

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 6:35 pm

It was when we'd reached about the twenty mile mark in our walk, yesterday morning, that I broke the flow in my conversation with John Christensen and David Quentin to suggest that the time we'd spent together had already proved more valuable in terms of my thinking than any conference I'd been to for a long time.

Starting from Wells-next-the-Sea we walked west on Thursday and east on Friday. The walking is not tough, but the scenery is stunning. We were blessed with good weather. We kept up a pretty good pace throughout. And the conversation flowed continuously, barring the odd moments when, to my friends' bemusement, I insisted on looking through my binoculars at some of the great bird life North Norfolk has to offer.

David had set our theme. In essence this was to debate how tax justice fitted into the necessary processes of change that must now take place if the future is to be claimed for people and not be passed over solely to the interests of international rentier capitalism that has the capacity to destroy life on earth and the well-being of the vast majority before it does so.

We covered enormous ground, and a massive range of ideas. One person who overheard us when we were setting out on Friday morning said "That sounds heavy". John cheerfully assured him it wasn't: it was precisely what we'd set out to do.

I am not promising we have all the answers. But I came back more optimistic than I have been for some time. I think answers are possible. With alternative approaches and new thinking we persuaded ourselves that reconciliation across the left may be possible. One of our ways of addressing the issue was to think how politicians we knew with seemingly irreconcilable views could be persuaded there was common ground.

What will the outcome be? Almost certainly a book, but certainly not of the sort I have been engaged with before and in which I may only play a small part. But that would just be a focal point. The real aim would be more conversation. It's a shame the whole world can't go for a walk. We'd get radical change a lot quicker if it could. In lieu of that dialogue is key.

We'll beat this around some more but we recognise time is of the essence.

I'm truly grateful to John and David for two quite exciting days.