

# Carbon neutral asphalt and the perfect fungus. Can we save the world?

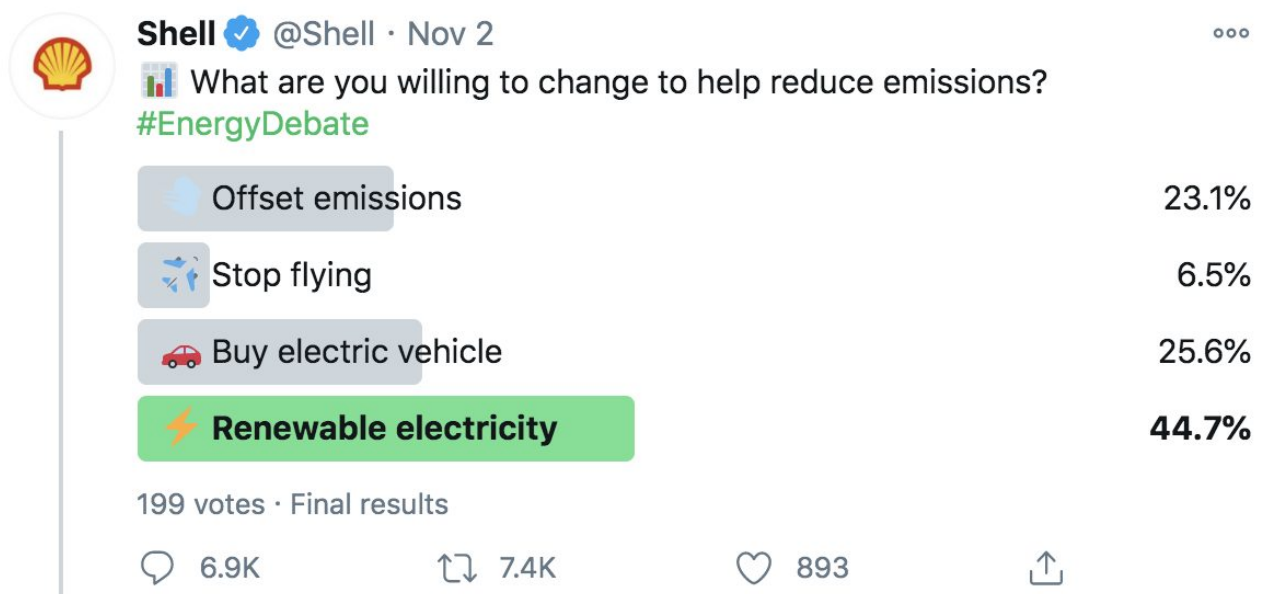
*Every week, Maddyness looks at the good, the bad and the ugly in climate change news. Today, we highlight the search for new-world dairy alternatives – and absolutely nothing about the US election.*

Temps de lecture : minute

4 November 2020

I talked quite a lot about the US election last week and, writing this on Tuesday evening, I don't yet know who's going to win – so I've decided my focus is best-placed elsewhere! Lalalalala.

First off, this tweet from Shell did not go down well.



'I'm willing to hold you accountable for lying about climate change for 30 years when you secretly knew the entire time that fossil fuels emissions would destroy our planet', replied Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. 'Y'all put the gas in gaslighting' replied the less famous but (on this occasion) much funnier [Luke Schumann](#).

Moving beyond ill-fated marketing and towards the big news... Has Asia turned its back on coal once and for all? The Philippines is the latest nation to reject the fossil fuel of all fossil fuels; last week it [declared a moratorium](#) on new plants.

Overall, Asia's recent announcements [are sending](#) all the right signals. According to Patricia Espinosa, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,

*"These signals of very strong commitments by countries that are very important, and that have a real impact on the level of emissions globally, are extremely important... And it's also very important to recognise that they are coming at a time when we need this kind of leadership."*

Tick tock, Australia. China has stopped importing Australian coal, and banks have expressed a clear intent to stop financing thermal mines and power stations, but nevertheless, [the powers-that-be persist](#).

## The big ideas

Last Thursday, Maddy Ness [republished a piece](#) I originally wrote for *Ours to Save* on designing for a circular economy. I spoke to Charlotte Perkins,

founder of [another](#), about how architects, designers and construction companies can move away from the linear economic model and towards greener building.

Beyond this, have a look at the ideas and innovations from across the spectrum of politics, social justice and big business that caught my eye this week:

- Yellow provides access to green energy via the distribution of Solar Home Systems across rural communities in Malawi and Uganda. Read a recent interview with its Head of Operations [here](#).
- WestRock, the second largest American packaging company (worth \$18B) [says](#) it's innovating new fibre-based packaging solutions and improving the recyclability of foodservice packaging.
- Green innovation is booming in Israel, according to [this article](#). One example startup is Chakratec. According to CEO Ilan Ben David, "Utilising our proprietary Kinetic Power Booster technology, Chakratec facilitates the deployment of fast and ultra-fast electric vehicle charging stations anywhere, including locations with a weak grid."



- There are 1.9 million homes in the UK without internet. Hubbub are calling on people around the UK to combat e-waste and digital exclusion by giving away their old phone. If you're interested in this kind of thing, read Maddyness's interview with TechInclusion.
- The world's largest cement manufacturer - LafargeHolcim - has signed the Net-Zero Pledge. In a step towards this goal, its subsidiary Aggregate Industries has released Superlow - a carbon neutral asphalt.
- Lalitpur, Nepal was once a truly 'green city'. Now, its government is working with UNEP to regain this former glory through park construction, solar lights, waste reduction, less open burning and public services.
- Businesses in the South West of the UK are collaborating with Korean innovators in the hydrogen mobility space. South Korea, according to facilitators Business West, will have 6.2 million hydrogen-powered vehicles on its roads by 2040.

- Can co-operative banks drive Europe's economic recovery and green transition?
- In the Ras al-Khaimah, UAE, businesses that violate environmental laws are being given the option to plant trees rather than pay fines.
- The Future Foodtech Summit is due to take place on 2-3 December. Green queen has listed its eight favourite participants, including Those Vegan Cowboys, which is trying to speed up the development of fermentation-based dairy alternatives and currently embroiled in a bounty hunt for the 'perfect fungal strain'.

## Further reading

If you're still reading, here's even more reading:

- Innovation is an essential part of dealing with climate change, via *The Economist*.
- Climate-conscious venture capitalists are back. Can they both make money and protect the planet? Also via *The Economist*.
- You've got cheap data, how about cheap power too? Via the BBC.

---

Article by Florence Wildblood