**The Climate Crisis and Covid-19**

**During this strange and worrying time, it is easy to focus on the many negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, including how it has affected all our lives. From school’s closing to businesses on the line, it is safe to say that this year has been detrimental to all areas of everyday life. However, amidst all the negatives, there is one main positive to the lockdown earlier this year, and this is the effect it had on the environment. So just how was this impacted and what does it mean for the future?**

During the first lockdown back in March, the centre of London especially saw a dramatic decrease in the amount of vehicles on the roads, and therefore a reduction in carbon emissions. In fact, London saw a 59% decrease in CO2 levels (based on studies by UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology) purely as a result of people staying at home and not travelling to and from work.

The positive environmental impacts of the pandemic are not just seen with London, however. Globally, carbon emissions have seen a 17% reduction from 2019 during the peak of the lockdown, a promising statistic considering the current climate emergency that our planet faces.

However, what does this mean for the future? With a vaccine now on mass rollout in most parts of the world, we can start to expect a gradual return to normal life within the coming months, and this means an inevitable increase once more in CO2 emissions around the world. Arguably, we have already begun to see this in London, with the amount of vehicles on the roads steadily reaching pre-lockdown numbers, especially with the reluctance of people to use public transport due to the possible transmission of the virus. In this sense, perhaps our lesson has not yet been learnt and we must still do all we can to reduce our carbon footprint before the climate crisis becomes irreversible.

The reality of the situation is that climate change is not going anywhere, and even in 2020 we can see its devastating impacts. The wildfires seen in America earlier this year are estimated to have destroyed over 2 million acres of land in total, and scientists say that this is caused without a doubt by a warming climate.