

Climate change concern within accounting is all down to...

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A week ago [I noted that the FT had published a letter from me](#) criticising PWC for moaning about their recruitment problems. I suggested that if they brought audit into the 21st century by tackling climate change, amongst other things, then young people might want to work for them.

This morning the FT carries a reply from some called Andy Thompson of Worcester Park, [who says](#):

I am surprised to see Richard Murphy, as a professor of accounting practice, claiming such a broad social role for the audit profession ("Auditors only have themselves to blame for recruitment woes", [Letters](#), January 5).

Heaven forbid that there be a social purpose for audit! Mr Thompson is quite sure that there is not:

The primary function of auditors must always be to assess all aspects of financial performance. Their principal constituents as account users are investors in, and major lenders to, the entities that they audit.

Most of us are, directly or indirectly, equity investors in listed companies at some time in our lives. As citizens, of course, we may have many concerns and interests that overlap with the activities of commercial companies, well beyond their financial performances. Yet we should not expect, nor need, to find useful information about many of these matters in company annual reports.

We should be grateful for what crumbs of information that we might get from accounts, and not complain, is the message.

After another paragraph which rambles on whilst suggesting that we should rely on other regulators from '*police fraud squads to health and safety inspectors, environmental authorities, tax officials and many others*' to ensure climate change

compliance by such companies, all of whom will, I am sure, be pleased to learn of their new roles in this area

Murphy states that “many young people think that auditors are part of the climate change problem”.

Do they really? Or does it depend who has been teaching them?

Now I get it! Climate change is not a real issue. Lefty professors talking about it as if it might have an impact on business is the real problem.

There are moments when you have to despair at the stupidity of people unable to comprehend the crisis that they and the businesses in which they are invested are facing. This letter provided one of them.