

***Berkhamsted School Event, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March,  
11.20 to 12.20 pm***

***We face the biggest challenge in human  
history***

***It's a great opportunity. Will you be part  
of the solution?***

***Bruce Nixon***

# ***A Conversation***

## ***Structure***

**11-20** *Part One - The Challenges and Opportunities* **15 minutes**

**11-35** *Reflect in pairs how I feel, insights, shocked or surprised, additions, questions*  
*Share in plenary*

**11-50** *Part Two - Solutions and making them happen* **15 minutes**

**12-05** *Reflect What I am/we are doing – want to do*  
*Share in plenary – actions*

**12-20** *Finish*

# ***Part One - The Challenges and Opportunities***

***Climate change is the most important issue of our times***



***City sized glacial collapse (James Balog's film Chasing Ice)***

***Where I am coming from***

***“It’s alright for your generation; it’s different  
for us.***

***We’ll have to face the consequences of  
your inaction.”***

***Sixth form student***

*When I get discouraged I turn to inspiring  
thoughts like these*

*Everything that is done in the world is done by hope*  
**Martin Luther King**



## *Five interrelated issues*

- *Climate change – extreme events – some scientists say just 34 months before a tipping point \**
  - *Peak everything – not just Oil which made our extraordinary way of life possible*
  - *We are damaging the ecosystem on which all life depends – air, soil, forests, oceans and other living things*
  - *Poverty and economic injustice*
  - *Violence, war and terrorism*
- \* [www.onehundredmonths.org](http://www.onehundredmonths.org) and <http://www.pachamama.org/>

# *Folly*

## *Ecocide = extensive damage to, destruction or loss of ecosystems*

- *Canada's Alberta Tar Sands produce 4 times more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil extraction ... Uses enough natural gas to heat three million Canadian homes....*
- *Pacific Trash Vortex - 100 million tonnes of floating rubbish polluting sea and coastlines*
- *100 species become extinct every day*
- *Amazon forest: an area equal to 50 football pitches has been destroyed every minute since 2000. The total loss is 10 times the area of the UK* (guardian. com, Friday 15 November)

*We all know Ecocide is happening*

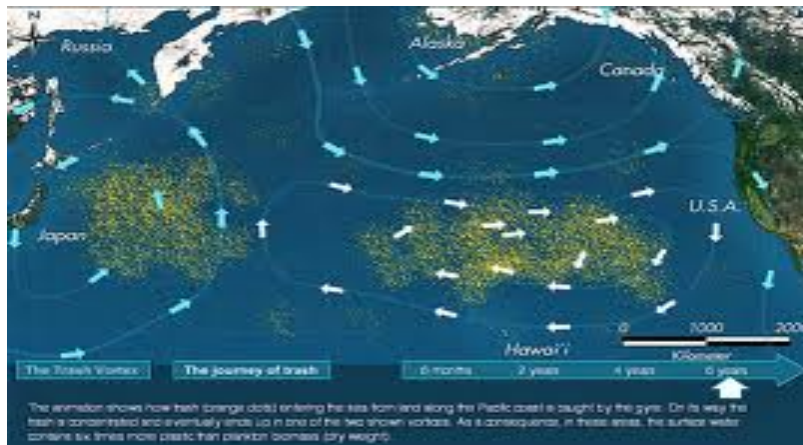
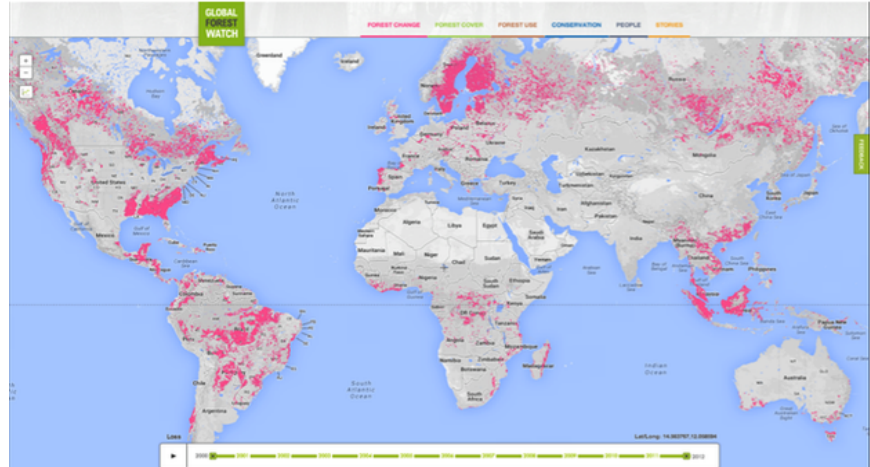
*But many of us prefer to not think about the human impact on our planet.*

