

Welcome to Aardvark's environmental news briefing

- **Droplet-based electrical generator:** The City University in Hong Kong has been researching how generating electricity from raindrops efficiently can be taken a step further, producing 140V of power with enough energy to light up 100 LED bulbs. (sciencedaily.com 05/02/2020)
- **West Midlands canals to help heat hospitals:** Although an unlikely source of warmth, the Government pledges to spend £20million turning canals, mines and rail lines into heat sources. The idea comes from the success on the Birmingham canals and their role in generating green energy. (theguardian.com 18/02/2020)
- **System achieves new level of efficiency in harnessing sunlight to make fresh potable water from seawater:** A new solar-powered desalination system could provide more than 1.5 gallons of fresh drinking water/hour for every square meter of solar collecting area. These systems could serve off-grid and coastal areas to provide an efficient and low-cost water source. (sciencedaily.com 07/02/2020)
- **World's richest man pledges \$10bn to fight climate change:** Amazon boss and world's richest man Jeff Bezos has pledged \$10bn to help finance work by scientists, activists and other groups. This pledge represents almost 8% of his fortune. (bbc.co.uk 17/02/2020)
- **Britain to invest £90million to cut emissions from homes:** With Britain becoming the first G7 country to set the target for reaching net zero by 2050, the Government has pledged £90million to cut carbon emissions from homes and industries, while using the money to invest in two hydrogen plants. (uk.reuters.com 18/02/2020)
- **£50million plan to create first all-electric bus town:** England's first town to have all-electric buses will be created through a £50million fund by the Department of Transport. This is associated with the aim for the UK to become net zero by 2050. (theguardian.com 31/01/2020)

and finally.....

- **Human compost funerals 'better for environment':** A US firm has completed a study showing that soft tissue can be broken down safely and completely within 30 days. The firm claims that this process saves more than a tonne of carbon, compared to cremation or traditional burial. (bbc.co.uk 16/02/2020)

Latest news from the Aardvark team

Following the recent Selbrigg Farm wind turbine appeal decision, the impact of Councils across the UK declaring a climate emergency in their district and what potential impact it has on planning application decision making is starting to become clearer. Whilst it is too early for the majority of Councils to have enshrined a declaration into planning policy, Inspector Griffiths in his Selbrigg farm decision stated that *'in light of the matters the Council acknowledged in declaring a climate emergency, it would be something of a contradiction to resist further policy compliant [renewable energy] schemes in the District'*. This makes for an interesting assessment for the decision maker when considering the local community test in footnote 49 of the NPPF.

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