

We could do things so very differently

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There are rare moments when I think everything must change.

Sometimes, these have been personal.

Other times, I have realised that organisations I have been involved in need to change.

But this morning, I have a very real sense that the need for everything to change is very much bigger. I am increasingly thinking that society is becoming unsustainable. The political decisions of the past are coming home to roost. The current political narrative is not working and cannot ever work again. The risk of serious breakdown is very high.

The evidence is all around us, and I offer it in no particular order.

The COP28 has seen bizarre claims that we must burn carbon to save the planet. The scientific evidence is unequivocal that we must stop doing so. Our failure to do just that is very rapidly leading us to [climate tipping points](#).

The [war in Gaza](#) is going to rewrite the politics of the Middle East, which have been so significant throughout my life. Israel's actions will change its standing in the world, whatever Hamas totally unjustifiably did.

[Sellafield is leaking](#), and there is no answer to the questions about nuclear waste after a lifetime of it accumulating. The pretence that nuclear is the energy answer has to be over.

Fascism is on the rise. We have seen it in the Netherlands, but it is as apparent here. [The Tories are discussing the suspension of human rights](#) so that they can pursue a policy on extraditing immigrants to Rwanda that can do absolutely nothing to solve the migration issue because of the tiny numbers that will ever be involved.

In fairness to the Tories, it looks quite likely that they will split over this issue. The possibility that the supposed most effective electoral machine in democratic history

might collapse under the weight of its own in-fighting looks to be very real. It could happen soon. The likelihood that the date of the next election is not Sunak's to choose is growing [as he begins to lose his party's support in the Commons](#).

Labour has moved into Tory space to take on the centre-right role.

There is no leading left-of-centre political party in the UK in a two-party system now: the essential element of first-past-the-post, that it offers the electorate choice, even if it is only a limited one, has gone. As a result, we no longer have anything approaching a functioning democracy.

Nor, with Labour dedicated to austerity and cuts, will we have anything approaching acceptable public services left in the UK. The next round of doctors' strikes is evidence that this is unacceptable.

The migration issue is not going away: without inward migration, we cannot survive. Without it, there will be no provision for an ageing population in the UK that long ago ceased to replace itself. The self-destruct button is being pushed on this issue.

And the same is true of economics. The failure to recover from the 2008 crash is not by chance: it is because that crash was caused by the failure of neoliberalism and yet we are still trying to treat that failure with more neoliberalism, which clearly cannot work. But our politicians, civil service and the so-called economists who feed them the nonsense that informs what is supposedly called evidence-based policy cannot see this obvious fact, so blinded are they by ideology.

All of this, and more, suggests that the system we have cannot survive. It is literally, and very obviously, dying all around us.

We could do things so very differently.

We could care.

We could prioritise meeting the needs of all and not delivering the wants of a few.

We could plan for our children's and grandchildren's survival.

We could make financial services a servant and not a master.

We could fund strong public services.

We could take action to stop the massively destructive excess consumption of some that is destroying this planet for everyone else, which is also utterly distorting our economies.

We could have a functioning democracy.

If we did, we could stop fascism.

We could do all this.

But will we?