*(Polly Higgins – Eradicating Ecocide)*



## ***Our failure to live in harmony with Mother Earth and all life, including each other***

***Open cast mining in Indonesia, destruction of forests - displacing native peoples, Pacific Trash Vortex – 100 million tonnes of floating rubbish, oil from tar sands in Canada, gas from “Fracking” – just puts off the day***





## ***We're warming up the planet and getting fatter and unhealthier***



- ***Air pollution causes 29,000 early deaths a year in the UK – more than obesity and alcohol combined.(ClientEarth)***
- ***Sitting in cars and at computers, instead of walking and cycling***
- ***Eating more energy than we burn up and the wrong food = 25% obese, 64% overweight in UK - Costs NHS half its budget***

## ***Spiralling inequality: The rich are getting richer; the rest are getting poorer***

***The wealth of the world's 475 billionaires is now worth the combined income of the bottom half of humanity***



***London is the most unequal city in the Western world***  
***Richest tenth of the population own 273 times the wealth owned by the***  
***bottom tenth - around the same levels as the beginning of the 19th century***



**Professor Dorling, Sheffield University, reported in Guardian and Daily Mail.**



## ***Kiribati – they'll have to leave Who next?***

*Somerset levels Matt Cardy/Getty images*



# ***Insanity***

***Instead of dealing with the biggest threat to humanity,  
Governments are fixated on economic growth***

***When ....***

- ***Climate action is urgent***
- ***We're already consuming 30% too much – and our consumption is rising***
- ***Population estimated to grow from 7bn to 9bn by 2050***
- ***Poor countries' expectations are rising***

***Current orthodoxy defies common sense***

- ***Continuous growth on a Finite Planet***
- ***Consume more and more to be happy and provide jobs***
- ***Paradoxically - Cuts = more distress, lost jobs, insecurity, more spent on benefits, less tax revenue and more debt***

## ***An unsustainable global economic system***

- ***Fuels climate chaos***
- ***Systematically transfers wealth from the 99% to the 1%. Bears down on the rest of us - people who make things, serve and feed us***
- ***Taxpayers subsidise Big Cos, banks, landlords and employers who are not paying enough through subsidies, bail outs and tax credits.***
- ***Big Cos – above all oil, autos, superstores, energy and agribusiness - have to much power- they hi-jack national governments and global institutions and “externalise” costs***
- ***Mono-thinking, mono-culture, mono-crops, mono-everything, “clone towns” – when diversity is vital***
- ***Our security and sovereignty at the mercy of global markets***
- ***Supported by war and huge military economy = lives lost; \$ trillions that could be better spent***

***Essentially we’re “colonised”***

## ***What drives the system***

***“When the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done” John Maynard Keynes***

- ***“Neo-Liberal Ideology” – free market economy; privatisation; austerity***
- ***Cuts and “structural adjustment” – didn’t work in poor countries – why would it work for us?***
- ***Growth – Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not a measure of progress or real wealth Short-termism***
- ***Free Trade in pursuit of lowest cost – damages economies, communities, jobs, security and sovereignty, “all roads lead to the ports”***
- ***Debt Money – money created through debt - the need to pay interest and repay debt - fuels unsustainable growth***



## ***The solutions are known. So what obstructs change?***

### ***Lack of Political Leadership – Economically illiterate Policy Makers***

- ***Governments lack political will, vision and long-term strategy – in the grip of funding/lobbying; short term focus; tomorrow's news; next election***

#### ***Failing to provide enabling strategy for business***

- ***Economically illiterate view that personal debt and national debt are the same thing – In a depression the job of the state is to invest***
- ***Out dated democracy - unfair voting system; unrepresentative parliament – disenfranchises us Adversarial politics - polarised***
- ***Centralised power, big solutions, big tech, centralised decision making – instead of subsidiarity (getting things done at the right level), local power and releasing creativity***
- ***Irresponsible media – unbalanced, confuses, distracts, misleads***
- ***Disempowered citizens – angry, frustrated, cynical, perception of low standards in public life, retreat from political participation, especially amongst young “nothing we can do”***

# ***Money, financial markets and taxation***

***The process by which banks create money is so simple that the mind is repelled. J K Galbraith***

- ***Debt Money – 97% of our money created by banks “out of thin air” for profit; causes housing inflation; everything costs more***
- ***Creates massive debt burden for nation, people especially young and poor people and poor countries***
- ***Unstable financial markets – 90% transactions are speculative***
- ***Lack of regulation and due diligence = subprime crisis, credit crunch, recession, bailouts - the taxpayer pays***
- ***Perverse taxation, enormous hidden subsidies for Big Cos and banks– rewards the unsustainable; fails to reward sustainable enterprise***
- ***Vast tax avoidance and evasion - UK tax havens, laundering, corruption and abdication of social responsibility***

