

When are we going to get as scared witless as we should...

Published: July 25, 2026, 7:04 am

As [The Guardian](#) reports this morning:

More than 200,000 people have fled or been ordered to lock down as huge wildfires swept Spain and France on Friday, prompting Madrid to declare a national emergency and the French authorities to order the total evacuation, by land and sea, of one of the country's best-known holiday spots.

They added:

Authorities in south-west France ordered the Cap Ferret peninsula on the Atlantic coast to be evacuated "village by village" in the face of an "intense, highly unpredictable" wildfire that has burned through more than 19,000 hectares (47,000 acres) of forest.

And let's be clear: fires are out of control in Wales and Scotland as well right now.

What is more, this situation is only going to get worse: we have passed the point where we can stop that being the case. Unless we take action soon, climate change risk will enter the zone of being entirely unpredictable.

In 2008, I co-authored the first [Green New Deal report](#). I wrote most of the subsequent reports. The group that wrote that report is now defunct, killed by Ann Pettifor's visceral hatred of modern monetary theory (although she seems to actually embrace all it says, whilst thinking MMT is about Friedman's helicopter money). That does not matter, though: the point is that it was obvious that these risks existed, and nothing happened.

More worryingly, nothing still is happening. Has Andy Burnham talked about this during his first week in office? Has he ever? Does he have any awareness of this issue? It seems to me that he has very little. And despite appointing a minister for net zero with Cabinet rank, he then raided the climate budget to pay for his £2 bus fare cap in an act of such small-mindedness it defies belief - whilst reinforcing his neoliberal belief with an approach reminiscent of the Washington Consensus, which [this morning's infographic](#) is about.

The question to ask then is a simple one. It is, are we now kissing our planet goodbye? And do we care? Or has our focus on hedonistic pleasure in the moment reduced us to the point where concern for its consequences now does not occur to most people?

I can worry about Trump, fascism, neoliberal failure and more. But they're all lower-order issues compared to climate change, and what worries me is that it is not being talked about by almost anyone, whilst the fascists even deny it is happening.

When are we going to get as scared witless as we should be?