

LANSON'S  
LONDON NEW YORK



What people think,  
feel and do

# Perspectives on the climate crisis through COVID-19

Key Findings  
October 2020





***“We can’t self-isolate  
from climate change”***

*Mark Carney, May 2020*



## Contents

Introduction	4
1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change	6
2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector	14
3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet	22
4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change	29
5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet	37
Conclusion	45
About the authors	50



# Perspectives on the climate crisis through COVID-19

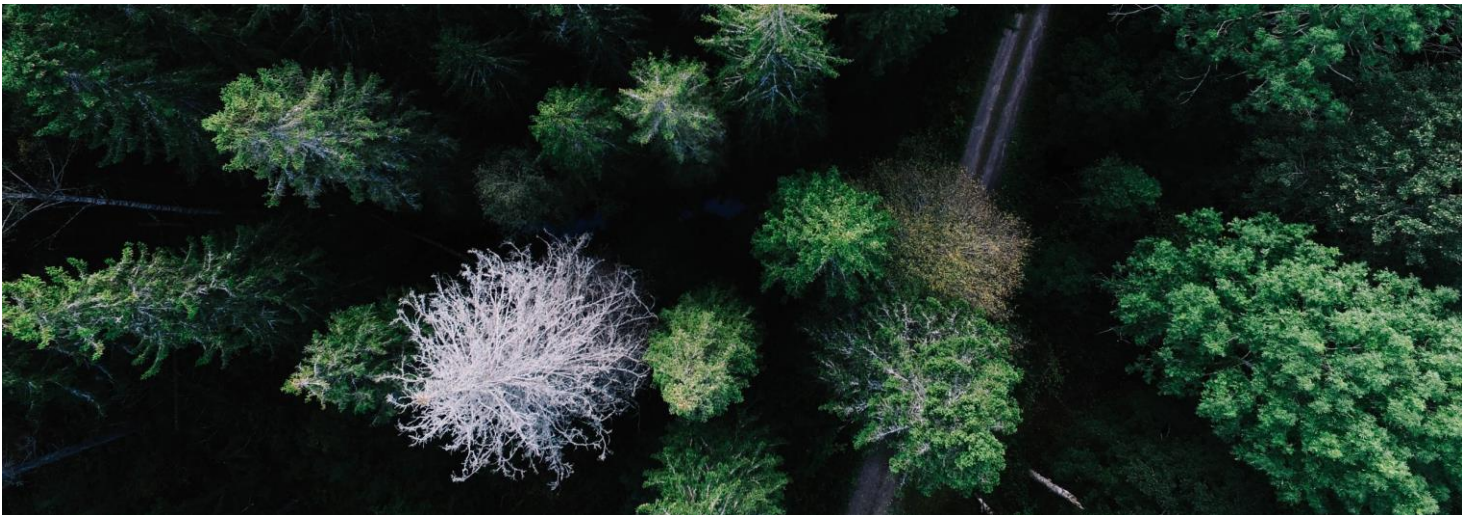
## Introduction

To better understand how changes from the coronavirus crisis will impact business leaders across the UK in the long term, Lansons partnered with specialist research house, Opinium, for its study **“Climate Perspectives through COVID-19: has the pandemic changed attitudes and behaviours needed to tackle the climate crisis?”**

The desire to stay safe during the coronavirus crisis created some dramatic, mass behaviour changes that have had sustainable and environmental benefits. For instance, our reduction in movement – travelling less by air and on roads – has led to the biggest carbon reduction ever recorded.

Is this a turnkey moment in the climate change story?

Not so fast.



While our consumer research, together with insights from independent sources and expert commentary from sustainability specialist, Jane Stevenson, suggests that attitudes have changed and concern is growing, there's no guarantee that society's response to the crisis will prompt permanent changes in our behaviour towards the environment. And we risk lurching from one crisis (back) to another.

**The big challenge is not to take our eyes off climate change, through all the distraction of coping with COVID; to ensure our recovery has a green focus, and it is critical businesses are attuned to it.**

## Perspectives on the climate crisis through COVID-19

This report has five key insights that business and brand leaders should have front of mind when reviewing their sustainability strategy and narrative for customers, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders.

The research was conducted in two waves over the course of 2020. The first wave was conducted in May amongst a nationally representative sample of 1,086 UK adults (aged 18+). The second wave was conducted in August and consisted of another nationally representative sample of 2,001 UK adults (aged 18+). It revealed these key findings:

- 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change**
- 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector**
- 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet**
- 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change**
- 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet**

# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change





# 1. Pandemic highlights ○ generational divide in the fight against climate change

## ○ During the pandemic, many have made sacrifices for the greater good.

Similarly, when it comes to climate change the public recognise the need for a collective response. However, views on the nature of that response and the degree to which we all have an individual role to play, differs significantly by generation.

Older generations are most concerned by clear and visible symptoms of climate change; plastic in the oceans, food waste, and bad air. The respiratory nature of COVID-19 has had its impact here too, with air pollution appearing in the list of concerns amongst older age groups for the first time, during the pandemic.

In contrast, young “climate natives”, believe tackling the symptoms won’t solve the problem. They prioritise investment in green infrastructure and changes to British law. They seek systemic change that addresses both individual behaviours and the reduction of carbon emissions at organisational, industry, national and international levels.

Organisations need to account for these different views and priorities when engaging internal and external audiences with their commitments and actions around climate change.

# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

## Opinium research:

52%

of British people say that  
the collective effort is  
more important than  
individual, when it comes  
to the environment



32%

of under-40s say  
individual behaviour  
is more important



17%

only 17% of over-60s  
say the same



75%

of over-60s say  
"Reducing the amount  
of plastic in the sea" is  
their priority





# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

## Opinium research:



“Changing overall behaviour towards the environment” and “Reducing carbon footprint” are most important to 18-29 year olds



31%

of 60-69s say “air pollution” has only come to matter during C-19. The highest of any group



**“The research underpins the strategic versus tactical approaches preferred by the different age groups; *younger = active, older = passive.*”**

# 1. Pandemic highlights ○ generational divide in the fight against climate change

## ○ Other supporting facts:

A study by the Yale Programme on Climate Communication in the US found that younger generations **are more likely to understand and therefore trust** the science on climate change.



COVID-19 [has led](#) to the **Fridays to Future** movement, where youth activists have adopted digital demonstrations to share their demands for bold climate action. These follow the call from Greta Thunberg to [#ClimateStrikeOnline](#).



# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

## Insights:

As the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic, the words **'Boomer Remover'** has featured prominently in Twitter trends. It's an attack by Millennials on the Boomer generation, saying they've had enough of the policies and politics that have got us to this point. They want more action.

As the US inches closer to election, climate change is a big voting issue. **Young people are seeing the impact of global warming and are actively voting.** Polls suggest 48% of 17-29 year olds would have voted for Bernie Sanders this year, who had been endorsed by leading environmental groups.





# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

## Expert commentary from Jane Stevensen



“Pre-pandemic we were already seeing a clear divide between generations in terms of how climate change was driving behaviours. The so-called **“Greta effect”** led by the Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, began with her solitary protest outside the Swedish Parliament and grew into **a world-wide movement bringing cities to a halt**, and inspired the global Fridays for Future movement with predominantly a youth/student membership profile. Direct action through strikes is the modus operandi – something which, generally speaking, **doesn’t appeal to the over-40s who prefer to be less confrontational**.

The research underpins the strategic versus tactical approaches preferred by the different age groups; **younger = active, older = passive**. For those under 35-40, climate change is a global issue which requires a global solution, with the world uniting to fight it. It is recognised as an existential threat which requires a huge shift in the way the world works, removing fossil fuel usage and creating a sustainable more balanced way of living in tune with the natural world. For the over 40s it is much more about their own local environment, hence the focus on issues such as recycling, plastic waste, and air pollution.”

# 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

## What to do next?

Public concern is evident across all age groups. But the extent to which people worry about it and their behaviours in tackling the crisis, differs markedly by age. This should serve as a wake-up call to the type of action and flexible messaging required by business and brand leaders.

- **One size doesn't fit all.** Sustainability narratives need to be built around the action an organisation is taking, but the communication must be sensitive to the needs and preferences of different audiences.
- Employers looking to target young talent should **demonstrate both how they empower individuals** to make choices that are better for the planet **and what they are doing at an organisational level** to address emissions and contribute to infrastructural change.
- **Don't alienate those who sit in the middle** of young vs older generations or who don't associate themselves with their stereotype. Not all young people want to be activists! Be ready with messages that plays to the interests of collective action. Give people a toolkit that fits their circumstances.
- As an employer, **build pride in the climate commitments you make** as a business. When some organisations have announced a big goal to save emissions, they've witnessed a surge in interest from their people to learn and get involved. Find your ambassadors and disseminate the messages and call-to-arms.

## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector





## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

- **“The green recovery” is now firmly on the Government agenda, with investment in the decarbonisation of heavy industries announced in July.**

Phrases such as “Build Back Better” have resonated and the public are keen to see Governments and industries making choices now that take advantage of the respite the pandemic has offered the planet.

However, the financial sector is also under huge scrutiny as people – now deeply concerned with the stability of their financial future – look for solutions that are sustainable.

Consumers say they are more interested in the green credentials of financial services as a result of the pandemic, and this is particularly true among younger age-groups.

Financial services organisations need to show genuine commitment to the issue, not just through their products, but also through their own behaviour.

Whilst there has been a rapid growth in the number of solutions labelled sustainable, responsible or ESG compliant, this will not be enough to win consumer confidence and the disconnect between products and practice could undermine public trust.

As their interests align, employees and consumers alike will increasingly expect sustainability to be fully embedded throughout an organisation and doing so, in a purposeful and transparent way, will be key to building credibility on the issue.

## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### Opinium research:

29%

of investors are “more interested” in sustainable investments since the coronavirus outbreak



58%

say they want their bank / building society to invest their savings (or other products) in a way that is good for the environment



32%

say they hold this view more strongly since the pandemic



62%

say they want businesses to help them make environmentally friendly decisions



## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### Opinium research:

23%

A quarter of 30-39 year olds say buying sustainable products is important to them



27%

of those earning over £80k a year say the same



**“Climate risk is a major destabilizing force in terms of global financial markets.”**



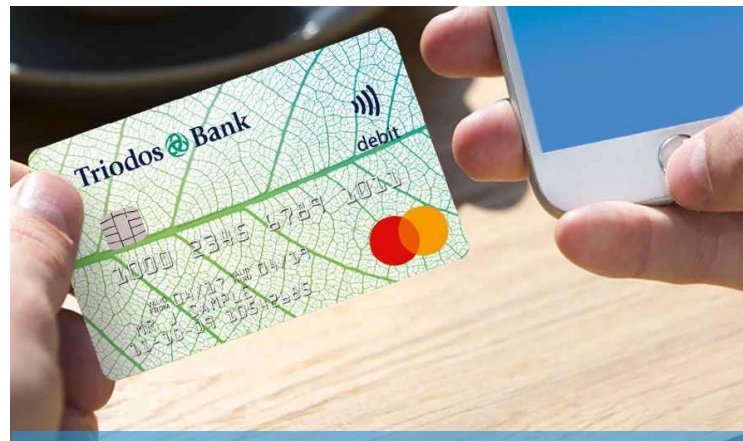
## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### Insights:

Speaking in May, during BP's first quarter results webinar, new CEO Bernard Looney acknowledged that the pandemic had served to reinforce his belief in the **Energy Transition** and of the benefits, in terms of risk and resilience, of diversifying into renewables.