## ***Review***

**11-35** *Reflect in pairs **how I feel, insights, shocked or surprised, additions, questions***

**11- 45** *Share in plenary*

**11-55** ***Part Two** - Solutions and making them happen **15 minutes***

## *Part Two*

*Solutions – the way forward*

*How to make it happen*

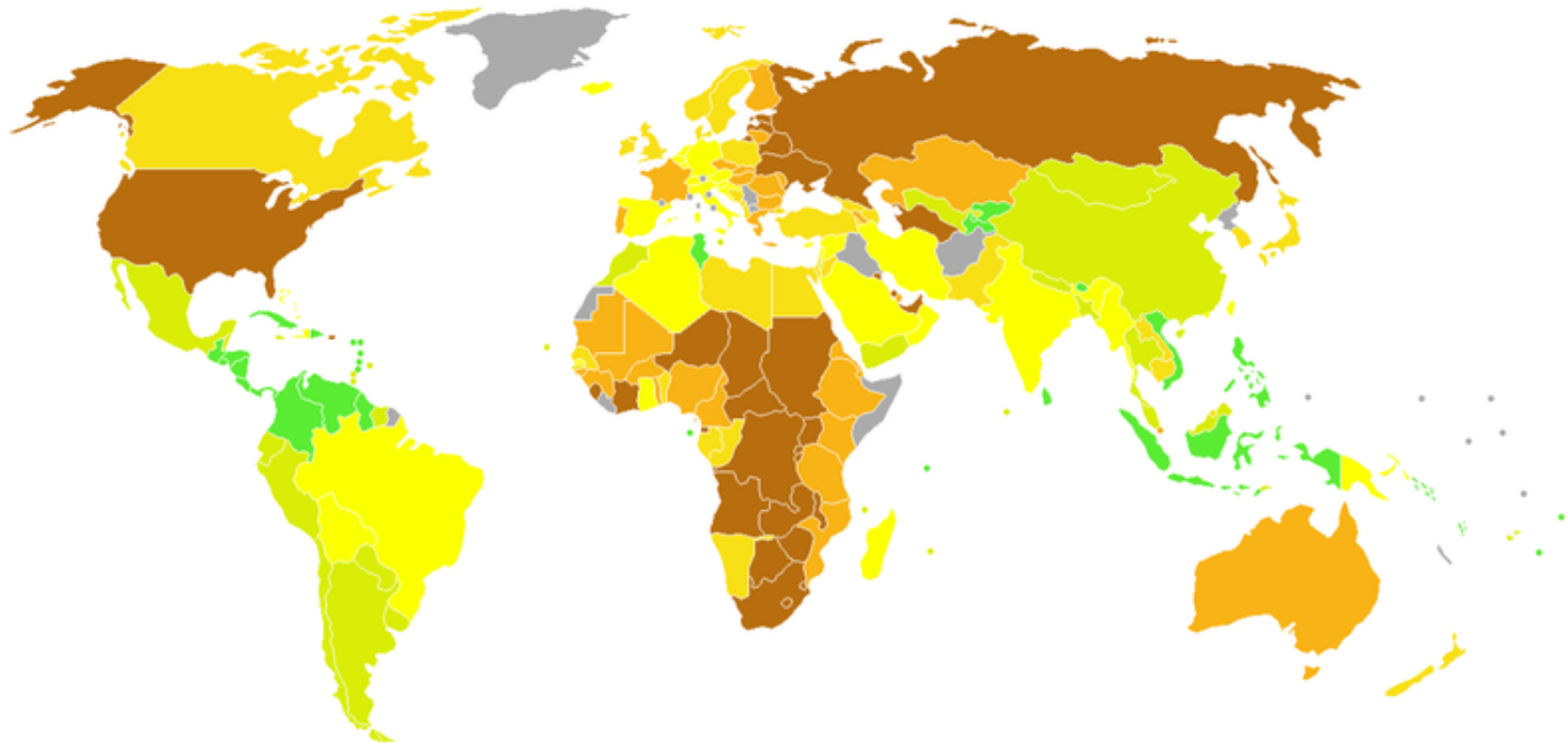
# ***The Alternative***

***A Global Economy whose purpose is the  
Wellbeing of all, including all life on the  
planet***

## **Wellbeing**

***Happier countries are green, yellow middling; least happy are brown (New Economics Foundation (nef) Happy Planet Index)***

