

**To all our Members of Parliament.  
27<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

***This letter reflects the views of 120 grandparents who share serious concerns about the future for their 245 grandchildren.***

*We are sending this on behalf of grandparents who are extremely concerned by the accelerating rate of climate change, which politicians and statesmen have failed to deal with over our lifetime and which, without urgent action, will severely blight the future of our grandchildren and yours.*

***Most of us grew up in the '50s and '60s, at a time when scientists understood the impact of carbon dioxide on the world's climate. US politicians certainly knew: in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson received a report from his scientific advisory group entitled 'Restoring the Quality of Our Environment'\* which warned of melting ice caps, rising sea levels, and predicted that, by 2000, the increase in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> might be sufficient to produce measurable and perhaps marked changes in the climate.***

*As children and teenagers, we would have expected the 'grown-ups', the politicians and statesmen of the time, to have ensured that any possible dangers to our future would be taken care of. Alas, this was not to be.*

***As scientists continued to give us warnings, we reached the 1990s, by which time most of us had our own children and thought that with formation of the United Nations Environment Programme\* and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change\* (IPCC) and annual COP\* meetings the problem would be sorted. Margaret Thatcher presented a rousing speech\* at the second Climate Conference in Geneva in 1990 and established and opened\* the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, also in 1990.***

*We continued securing our children's future in the knowledge that a new generation of politicians and statesmen who understood the issues would soon put in measures to solve the problem.*

*We were naive enough not to recognise the power of the vested interests, the power of a press influenced by them, and the politicians more concerned with supporting them; some politicians failed to understand and others were just uninterested. By the time we reached the millennium climate scepticism was rife, climate sceptic think-tanks sprang up to support the vested interests and to spread doubt on the science.*

***From the millennium many of our generation began to become grandparents and there was a glimmer of hope with the signing of the first Climate Change Bill in 2008\* and then the election of a Prime Minister who promised to lead the "Greenest Government Ever"\* in 2010. But we were to see the cutting of subsidies for onshore wind farms\*, the cancellation of the proposed funding for carbon capture and storage research\* and the encouragement of fracking\*. Thankfully, the new government in 2019 have essentially reversed these, five years later! The amended 1998 Climate Change Act introduced in 2019 aiming for the UK to be carbon neutral by 2050 was welcome and the first of its kind but, sadly, was not particularly ambitious considering where we are.***

***In June, the Committee on Climate Change presented a new report\* which, among other things, stressed the need for adapting all planning for a minimum 2°C and potential 4°C global temperature rise (by 2100 from pre-industrial levels). The United Nations Environmental Programmes Emissions Gap report\* published in November also clearly points out that we are on track for a 3.2°C temperature rise unless we set in motion the radical transformations we need. Otherwise we, and more importantly our grandchildren and their children, face the consequences of a planet radically altered by climate change.***

*We now need a generation of politicians who will finally put climate change at the top of the agenda and keep it there, both nationally and in our international relations. The latter is extremely important and will need, in Margaret Thatcher's words, "Statesmanship of a rare order". We have a major opportunity to take a lead next year at COP26 but only if we can lead by example.*

*While some MPs have recognised the seriousness of where we are and have made major contributions over the years to try and deliver change, others just kept kicking the climate change issue down the road while some have simply not recognised it as a problem. Many we assume have not understood the issues otherwise we would not be in the position we find ourselves in now.*

*Climate change is multifaceted and the science is multidisciplinary; getting to grips with it is not always easy and takes time. To help we are going to send you a number of emails focusing on aspects of climate change, which we hope will help those of you who are not clear on some of the details to find your way through it and to highlight many of our concerns. There are lots of sources of information but to dissect and understand them takes time. We sincerely hope that these will prove helpful to inform your discussions.*

*The Covid-19 crisis, while a major global disaster for public health, economic activity and social well-being, will be looked back on as an acute disaster in human history. The Climate crisis is a chronic, ongoing disaster and one that we have brought on ourselves and that, if unchecked, has the potential to bring human history to an end.*

*We do not want our children and grandchildren to have to write to the next generation of MPs challenging why you have also failed them, just like the previous generations of MPs have failed us.*

*We appreciate the time you have taken to read this.*

*From Grandparents against Climate Change including **over 110 signatories***