

Now we need an END

Published: January 19, 2026, 7:58 am

I was asked to speak to the [Cross Party Group on Sustainable Energy](#) in the Welsh Senedd (parliament) yesterday. I had already done so in February this year, presenting in both occasions alongside Paul Allen from the Centre of Alternative Technology in Machynlleth. On the first occasion I presented on what the Green New Deal was. This time I suggested we might need an Emergency New Deal (and END) as well. These are my speaking notes:

I presented what I thought the Green New Deal is way back in February. It seems like a lifetime ago now. I am not proposing to present this again today. Instead, I am interested in how perspectives have changed since then.

Let me offer a brief overview of those changes. Fundamentally:

- A Brexit Deal is not happening;
- Covid is.

So we have:

- A pandemic;
- An economic recession;
- More than half the country in lockdown. Only mid-Wales looks to be escaping right now, and who knows how long that will last?
- The risk is very high unemployment soon as the furlough scheme comes to an end. I am predicting at least 5 million unemployed in the UK as a whole, although the figures may be manipulated by the denial of universal credit and by people falling out of the labour force and simply becoming unrecorded;
- The risk of a major food crisis from January onwards as a result of Brexit;
- Inflation as a consequence, particularly in food prices;
- The likelihood of an increasing number of corporate failures as cash flows literally cease to exist in 2021;
- Increasing poverty as a result of unemployment, with a substantial risk of a significant increase in homelessness amongst both renters and those with mortgages as universal credit fails to meet their liabilities;
- A consequent banking crisis;
- Serious house prices falls;
- An economic depression.

So the questions have changed.

I assumed, somewhat naïvely as it turned out, that we might face an orderly

transition from the world we had been in, to the sustainable one in which we need to live. That is clearly not going to happen now. We do, instead, face a period of substantial economic, social and political disruption on the way.

As a consequence this requires an adjustment to thinking. There are now three issues of consequence:

1. Making clear that the old normal has gone;
2. Dealing with the current crisis;
3. Simultaneously planning for the world beyond that crisis.

The best parallel I can draw is with WW2. Once that began there were some who did not realise that everything had changed, but over time that became apparent. Then there was a need to win the war. But, most importantly, during that process of fighting the war things like the Beveridge report were prepared. The planning for what became the postwar consensus was put in place well before the war was won.

My suggestion today is, then, that the Senedd now has two real priorities. I suspect that few in Wales have a difficulty in understanding that the old normal has gone. After all, Wales did not benefit greatly from it. In that case the priority is addressing the crisis to come, and I fully accept that the majority of effort will go into this. But there must, secondly, be room for the visionary thinking about what Wales wants in the future.

Of course, the two can be aligned to a degree. In fact, I think that this will be essential, and that the Senedd should be planning on this.

In effect, I suspect that we will move from New Deal (or an Emergency New Deal) in the first instance, to Green New Deal in the second.

What I mean is this. Because the coming jobs crisis is going to be so much bigger than anyone expects, and of longer duration, any government is going to have to resort to direct employment to solve the crisis. This is what the New Deal did. The Federal state in the USA directly employed people to correct unemployment. I think that this will be happening in the UK, and that to be effective the power to do this will have to be devolved, including to the Welsh government. In that case the Welsh government has to think about what it wants to do now.

We know that there are easy jobs to create in some areas. For example, some aspects of an installation are easy to do. Making double glazing also is relatively easy to train people to make and to fit, and the yields are enormous. Simply planning how to get people on the streets, doing work, is a critical activity for the Senedd now, because I think the demand is going to be there.

But of course, these things are only the overture. A true Green New Deal has to follow. That is the plan that I hope the Senedd will adopt - including its integration into environmental tourism, care and so much more.

We are facing a disaster. But, it can be transformed into something of value. It's all down to the planning. And that's for you to do, now.