***Denmark is the happiest – community matters most, 50% tax but free education, university, child care and healthcare (UN World Happiness Report 2012)***



## ***Polly Higgins's UN Ecocide Law 5<sup>th</sup> Crime against Peace***

- ***A 5th crime under the Rome Statute – primary duty protect people and planet first***
- ***Stewardship will become the number one priority - ownership secondary***
- ***International Criminal Court (ICC) Starting point is restoration. Where member state is either unwilling or unable to act, the ICC will step in***
- ***Legally binding duty of care - 5 years transition from "polluter pays" to "polluter doesn't pollute"***
- ***Companies, banks and governments responsible for restoring adversely impacted territories***
- ***Ultimately enforced by minimum two years imprisonment - alternative sentencing option restorative justice; hearing to come to agreement with parties adversely affected***





## ***A Great Transition – Green New Deal (New Economics Foundation – nef)***

- ***Green the economy - Double win – preventing environmental catastrophe and creating good work and prosperity - the way out of depression***
- ***New values - not stuff, power and status but what matters most. Respect for nature and One World***
- ***Steady State Economy – “prosperity without growth”***
- ***Consume less! “Contraction and Convergence” Rich “ West” contracts – carbon rationing.***
- ***Cut burning of fossil fuels; leave them in the ground. Converge to equal per capita footprint – gradual transition. Concentrate trade on the highest FEET index \****
- ***Rebalance the Economy and Invest - service sector is ¾ of British economy; North/South***
- ***Cut military expenditure – spend on preventing war and resolving violent conflict. Nuclear weapons cost £3BN per annum – enough to quadruple investment in green energy***

\* Foreign Exchange Earnings per Transport tonne (FEET index)

Contraction and Convergence <http://www.gci.org.uk>

## ***Multiple Renewable Solutions - Sustainable Energy Networks***

- ***Power output from renewables can be highly variable - so a combination of different sources and storage is needed***
- ***Wind, wave, tide, hydro, solar, solar PV, ground, water, nuclear (do we really want this?), air source heat pumps, energy storage, biomass, waste reduction. Sustainable Energy – without the hot air David Mackay and Zero Carbon Britain – Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)***
- ***Regional Energy Networks to develop a network to bring together energy know-how and research programs through better coordination and exploitation of research – e.g. The European North Sea Energy Alliance (ENSEA) Scotland, Norway, Northern Germany and Northern Netherlands <http://www.ensea.biz/>***
- ***Will help achieve the European Union's 20.20.20 climate and energy goals and sustainable growth***

## ***Monetary Reform James Robertson and Ben Dyson***

- ***Central Bank creates money, debt free = £60bn a year saving for taxpayer, lower inflation & lower costs (Positive Money campaign)***
- ***Banks – re-define roles, more choice, break oligopoly***
- ***Regulate markets – food and commodity speculation – Tobin Tax***
- ***Sustainable taxation: reward the sustainable; tax “harms”; end Avoidance and Evasion***
- ***Tackle excessive top pay based on short term yields***
- ***Living wage - currently taxpayers subsidise employers paying low wages***
- ***Citizens Income – a right, everyone including students and pensioners - ending dependency – would probably costs less***

***There are lots of campaigns – see appendix***

# ***Green cities, homes and communities***

***Amsterdam; Vauban, almost car free district, Freiburg, Germany; Bedzed in Sutton; Hockerton in Notts.***





# ***Local Food***

***Our garden - Your parents too - Community Gardens***



# ***How to make it happen – a sustainable, fairer society.....***

## ***Two options: Collaborate to survive - Or we face Catastrophe***

***Better democracy: cross party collaboration, very long term cross party bodies, fully representative of our diversity - equal women, people really involved and in charge***

***Sit in a circle – not opposing rows***

***All 193 nations voting in the UN; not just wealthiest***

## ***You in school and elsewhere***

- ***Decide your vision, values and purpose***
- ***Be better informed***
- ***Open minded – hopeful, sceptical; not cynical***
- ***Learn from each other***
- ***Find common ground, “win; win” solutions***