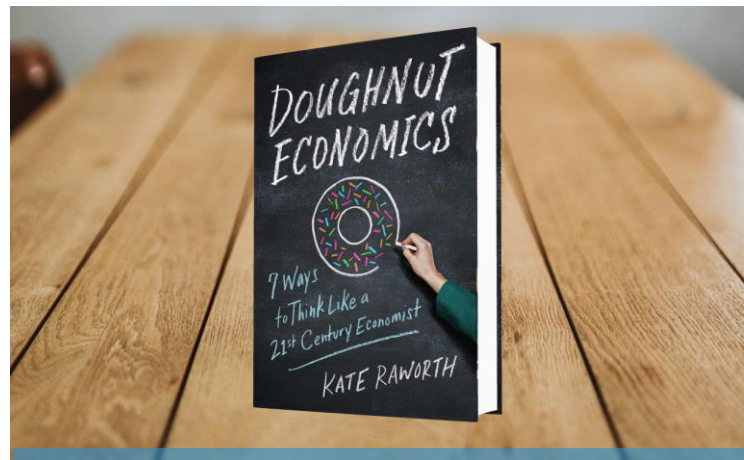
**New banks like Triodos** reflect a changing landscape for consumer banking and investment, in which consumers are looking for more sustainable approaches.



## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### Insights:

Much has been written about the need for a restructuring of the economy to tackle climate change. In Kate Raworth's book **"Doughnut Economics – Seven ways to think like a 21st Century Economist"** she draws on the work from other academics and disciplines to put the case forward for a new economy that puts the planet first.



**In 2018, at least \$30.7 trillion of funds were held in sustainable or green investments**, up 34% from 2016, according to a report by the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance.



## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### Expert commentary from Jane Stevensen



“The amount of money flowing into environmental, social and governance (ESG) funds has exploded in recent years with **31 trillion US dollars invested sustainably according to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance** as of last June (2019). And with climate change recognised immediately pre-pandemic as the defining issue of the decade and dominating discussions amongst asset managers and other investment professionals, you might think the majority of that 31 trillion dollars would be invested in environmentally sustainable activities. But you’d be wrong.

Before the pandemic struck, companies throughout the economy were under intensifying pressure to respond to climate change, not just from central banks but from employees, consumers, corporate customers and, above all, from investors. Only this February there was an announcement from Larry Fink, the CEO of Blackrock, the world’s largest asset manager, putting climate change at the heart of every investment decision. He said that **“a fundamental reshaping of finance is required; climate change is driving a profound reassessment of risk and we anticipate a significant reallocation of capital”**.

This demonstrates a recognition of climate risk in financial terms, and the understanding of how it is a major destabilising force in terms of global financial markets.”



## 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

### What to do next?

From Investment industry specialist, David Masters

The demand for a sustainable finance sector is clear, but the roadmap is not. Organisations will have to play many roles to educate, enable and empower savers and investors whilst at the same time ensuring their own house is in order.

- Organisations need to establish sustainability credentials by ensuring activity and progress is communicated effectively, both internally and externally. For those that have not yet done so, embedding sustainability principles into business operations by setting out a clear approach, narrative, and measurable objectives will be essential. **This is the time for businesses to be asking themselves difficult questions.**
- Aligning ESG strategies and narratives with the UN's sustainable goals will allow FS companies to give people clear and simple choices when it comes to investment products, better enabling them to connect their financial objectives with the causes they care most about. **FS businesses need to listen to consumers about what is important to them** and design solutions that have the flexibility to adapt as beliefs around ESG continue to evolve.
- Adopting **the TCFD framework for reporting the financial risks of climate change demonstrates commitment to the UN sustainable goals** and provides the transparency that investors seek.

A person wearing a white lab coat is standing on a beach covered in white pebbles. They are holding a large, blue, rectangular foam object with both hands. A clear plastic bottle is attached to the foam object. The bottle is partially filled with a brown liquid and has a small, yellowish object inside. The person is also holding a blue stick or rod. The background is a blurred view of the beach and some greenery.

### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet



### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

**While being in lockdown gave many people the opportunity to take stock, it has not been enough to prevent a return to old habits.**

During the summer, when restrictions eased, we saw large numbers flock to beaches and national parks creating a spike in littering, an increase in CO2 levels with more road travel, and food waste climbing as people stopped worrying about running out of food. Combined with the added time pressures of some 'normal' life resuming, such as more people returning to places of work and pupils returning to school, people's motivations to act responsibly for our environment is waning. Some are even saying that relaxation of restrictions has acted like a 'cork popping from a bottle.' Now, restrictions are increasing again and there are already reports of the same panic buying we saw in April, such as toilet paper running out.

So, while our research found that many felt ashamed by the visible sigh of relief we saw from the planet when our previous behaviour temporarily ceased, the re-emerging trends are not supporting the climate cause. Businesses have a crucial role to support a green recovery by committing to not going back to old ways: motivating and empowering employees, customers and consumers to take responsibility, individually and collectively, for the benefit of our planet.



### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

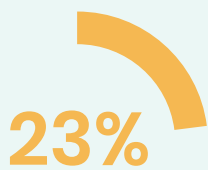
#### Opinium research:



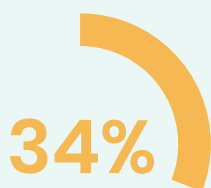
feel ashamed when it comes to the environment



say they feel negatively about the UK's environment



For 1 in 4 people, reducing food waste and reducing air pollution have only come to matter to them since the outbreak



say they feel more concerned about climate change as a result of the pandemic





### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

#### Opinium research:

36%

say that one thing most likely to prevent positive environmental changes from taking place would be "everyone going back to how they were before"



**"In the UK, the shutdown resulted in a major upwards hike in air quality, with measurements of toxic small particulate matter down by as much as 50 per cent in major cities."**

### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

#### Insights:

Research by WRAP, June 2020, shows that although people have found ways to manage their food better, **self-reported waste has increased by 30% compared to the early stages of lockdown.**



As lockdown was relaxed, many returned to beaches and parks in vast numbers. **On Bournemouth beach as much as 33 tonnes of rubbish needed to be cleared up after just a day.**



**Road congestion is now higher in outer London than before lockdown,** according to new car monitoring data. The "Waze for Cities" app found congestion was up by 20% in August compared to the same period last year.



### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

#### Expert commentary from Jane Stevensen



“The upside of lockdown was that it opened our eyes to the result of a significant reduction in pollution, breathing cleaner air, rebalancing ecosystems and reconnecting with nature. In the UK, the shutdown resulted in a major upwards hike in air quality, with ***measurements of toxic small particulate matter down by as much as 50 per cent in major cities.***

As we came out of lock-down we could see these figures increasing again; ***traffic has continued to rise and the direction from government to favour private vehicles over public transport is a flawed policy in relation to the climate implications***, which will create upwards spikes in C and GHG emissions and significant increases in particulates. This is in direct opposition to the need to hit the targets of the Paris Agreement and the Energy Transition (see my comments in section 5 on the UK's approach to green tech and economic recovery).

But there is another option. ***This should be seen as a unique opportunity to re-build our society and economy for a healthier more sustainable future.*** Climate scientists have warned that we have a mere 10 years available to address the worst effects of climate change – this could be our opportunity to fix the climate crisis before it's too late.”

### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

#### What to do next?

To influence changes to longer-term behaviour that will support a greener recovery from the pandemic, businesses should take advantage of the temporary benefits witnessed and people's recognition that everyone and every action (small or big) can make a difference.

- Brands shouldn't be afraid to **share lessons learned** and use that insight to make fresh commitments that show how they are part of the 'green recovery'
- **Empowering employees and/or customers to continue doing their bit** by making it easy for them to adopt or continue environmentally-beneficial behaviours, will go a long way to earning favour and loyalty
- **Create incentives that reward and inspire employees.** An example is encouraging employees to take green travel options as part of a benefits package – so instead of driving or flying, take a train instead and get an extra day's holiday in recognition
- Position messages carefully to **inspire and celebrate behaviour, rather than shaming or placing guilt.** For consumers, this might be spotlighting products that are more sustainable
- Use insight during this period to **revisit business operations and marketing strategy**, since it can provide vital early warnings and enable better decision-making and deployment of resources



## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change





## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

- **Our research shows that when it comes to the products we buy, the majority of the British public want their consumption habits to be environmentally friendly.**

Not only that, but our findings suggest that these feelings have increased as result of the pandemic.

Consumers expect more than just sustainable products. They want to buy from brands that have ensured their supply chains also safeguard the environment. After all, the environmental impact of a product is often not just limited to its life cycle, but also to how businesses transport the raw materials and finished products along the supply chain.



This growing trend of “green consumerism” is forcing more companies to put in place sustainable and ethical practices. By doing so, brands can offer greater transparency/traceability data and stories on packaging that inform consumers how a particular product has helped to preserve biodiversity, support local sourcing, manufactured with less carbon impact and so on.

## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### Opinium research:

64%

want to know that the money they spend is not going to damage the environment.



37%

say they hold this view more strongly as a result of the pandemic.



59%

say they try to buy products and brands that are environmentally friendly



62%

say they want businesses and brands to help them make environmentally friendly decisions



## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### Opinium research:

30%

are more interested in sustainable purchases since the c19 outbreak



22%

say they will review their buying choices in the following year



**“Influential brands – and their brand ambassadors – could play a much bigger part in helping the world move on to a more sustainable footing”**

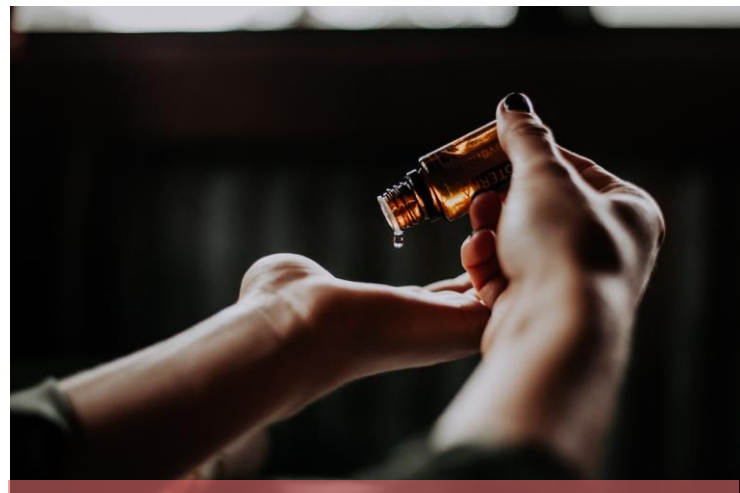


## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### Insights:

According to a report by global consulting and research firm, Kline & Company, **the "natural" trend is the most important in consumer products, especially food and personal care.** Traditional makers of personal care products, including Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive Co., and Procter & Gamble, Co., have acquired specialist companies to build out their own "natural" divisions to meet with demands and compete with niche companies or start-ups in the industry

**Starbucks**, the world's leading coffee chain, **has gone big in promoting its sustainable coffee business model.** In January 2019, the Seattle-based company opened its largest coffee shop in Southeast Asia in Bali, Indonesia, showcasing the green "seed-to-cup" supply chain journey of the Arabica bean



## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### Insights:

**Ikea**, the world's largest retailer of furniture products, **is another company implementing sustainability practices across its entire supply chain** — down to its third-tier suppliers — in a bid to become a climate-positive business by 2030. The company's Australian arm has also recently committed to changing its whole transport fleet to electric vehicles by 2025.



## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### Expert commentary from Jane Stevensen



“Influential brands – and their brand ambassadors – could play a much bigger part in helping the world move on to a more sustainable footing. The climate crisis has been superseded by the pandemic in terms of dominance in the global media. However, this research shows ***there is appetite from the public to follow a greener behavioural trajectory in their buying habits***. Capitalising on that now – while the world is focused on #buildbackbetter, #buildback greener, and there is a clear vision created by a global disaster to create a positive outcome – the opportunity should be seized.

***Businesses need to ensure they are addressing the entire value chain***, actively removing environmentally damaging suppliers and leading by example. Strategies to achieve this also need to be implemented quickly. The tendency to bring in a corporate policy change over a number of years has to be addressed; ***there simply isn't time for a softly-softly approach***. The world has less than ten years to reduce atmospheric carbon which has to be done by both slashing emissions and implementing efficient sequestration methodologies to pull back from dangerous global warming.

Price will be a significant driver too; environmentally-appropriate should not just mean ‘more expensive’, but ***“the real value of what a truly sustainable system is needs to be communicated effectively.”***

## 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

### What to do next?

With today's consumers demanding greater transparency in the products they purchase, including knowing where their products come from and what their ingredients are, businesses need to be much more proactive in offering and communicating their green solutions. It's a vital element in protecting our planet and increasingly, in consumer preference.

- The benefits of sustainable and ethical practices are evident. They can **boost an organisation's reputation, brand image and even add to its bottom line.**
- Be transparent with customers/consumers with **clear information about green supply chains and solutions** for informed sustainable choice.
- **Efforts cannot reside in marketing only.** It has to come from the very top (CEO / executive board level) and be operationalised throughout the business, because green solutions and supply chain of products impacts every area of the business.
- For greater credibility and proof, there needs to be **clear KPIs to measure progress** both internally and externally, with examples.
- **Be mindful of language and tone-of-voice in all communications.** There is always danger of it being mis-interpreted as being used for commercial advantage or 'greenwashing'. This is about offering consumers a genuine choice for the 'greater good' of the planet.





## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet



## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

**In the summer, Britain officially entered a recession, with many saying it's the worst since records began.**

As the pandemic continues, it will be tempting for some to overlook the climate change challenge in the rush to protect the economy. By desperately clambering out of one crisis, we may worsen the effects of another.

The pandemic is not a reason to weaken the commitments to net zero emissions. In fact, climate action is a vital protection against further global shocks, especially as governments plan their pandemic-response stimulus packages.

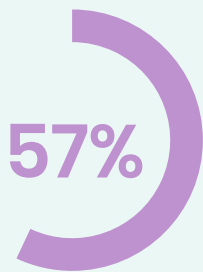
Our research found many people believe that any recovery from the economic recession must still put the environment first. People are also opposed to the government getting rid of environmental regulations to make life easier for businesses.

This shows that climate change is still front of mind. So while neither government or businesses can afford to deprioritise climate change for quick commercial fixes, its going to be a difficult balance as choices are made to simultaneously protect livelihoods and future life. The reputational risk is bigger than ever.

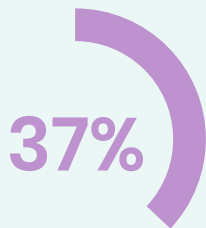


## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

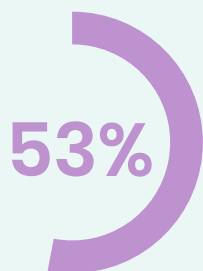
### Opinium research:



agree that any recovery from the economic recession must put the environment first



are opposed to the government getting rid of environmental regulations to make life easier for businesses



say they feel anxious about the threat of climate change and 47% feel scared.



## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

### Opinium research:

69%

say the government should invest in green technologies and industries as part of this response



**“At the start of June some 200 major companies called on Boris Johnson to launch a green economic recovery plan, insisting that future corporate bailouts should take account of the UK’s net zero climate target.”**



## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

### Insights:

A circular economy could result in as much as **\$4.5 trillion in economic benefits by 2030**, according to the World Economic Forum. Just 8.6% of the world is currently circular, and the Forum's work seeks to foster collaboration between private, public, civil society and expert stakeholders to accelerate the circular economy transition.



[New research](#) shows climate mitigation actions deliver economic benefits. It found **spending on new green energy projects generates twice as many jobs for every dollar invested**, compared with equivalent allocations to fossil fuel projects.



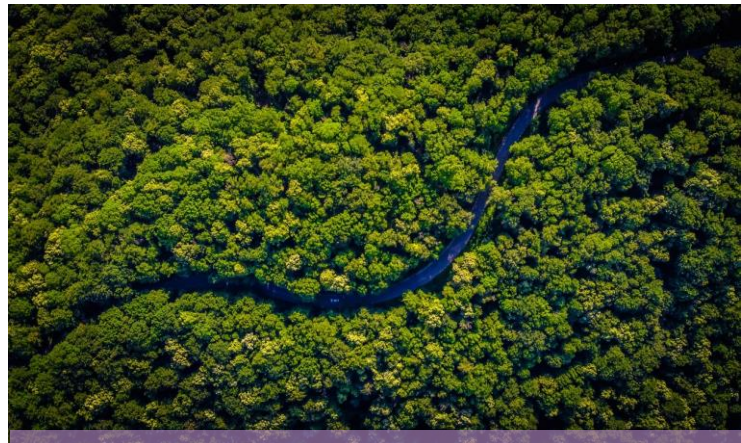
## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

### Insights:

Business leaders have added their names to a [call](#) for stimulus funds to be invested in what they call “the economy of the future” including executives from major organisations such as Rio Tinto, BP, Shell, Allianz and HSBC, together with the [Energy Transitions Commission](#)



In Europe, a [coalition](#) of chief executives, politicians and academics is calling for major investment in projects to make the European Union the “**world’s first climate-neutral continent**” by 2050”. They say the pandemic provides a chance to build economies that are sustainable, resilient and dynamic.



## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

### Expert commentary from Jane Stevensen



“The UK is one of several nations looking to reboot its environmental strategy by working closely with private sector. After all, it was the UK government which bailed out employers when the crunch came in March.

**At the start of June some 200 major companies called on Boris Johnson to launch a green economic recovery plan**, insisting that future corporate bailouts should take account of the UK's net zero climate target.

Business leaders including the head of Lloyds Banking Group, the chief executive of Heathrow airport and the UK country boss of BP wrote to the Prime Minister outlining their demands stemming from the coronavirus crisis. **“We must use the recovery to accelerate the transition to net zero,”** the corporate leaders told Mr Johnson, in the letter signed by companies and business associations.”

## 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

### What to do next?

We're at a crossroads. We need to rebuild the economy. But we can't do so at the expense of locking ourselves into a warming future. If we rise to the challenge, we can use the recovery from one crisis to simultaneously address another.

- Brands need to review their position on profit and sustainability and adjust it for the recovery and beyond. **Now is the time to balance Profit with People and Planet** – also known as the 'triple bottom line' approach, where businesses bridge the gap between economic benefits [Profit] and non-economic benefits [People and Planet]. Now is not the time to fall back on old strategies and ways of talking
- **Commercial decisions can no longer be made in isolation to environmental impact.** Audiences will expect leaders to always think of – and prepare for – the environmental consequences. Sometimes, this may lead to a more expensive choice – but the risk of not doing so, will impact future survival
- **Organisations which can demonstrate how they are aiding the UK's progress towards net zero will have greater sway** with policy makers and more opportunity to engage
- This pandemic has shown how people and businesses can dramatically change, such as moving to remote working overnight and stopping international business travel. So, **people won't accept things aren't possible. A 'can do' attitude towards positive change is vital.**



## Conclusion: what to do next?

### 1. Pandemic highlights generational divide in the fight against climate change

Public concern is evident across all age groups. But the extent to which people worry about it and their behaviours in tackling the crisis, differs markedly by age. This should serve as a wake-up call to the type of action and flexible messaging required by business and brand leaders.

- **One size doesn't fit all. Sustainability narratives need to be built around the action an organisation is taking but the communication must be sensitive to the needs and preferences of different audiences.**
- **Employers looking to target young talent should demonstrate both how they empower individuals to make choices that are better for the planet and what they are doing at an organisational level to address emissions and contribute to infrastructural change.**
- **Don't alienate those who sit in the middle of young vs older generations or who don't associate themselves with their stereotype. Not all young people want to be activists! Be ready with messages that plays to the interests of collective action. Give people a toolkit that fits their circumstances.**
- **As an employer, build pride in the climate commitments you make as a business. When some organisations have announced a big goal to save emissions, they've witnessed a surge in interest from their people to learn and get involved. Find your ambassadors and disseminate the messages and call-to-arms.**

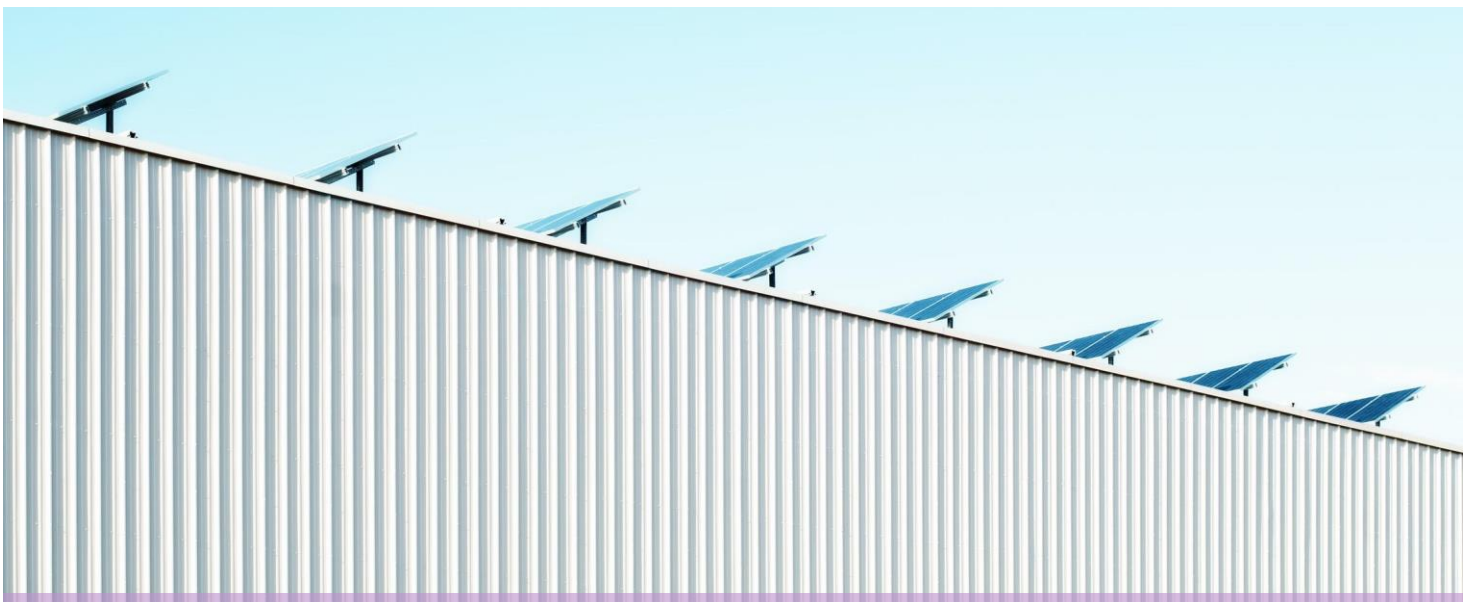


## Conclusion: what to do next?

### 2. Crisis-weary consumers demand a sustainable, green financial sector

The demand for a sustainable finance sector is clear, but the roadmap is not. Organisations will have to play many roles to educate, enable and empower savers and investors whilst at the same time ensuring their own house is in order.

