

STEAM essay – Patrick Vallance:

Sir Patrick Vallance is the Government Chief Scientific adviser as well as Head of Government Science and Engineering. He has carried out his own research in diseases and worked at GlaxoSmithKline as head of Drug discovery. During the time he was president of R&D, over 14 new medicines were approved for use worldwide for many different diseases, his impact has been extraordinary to his field of work and his most recent accomplishment has helped lead the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic with vaccine development

Patrick Vallance recently attended COP26 with Boris Johnson, his most important message warned that action is needed now, and that climate change is far bigger, and potentially more deadly, than Covid-19.

Sir Patrick Vallance said at the UN climate summit in Glasgow, that coronavirus was a 2–4-year problem, whereas climate change is a 50–100-year problem and that more people will die from climate change rather than Covid-19 if we fail to act. He said that to battle climate change we will need technology and behavioural change as the pandemic is combatting climate change and that we collectively need to reduce our carbon footprint. He told the BBC: “The reason I say it is a bigger problem is because in terms of the overall effect on humanity, if this is not stopped it is a bigger, bigger challenge to the way we live, and lives will be lost.” He also said, “If the green choice becomes the easy one, more people will be willing to change their behaviour.” Which means, if we make the green choice easier, people are more likely to do it!

Sir Patrick Vallance explained that by making greener choices such as electric cars, flying less, recycling, eating less meat and reducing food wastage, it was still possible to control temperature rises to 1.5C. His focus was also on reducing emissions, improving infrastructure and travel too. However, this was only part of a solution and other technological and scientific advancements are needed which were in the government's hands rather than individuals.

This means that this is a global responsibility, and it requires all of us to take ownership, act and change our behaviour. Small changes can make a big difference collectively.

In conclusion, from reading about Sir Patrick Vallance the biggest message I can take away is that what I do matters, no matter how small and that I can make a difference. He has inspired me to take my own action against climate change, so I have decided to eat less meat and have taken responsibility at home for recycling and reusing and in the future, I hope to grow my own vegetables, reducing carbon footprint.



By Megan Thandi