***Mass mobilisation is needed – “Be the change” is not enough***

***Dare to be great!***

***Activism is my rent for living on the planet*** Alice Walker

***Get involved*** ***Do whatever inspires you and you enjoy***

- ***Support campaigns - Polly Higgins’s UN Ecocide Law 5<sup>th</sup> Crime against Peace - Key Campaigns at [www.bruce-nixon.com](http://www.bruce-nixon.com)***
- ***Petitions - Avaaz, 38 degrees, 350 degrees, World Development Movement.***
- ***Lobby - write to your MP - do it collectively with colleagues***
- ***Be an example***
- ***Influence your parents, your school, your friends and workmates***
- ***Volunteer***
- ***Inform yourself – book list in Appendices, A Better World is Possible PDF version free, articles, links to think tanks at [www.bruce-nixon.com](http://www.bruce-nixon.com) and [bruce@bruce-nixon.com](mailto:bruce@bruce-nixon.com)***





## ***A Conversation***

**12-15** *Reflect for a moment* ***What I am/we are doing – want to do***

*Share in plenary – Actions*

**12-20** *Finish*

# ***Appendices***

## Further reading

*Eradicating Ecocide* **Polly Higgins**

*Sustainable Energy – without the hot air* **David Mackay**

*The Energy Glut -The Politics of Fatness in an Overheating World* **Professor Ian Roberts**

*Freefall – Free markets and the sinking of the global economy –* **Joseph Stiglitz**

*James Robertson's Quarterly Newsletter* <http://www.jamesrobertson.com/newsletter.htm>

*The Return of Depression Economics* **Paul Krugman**

*Green New Deal* **New Economics Foundation (nef)**

*Zero Carbon Britain –* **Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)**

*Modernising Money - why our monetary system is broken and how it can be fixed* **Andrew Jackson and Ben Dyson**

*Sovereign Money – paving the way for a sustainable recovery* **Positive Money**

*Steady State Economy* **Herman Daly** <http://steadystate.org/category/herman-daly/>

*Prosperity without growth* **Tim Jackson**

*Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization* **Lester Brown**

*The Burning Question - We can't burn half the world's oil, coal and gas. So how do we quit?* **Mike Berners-Lee & Duncan Clark**

## ***Monetary Reform James Robertson and Ben Dyson***

- ***Give Independent commission sole responsibility for creating money, debt free, to meet national objectives = £60bn a year saving for taxpayer, lower inflation & lower costs***
- ***Banks – re-define roles: investment banks, “boring” banks; national, regional, local banks and break oligopoly***
- ***Regulate markets – food and commodity speculation; Tobin tax on transactions***
- ***Sustainable taxation: Reward sustainable enterprise; Tax “harms”: Carbon Tax; end avoidance and evasion***
- ***Citizens Income – a right, everyone including students and pensioners - ending dependency; costs less. Land Value Tax sharing nation’s common wealth***
- ***Tackle excessive top pay – transparency, maximum pay ratios, supervisory boards, active shareholders***
- ***Living wage - taxpayers currently subsidise employers paying low wages***

## ***We're taking far more than our share***

- ***We are consuming **130%** (rising) of the earth's bio-capacity, wasting it massively; 7bn of us now; estimated 9bn by 2050; demand for power to rise 53% by 2030 unless we become more efficient and waste less***
- ***Eco-footprints: **LA rate = 5 planets; London = 3. Hectares per person: US 12.2 UK 6.29 (really double that), India 1.06. Safe, fair target 1.8 by 2050*****
- ***Carbon footprints - CO2 tonnes p.p. p.a. : **Qatar 44, US 17.2, UK 10 (double that because we have exported our dirty jobs), India 1.4, China 5.3, most African countries below 1. (Wikipedia 2009) Safe 2050 target for planet 2 tonnes p.p. = 90% reduction for us*****
- ***Real costs of oil and cheap everything = "externalised costs" **a billion are hungry, a billion overweight, wars too*****
- ***Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan **thousands killed, millions injured or displaced. Created and almost half the world's 11 million refugees. More money needs to go into prevention and research*****
- ***Climate change **kills 300,000 p.a. in poor countries*****
- ***Misdirected spends – **research goes into what makes money; not prevention of climate change, wars, harms and disease*****



## ***Deaths from war and road crashes***

- ***1.2bn war deaths since 1700***
- ***40m 1945 to 2000***
- ***War in Iraq and Afghanistan **thousands killed, injured or displaced, almost half the world's 11 million refugees created and ruined lives*****
- ***Annual road deaths – now around 2m, 300,00 children, **predominantly in poor countries, highest amongst young men, similar to those in war and conflict.** Expected to rise to 3.6m by 2030 exceeding those from war and conflict. Source World Health Organisation***
- ***Aid for investment **in roads in Africa is of doubtful benefit to poor people – bicycles would offer much greater benefits, especially for women** “The Energy Glut” **Ian Roberts*****
- ***Our nuclear weapons cost £3bn a year – enough to quadruple investment in Renewable energy **Campaign Against Arms Trade CAAT*****