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The climate and ecological emergency

beyond declarations, what is the plan?



While the Covid-19 pandemic is unresolved it is essential that we do not overlook the far greater existential threats of **climate change** and **ecological breakdown**. As Paul Crutzen, the Nobel Prize winning atmospheric chemist, has warned, we are in a new epoch, the Anthropocene, in which humans' impact on the earth rivals that of nature.

Dieter Helm has proposed responses to both these existential threats in two recent books:

In *Green and Prosperous Land: A Blueprint for Rescuing the British Countryside* he details the policy changes needed to manage the UK's natural resources in a way that will allow us to pass on a better environment to future generations and for us to stop depleting **natural capital** without, at least, recognising the value of what is being lost.

In *Net Zero – How We Stop Causing Climate Change (2020)* Helm reminds us that, to our shame, we have largely wasted the last 30 years. He investigates the issues of a net zero economy and approach to agriculture, transport and electricity and proposes a '**no regrets plan**' with a focus on two key issues – a carbon tax and the principle that the polluter should pay.

This discussion will address the issue of what such a 'no regrets plan' should deliver and the responsibility for implementing it, from politicians, with their hesitancy over enacting the necessary policies, to the public, with their unwillingness to accept change. What are the barriers to achieving positive outcomes and how do we overcome them?

The session will pose three questions for the speakers and the Edge audience:

1. What are the policies required and how can we influence them?
2. How can we ensure that policies, once enacted, achieve their aims?
3. How do we ensure that the pace of change is sufficient?

Introduction: Robin Nicholson, CBE, the Edge

Speakers: Sir Dieter Helm, CBE, Professor of Economic Policy, University of Oxford and Chair of the Natural Capital Committee 2012-20

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Chair of the National Audit Office

Shaun Spiers, Executive Director, Green Alliance

Online: Zoom

Timing: Tuesday 16th March 2021, 16.00 – 17.00

To attend please register at:
<https://edge114-climate-ecological-emergency.eventbrite.co.uk>

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Speaker Biographies

Photo credit: David Levinson



Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE became Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 2012 and her term will conclude in September 2021. She came to the college after a long career in the voluntary sector, latterly as Director-General of the National Trust from 2001-2012. During her time as DG she made the Trust warmer and more welcoming, bringing the houses to life and raising the profile of the Trust's work in the countryside.

Before the Trust, she was Director of the Women's Unit in the Cabinet Office (1998-2000), Director of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (now Campaign to Protect Rural England) from 1987-98 and Secretary to the Council for National Parks (now Campaign to Protect National Parks) from 1980-87.

Fiona also holds a number of non-Executive roles. She is a Trustee of the Grosvenor Estate, a Non-Executive Director of Wessex Water, a trustee of the Green Alliance, and Chair of the International National Trusts Organisation, the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and Cambridge University's Botanic Garden. She was a Panel Member for the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes, Adviser to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission and a member of the Advisory Panel for the Dasgupta Review of the Economics of Biodiversity. She took on the role of Chair of the National Audit Office in January 2021.



Sir Dieter Helm is Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford and Fellow in Economics at New College, Oxford. He was Independent Chair of the Natural Capital Committee, providing advice to the government on the sustainable use of natural capital, until the end of the second term of the Committee in November 2020. In the New Year 2021 Honours List, Dieter was awarded a knighthood for services to the environment, energy and utilities policy.

He has written many books, most recently *Net Zero* (September 2020, William Collins) in which he addresses the action we all need to take to tackle the climate emergency.

His other books include: *Green & Prosperous Land* (2019, William Collins), *Burn Out: The Endgame for Fossil Fuels* (2017), *The Carbon Crunch: Revised and Updated* (2015) and *Natural Capital: Valuing the Planet* (2016), all published by Yale University Press.

Dieter has provided extensive advice to UK and European governments, including The Cost of Energy Review for the UK government in October 2017 and for the European Commission in preparing the Energy Roadmap 2030. He served both as a special advisor to the European Commissioner for Energy and as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on the Roadmap. He also assisted the Polish government in its presidency of the European Union Council.

Dieter is Chairman of Natural Capital Research, developing natural capital models and assessments for the better use of land, and Honorary Vice President of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust



Shaun Spiers became executive director of Green Alliance in June 2017. He was chief executive of CPRE, the countryside charity, for 13 years. Previously he led ABCUL, the credit union trade association. From 1994 to 1999, he was an MEP for the South East, serving on the European Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

Shaun chairs the board of Greener UK, a coalition of 12 environmental groups set up in the immediate aftermath of the Brexit referendum. His book, *How to build houses and save the countryside*, was published by Policy Press in March 2018.