

### **Keswick Reminder 21.11.25: NfWW No.100 The new denialism.**

Consider this: the last ten years, that is, from 2015 to 2024, were the hottest on record, with 2024 being the very hottest, and with 2025 projected to be the second or third warmest. The last time the world was as consistently as warm as this was 125,000 years ago.

And the last time levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, the main driver of climate change, were this high was at least 3.3 million years ago, way before our species evolved.

Now consider this: the current administration in the USA, historically the world's largest emitter, is led by an arch climate change denier (who uses phrases like 'a green scam' to rubbish the work of climate scientists), leading the way for other governments and political parties in other countries (including in UK) to follow.

What is so worrying is that these head-in-the-sand sceptics are gaining traction at the very moment when humanity needs to pull together in this most urgent of tasks.

How has this come about? It is clear that, while the science could hardly be clearer, vested interests, notably the fossil fuel companies, are stepping up their campaigns of misinformation, particularly on the internet, as well as through well-funded think-tanks, PR firms and lobbyists who amplify those messages to block climate policies hostile to them nationally and internationally.

At last year's Azerbaijan COP there were 1,700 fossil fuel lobbyists. The year before in Dubai there had been nearly 2,500. (I have no figures for the current COP.)

The sheer numbers involved tell you how much they feel they have to lose through any actions which might seriously threaten their profits and how, in the face of evidence, they are determined not to lose their influence and power.

But there remains the question: Why are so many people seemingly hoodwinked by them? First, while most people globally accept that climate change is real and want their governments to take more action (even in the US), they don't want to admit to the implications for them personally.

The trouble is that acknowledging the severity of climate change can conflict with an individual's everyday behaviour (like driving, flying or eating meat) and lifestyle preferences. This creates psychological discomfort. Denial helps resolve this without requiring difficult behavioural changes.

So, people know at the same time as not wanting to know. They either push it out of their minds or swallow misinformation, or both.

And, second, there is the sheer sophistication of the misinformation that plays into people's doubts. In a recent analysis of nearly 18,000 text-and-image posts on platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram, many, according to the researchers, had 'the look and feel of science [with] technical graphs, neutral colours and data-heavy visuals that give an aura of objectivity, even when the message is misleading'.

As the pressure mounts, expect much more of this.

Please share widely. To hear from us regularly write to [sustainablekeswick@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablekeswick@gmail.com).

**Joe Human**

**Sustainable Keswick**