**The Big Guide to Climate-Friendly Living.**

**A handbook**

By Thomas Horne

Introduction

Why we need this book

Humanity is facing the greatest global challenge of all time. Climate change is already altering our globe and if we fail to stop this warming, it will make vast and already vulnerable parts of the planet uninhabitable for humans and animals alike.

Great swathes of biological diversity may be lost, the gap between rich and poor countries will widen catastrophically, and unimaginable numbers of people will flee. In the worst case. In a more optimistic scenario, the crisis will bring out the best in us humans: our ability to collaborate. In that scenario, we will manage to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, revolutionise technology and adjust our consumption patterns. Let us hope it happens – the sooner the better.

Here is a slightly shameful admission. It is only in the past five or six years that I have truly grasped the scope of climate change and the serious consequences that can accompany it. I have always been politically engaged and have alo been lucky enough to spend two decades working on human rights, refugee crises and emergency relief. All these have felt like urgent crises happening precisely here and now, whereas the environmental and climate question has seemed vaguer and less pressing, like a problem we can solve AFTER we have dealt with the current challenges. Climate has been my blind spot.

This has now changed and I am absolutely convinced that the climate issue is our most important global problem. That is why I want to live in as climate-friendly a way as possible – because I am quite certain that global challenges must always involve local solutions too, beyond the international treaties and processes. This means that the way I live my life matters. The question is how. What should I do to achieve a more climate-friendly lifestyle? I am far from alone in asking that question today.

There is no shortage of advice about all kinds of climate action we can take. The media write about it almost daily, plenty of good websites offer concrete tips, and an ever-growing army of bloggers showcase their climate-friendly lifestyles. However, the frustrating – not to mention bewildering – thing about my own quest for knowledge is the difficulty of gaining a full overview of all the measures, let alone a qualified picture of the impact each makes. Generally speaking, the information is fragmented and anecdotal.

One day, you might hear that it is crucial to sort our waste; the next, that you must trade in your old diesel car for a new electric car, preferably a luxury model. Housing, cars and beef say the environmental organisations, while others take the view that ecological vegetarian products will be our salvation. And on top of that, there’s plane shame.

How much does each of these measures actually count? How great an impact do they have, one in comparison to the other? If I am going to prioritise some battles – only a minority of us can face taking them all on simultaneously – which ones should I choose? I decided to find out for myself. The book you are now holding is the result.

*The Big Guide to Climate-Friendly Living* is not written to convince you that climate change is really happening, that it is caused by humans or that we can stop it. I take it for granted that you and I, reader and writer, pretty much agree on that. Nor is it yet another doomsday prophecy designed to scare you out of your wits. My intention has been to produce a practical reference book about the climate pressure of all kinds of things, big and small, in our everyday lives – a book that is also, I hope, imbued with a certain amount of optimism and enthusiasm.