- **Organisations need to establish sustainability credentials by ensuring activity and progress is communicated effectively both internally and externally. For those that have not yet done so, embedding sustainability principles into business operations by setting out a clear narrative, approach and measurable objectives will be essential**
- **Aligning ESG strategies and narratives with the UN's sustainable goals will allow FS companies to give people clear and simple choices when it comes to investment products, better enabling them to connect their financial objectives with the causes they care most about**
- **Adopting the TCFD framework for reporting the financial risks of climate change demonstrates commitment to the UN sustainable goals and provides the transparency that investors seek**

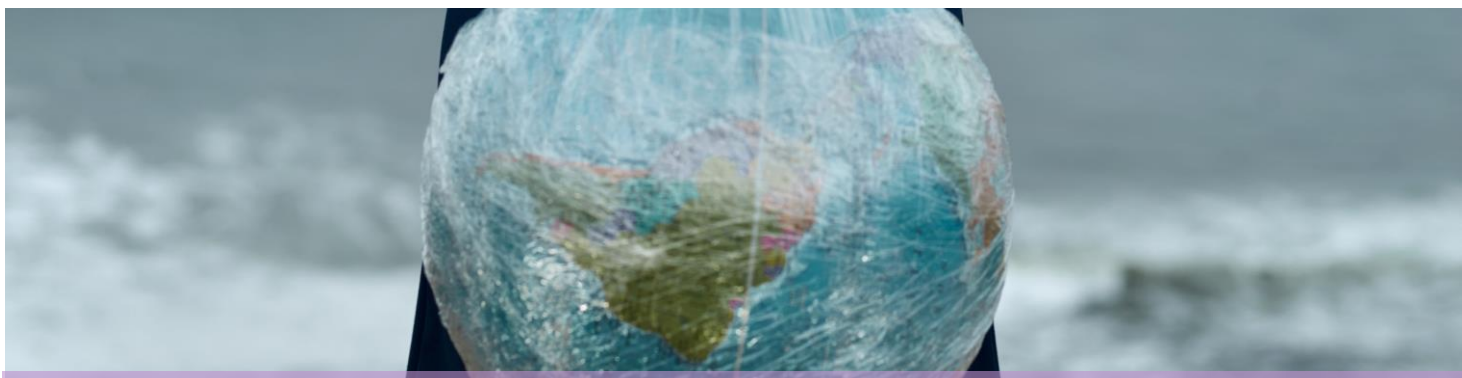


## Conclusion: what to do next?

### 3. Britain's 'shame' as the virus exposes the damage we do to the planet

To influence changes to longer-term behaviour that will support a greener recovery from the pandemic, businesses should take advantage of the temporary benefits witnessed and people's recognition that everyone and every action (small or big) can make a difference.

- **Brands shouldn't be afraid to share lessons learned and use that insight to make fresh commitments that show how they are part of the 'green recovery'**
- **Empowering employees and/or customers to continue doing their bit by making it easy for them to adopt or continue environmentally-beneficial behaviours, will go a long way to earning favour and loyalty**
- **Create incentives that reward and inspire employees. An example is encouraging employees to take green travel options as part of a benefits package – so instead of driving or flying, take a train instead and get an extra day's holiday in recognition**
- **Position messages carefully to inspire and celebrate behaviour, rather than shaming or placing guilt. For consumers, this might be spotlighting products that are more sustainable**
- **Use insight during this period to revisit business operations and marketing strategy, since it can provide vital early warnings and enable better decision-making and deployment of resources**



## Conclusion: what to do next?

### 4. People want businesses to play a bigger role in tackling climate change

With today's consumers demanding greater transparency in the products they purchase, including knowing where their products come from and what their ingredients are, businesses need to be much more proactive in offering and communicating their green solutions. It's a vital element in protecting our planet and increasingly, in consumer preference.

- **The benefits of sustainable and ethical practices are evident. They can boost an organisation's reputation, brand image and even add to its bottom line.**
- **Be transparent with customers/consumers with clear information about green supply chains and solutions for informed sustainable choice.**
- **Efforts cannot reside in marketing only. It has to come from the very top (CEO / executive board level) and be operationalised throughout the business, because green solutions and supply chain of products impacts every area of the business.**
- **For greater credibility and proof, there needs to be clear KPIs to measure progress both internally and externally, with examples.**
- **Be mindful of language and tone-of-voice in all communications. There is always danger of it being mis-interpreted as being used for commercial advantage or 'greenwashing'. This is about offering consumers a genuine choice for the 'greater good' of the planet.**



