

One thing we have learnt this week – new measure of wellbeing

Posted on **October 05,2018** by **admin**

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www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/05/green-party-wants-new-measure-of-wellbeing

The green party in England and Wales wants a new measure of wellbeing they have announced this week. Since [GDP](#) has captured economics in the modern age some people have been searching for a better measure of happiness and economic growth than this measure. As I blogged on last week endless economic growth is clearly impossible on a finite planet so something is going to have to give sometime. Up until now the alternatives have been "happiness". This is course subjective but a very long term study has found that people in Western societies have stopped getting happier over the last 30 years or so (not necessarily more miserable though). It does look like a certain level of materialism makes you happy but beyond a certain level of affluence there is no improvement in happiness levels. As the late great Spike Milligan said "Money can't buy you happiness but it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery". The greens want a new measure of wellbeing to be to measure happiness by the use of a free time index. So the idea is how much free time you have after work commute etc. The idea is to shift away from the time/work obsessed culture to one of leisure, community and family. The greens support a 4 day week and a [universal basic income](#). I broadly agree with the idea. There is evidence productivity would rise over a 4 day week and its a way of sharing the jobs out as automation arrives. My only caveats are it sounds a bit woolly and it depends what people do with their leisure time. As I blogged about in the last post its a bit difficult to do anything without damaging the environment.

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