

## Environmental and Waste Management Group



### December 2020 Newsletter

#### End of year message

2020 has continued to be a challenging year for us all but it is in times like this that we need to ensure that we continue to engage with you, the membership as much as possible. We as a committee have been meeting on a fortnightly basis in order to make things happen. We have ideas for further engagement up to Easter 2021 including opportunity to meet and speak to Committee Members and for us to experiment with a virtual AGM. Our engagement has been built around the three pillars of *Enhance, Collaborate* and *Influence*; all of which underpin the *IOSH Work 2020* initiative. The committee would like to give opportunity to anyone to showcase initiatives or successes they have led-on or been involved-in to a broader network. Please make contact via our LinkedIn page or mail via [groups@iosh.com](mailto:groups@iosh.com).

COVID-19 has forced us to make the leap to be a virtual group, with a dozen webinars this year attracting over 2,000 views; it's great to see that you the members have taken advantage of that. A big thanks to the speakers from a variety of background and also to the two Presidents (CIWM and IOSH) for meeting the members. Our group survey has closed with over 230 responses, early findings indicating that 45% believe *Environmental Management* is not a subset of *Occupational Health and Safety* was eye opening and may translate into new competency challenges. The committee would like to take this moment to say a big thanks to all of you who participated.

Finally, as this is the last news update for 2020, may we thank you all for your support and wish you and your families the compliments of the festive season. We are sure that you, like us, will all be looking forward to a better 2021 and the re-introduction of something that appears normal. Until then we hope that you all remain safe and healthy.

Best regards,

Your *Environmental and Waste Management Group Committee*

p.s. for 2021 look out for a revised newsletter – produced quarterly – and providing thought leadership on themes inspired by our membership.

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## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

See [here](#) for the latest information and guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

## **INCIDENTS AND PROSECUTIONS**

### **Four dead after explosion at Avonmouth water plant in Bristol**

Four people were reported to have died and one person injured after an explosion at a wastewater treatment plant in Bristol on 3 December that could be heard more than a mile away.

It is believed the five people were all working on top of or near a silo that contained biosolids – solid matter recovered in sewage treatment processes and turned into organic soil conditioner. Police refused to speculate on the cause of the explosion, but Avon fire and rescue service said it believed the silo also contained lime, which can be used in the stabilisation process of waste treatment. HSE is investigating. (Read more: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com))

The incident occurred a few weeks after a fire at a scrap metal yard in Avonmouth had burned over three days and sent smoke across the nearby M5 motorway. (Read more: [bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk))

### **Convicted waste crime offender ordered to pay £2.1 million**

A convicted waste crime offender has been ordered to pay £2,101,708 following a confiscation case brought by the Environment Agency at Worcester Crown Court which concluded on 22 December 2020. (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

## **WASTE, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND CLIMATE**

### **In a sign of our times...**

A new campaign to encourage the UK to switch to reusable facemasks was launched on 15 December, as research for North London Waste Authority (NLWA) revealed that 102 million single-use facemasks are being disposed of each week in the UK. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](https://www.circularonline.co.uk))

### **Festival of Circular Economy**

The Festival of Circular Economy - taking place virtually on 20-21 April 2021 - is a new event which will celebrate the projects and the people making a difference in this space. By showcasing a wide range of new developments and ideas, the Festival will give you insights and connections to accelerate your transition to more circular systems.

This event, organised by CIWM and supported by the Circular Economy Club, will be a unique forum for driving the collaboration which is fundamental to the development of circular systems, bringing together organisations of all sizes, from all points in the product life cycle. If you want to receive details of the agenda when it is announced in January, you can sign up for updates [here](#).

## UK sets out ambitious approach to strengthening climate adaptation and resilience ahead of COP26

On 12 December the UK set out its approach to prepare for the effects of climate change at home and support those facing impacts overseas, fulfilling a key commitment of the Paris Agreement. In becoming one of the first countries in the world to publish its plans – known as an Adaptation Communication – the UK is setting out how it is enhancing resilience to our changing climate. (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

### ...but is set to miss its targets?

UK government plans announced in 2020 add up to less than a quarter of the emissions cuts needed to achieve 2030 climate target, according to an end of year check by Green Alliance. Despite the enormous challenge of battling a pandemic, the government made 'bold promises' throughout 2020 to reduce emissions ahead of hosting the UN climate summit in Glasgow next year; these included the ten point plan for a green industrial revolution, new plans for sustainable land management, ending the financing of fossil fuel projects abroad and the new target (nationally determined contribution) to reduce emissions by at least 68 per cent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels. (Read more: [circularonline.co.uk](https://www.circularonline.co.uk))

### Easy listening (not always)

From new research to changing policy, from fresh insights to new leadership - the climate agenda has moved fast in 2020. These programmes are well worth a listen on your run, your morning walk, or just in the background while you cook the dinner this festive season. Enjoy –

1. **Mark Carney's Reith Lectures - BBC Sounds** Still being broadcast, but this has been my favourite listen of the year so far. In five lectures, former governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney charts how we have come to put financial value over human value and how we have gone from market economies to market societies. He argues that this has contributed to a trio of crises: of credit, Covid and climate. And he sets out how we can turn this around. [BBC Radio 4 - The Reith Lectures - Reith Lectures 2020 – How We Get What We Value](#)
2. **Joe Biden's ambitions for climate change - Pod Save America.** Pod Save America styles itself as "a no-bullshit conversation about politics." This October 2020 interview with Joe Biden is brilliant at showing his ambitions for making his presidency all about climate leadership. On Apple, Spotify or at ["We got Joe!" | Crooked Media](#)
3. **Zero Carbon Britain - Costing the Earth.** With the UK committing to net zero emissions, this is a pocket-sized podcast on just how can the UK do it - with the inspiring Helen Czerski, Mark Lynas and BusinessGreen.com's James Murray. [Costing the Earth - Zero Carbon Britain - BBC Sounds](#)
4. **Shaping Zero.** An engaging, uplifting film that sets out the challenge and opportunities for engineers to be part of net zero. Produced as part of Rachel Skinner's year as president of the ICE this is well worth a watch if you're an engineer (25 minutes). [Shaping Zero – Watch the film | Institution of Civil Engineers \(ice.org.uk\)](#).

5. **The UK's sixth climate budget.** The UK's Committee on Climate Change has set out the progress that the UK economy has to make to deliver a net zero Britain by 2050. There's lots of material online, but the 30-minute launch video is well worth a watch, chaired by the CCC's Chief Executive, Chris Stark. <https://youtu.be/vOwmd3zJBG0> <https://youtu.be/vOwmd3zJBG0>
  
6. **Climate Wars - BBC World Compass.** A bit of a dark end to the year, but this series charts how climate change is fuelling conflict across the globe – from guerrilla raids on farmer-herders in Africa to a Cold War in the Arctic. It's compelling listening and to understand how important climate action is worldwide, not just in the UK. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct165c>