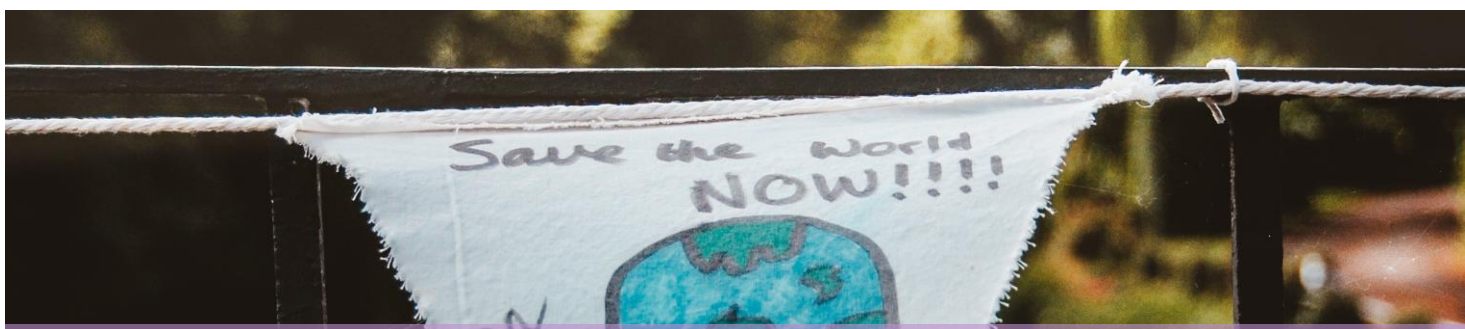


## Conclusion: what to do next?

### 5. Economic survival cannot be 'at expense' of the planet

We're at a crossroads. We need to rebuild the economy. But we can't do so at the expense of locking ourselves into a warming future. If we rise to the challenge, we can use the recovery from one crisis to simultaneously address another.

- **Brands need to review their position on profit and sustainability and adjust it for the recovery and beyond. Now is the time to balance Profit with People and Planet – also known as the 'triple bottom line' approach, where businesses bridge the gap between economic benefits [Profit] and non-economic benefits [People and Planet]. Now is not the time to fall back on old strategies and ways of talking**
- **Commercial decisions can no longer be made in isolation to environmental impact. Audiences will expect leaders to always think of – and prepare for – the environmental consequences. Sometimes, this may lead to a more expensive choice – but the risk of not doing so, will impact future survival**
- **Organisations which can demonstrate how they are aiding the UK's progress towards net zero will have greater sway with policy makers and more opportunity to engage**
- **This pandemic has shown how people and businesses can dramatically change, such as moving to remote working overnight and stopping international business travel. So, people won't accept things aren't possible. A 'can do' attitude towards positive change is vital.**



## About the authors

### Suzanne Ellis



Suzanne leads Lansons' *'Communications for Change & Transformation'* practice. She helps organisations manage change among employees, customers or stakeholders.

Recently, she's worked with global organisations on resetting their purpose; better balancing 'profit' with improved social good and reduced environmental impact. This has involved insight gathering, narrative development, engagement campaigns and cultural shifts as organisations reorganise ways of working to deliver purpose promises.

Suzanne also launched Lansons' 'neurocomms' service which applies neuroscience to communications; and last year won Sabre EMEA award for 'Best Brand Narrative'.

### Claire Southeard



Claire is a marketing communications specialist. She develops compelling narratives and value propositions to sit at the heart of multi-channel campaigns and thought leadership. This includes advising organisations on the role of purpose, sustainability, diversity and inclusion and social responsibility as part of a holistic reputation management strategy, working with C-Suites and senior comms professionals to balance words with action for authentic and transparent communication.

A former video producer, Claire's expertise is also in producing storytelling content that connects audiences with strategy in ways that are memorable and influential

## Analysis by

### Joe Curran



Joe is a Senior Research Executive at Opinium, working across a number of practice areas including Thought Leadership, Brand and Communications and political polling. His particular focus is working with clients in the social policy, public affairs and third sector, including Amnesty International UK and The Gatsby Foundation.

## Expert commentators

### Jane Stevenson



Jane has over 20 years' experience supporting businesses in addressing the challenges of climate change. She began her career in upstream oil & gas exploration with BP, and has subsequently worked with clients across sectors, creating global engagement programmes and developing sustainability-driven strategies for the understanding of climate-related risk and opportunity. She established J S Global Advisory Services in 2018 to focus on sustainability strategy and practice, the energy transition and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

She is former Managing Director of the Climate Disclosure Standards Board and advised the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative and the UK's Green Finance Initiative. Jane is Non-Exec Director of Levin Sources, global specialists in responsible mining, and works with consulting firm Wood Mackenzie on climate risk and strategic thinking. She has an MBA from INSEAD, is a graduate of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, and listed in the top 50 women to follow in climate.



## Expert commentators

### David Masters



David is a Board Director and senior practitioner at Lansons with nearly 30 years' experience working in and around the investment industry.

Specialising in investment and banking, David advises boards and senior management teams of asset managers, private equity firms, hedge funds, wealth managers, family offices and banks.

David is also on the advisory board of the Transparency TaskForce, for whom he is also an ambassador.

## About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

[www.opinium.com](http://www.opinium.com) | [research@opinium.com](mailto:research@opinium.com) | 0207 566 3190

Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Under these rules we are required, when requested, to make information available from survey results that have entered the public domain. These include, but are not limited to, the name of commissioning client, fieldwork dates, methodology, size and composition of sample, and data tables showing the text of the questions asked, the order in which they were asked and the answers given to them.

## About Lansons

Based in London and New York, Lansons is a leading independent reputation management consultancy, 100% owned by people working in the business. It has been voted agency of the year 24 times since it was established in 1989 by its Chair, Clare Parsons and Chief Executive, Tony Langham. Lansons has over 100 people (35 of whom own the Limited Liability Partnership), has won over 90 major awards, and works for more than 100 national and international clients. Through its membership of international networks, PROI Worldwide and Global Communication Partners (GCP), Lansons delivers global expertise and strategic advice.

At the same time Lansons has been featured in the Great Places to Work 'Best Workplace' rankings for each of the past 16 years. Lansons' consultants are experts in media, investor, political, regulatory, employee and change, crisis, marketing and international communications. In 2019, Lansons announced its acquisition of Intermarket, the specialist strategic communications consultancy based in New York.

[www.lansons.com](http://www.lansons.com) | [consultancy@lansons.com](mailto:consultancy@lansons.com) | 020 7490 8828