expert testimonies. This is not one of them. I am no expert. But then again, I don't need to be to see the devastation that that uncontrolled climate change is wreaking across the world; fires, floods, drought, winds.... No need to recapitulate on that, except to note their acceleration, both in their frequency and their severity. We are in a phase of acceleration, so we must accelerate our responses to avert the threat of greater catastrophes. For each such event reduces to some extent the ability of our Earth to recover. They are harbingers of worse to come; and the pain and suffering that follows them.

I believe it is part of Christian belief that God bequeathed to us, humankind, the stewardship of this beautiful, miraculous, intricate and generous world we inhabit; the guardianship of Nature, the protection of the environment.

We have failed in that duty.

We are failing - and I believe we are perilously close to total, irredeemable failure.

I am ashamed of how selfish and careless, wasteful and self-indulgent we have become.

And I am lost in total incomprehension, bafflement and frustration, at how so many influential people, in all walks of life, can blithely ignore the consequences of their actions.

How - in the face of climate breakdown - for the sake of some comparatively petty and temporary gain, financial or political, they can wilfully close their minds to the ever worsening destruction climate mayhem is causing and somehow imagine that it won't be visited upon their own children as it is upon the rest of humanity.

We have had warnings about global warming for fifty years.

We have wasted time. Unfortunately inertia raised its worthless head. We all have some tendency toward it - especially in old age - even our leaders. It is more comfortable to bump along in the way we have become accustomed than to change our ways. Too bad.

There's a definition of insanity which is just the ticket for right now; it's to keep on doing the same thing and yet expect a different result. We have faced crises before, - quite recently terrorist threats in our cities for example. Our spokesmen typically - and commendably - say, we must carry on as before, don't let them win, prove to them that they cannot affect our way of life. The environmental crisis we are now facing is not like that. Fine words and rhetoric will not influence the climate.

The scientific consensus is that in order to restrict a global temperature rise to a liveable - that is, a survivable - 1.5C or something close to it, we must reduce carbon emissions to net zero; that is, 51 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions - mainly CO₂ - per annum across the globe to zero. It sounds impossible. It's a matter of sorrow. If we are to have any chance at all we must all of us adapt to new realities.

Supporters of this airport's expansion may say that whatever Bristol Airport does is of little significance on a global scale. Two million extra passengers a year. That's five and a half thousand extra passenger movements per day. 365 days a year. Insignificant on the global scale? Maybe, maybe not. But that's not the point. We are here and now. It is the problem facing you and all of us - here and now. You have - again on a global scale and with all due respect - a small yet significant decision to make. There comes a moment when we just have to say, No. No more. Not one extra flight. Arrange your lives as best you may.

If we don't say that, who will?