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MP for Chelmsford



Remember Apollo 11... short-sighted policy of new leadership to scrap net zero plans



A view of Earth taken by NASA astronaut and Artemis II commander Reid Wiseman earlier this year

HOW do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time! Or so the saying goes. To be clear, I'm not advocating eating very large mammals. It's an analogy about tackling a very big, seemingly insurmountable task.

I'm sure we've all been there, faced with an enormous problem to solve or job to be done, and wondered where on earth to begin.

Well, if we follow the saying, every task starts with the first step (or the first bite in the case of eating an elephant), followed by the next one, and the next one and so on.

Most tasks are finite - they will end at some point, but not if we don't get started.

Of course, enlisting some help along the way can make the task much easier, quicker and give you more guarantee of success.

Indeed, some tasks are just so big, that you often can't see the progress that you alone are making, but when you add up the steps that you've completed, together with the bits that everyone else has done, things eventually start to take shape.

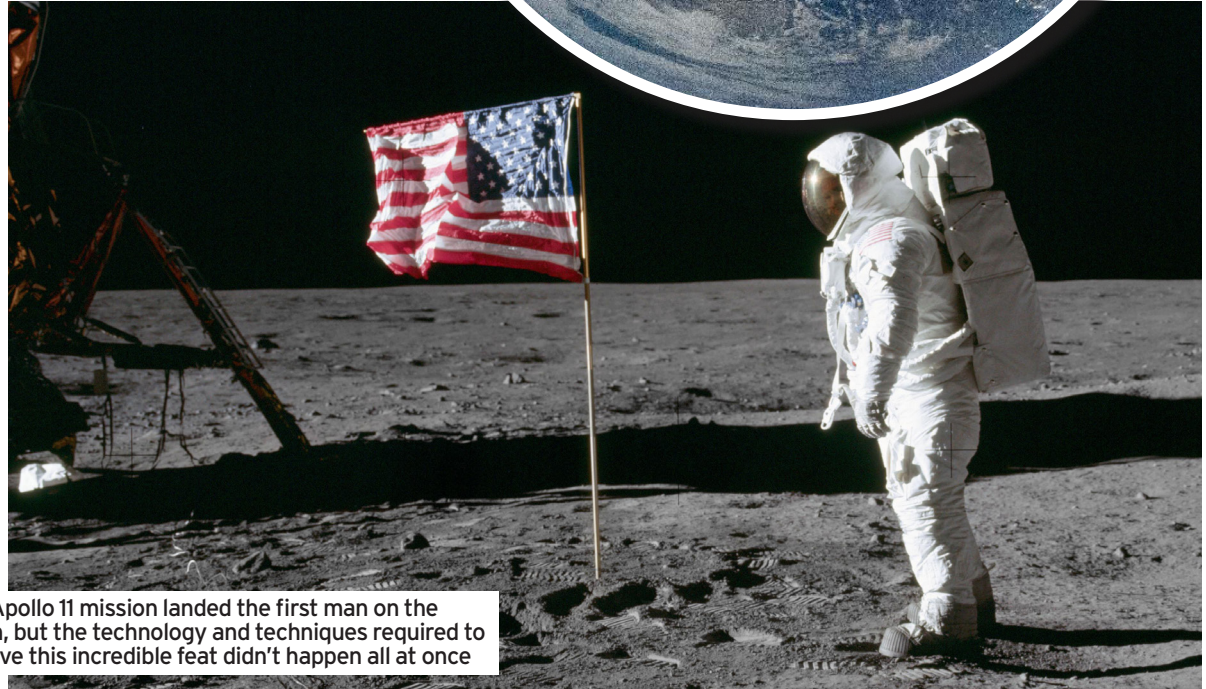
Education is a bit like this. Children don't learn everything all at once, nor could they. But gradually, over many years, we teach them the basics of what they need to know to get on in life, to choose their own path and forge ahead with their adult lives.

No single person is responsible for teaching a child all they need to know. As another saying goes: it takes a village to raise a child.

I'm rather fascinated by the ingenuity that was required in the space race of the 1960s that culminated in a man setting foot on the moon - and, crucially, returning safely to



The Apollo 11 mission landed the first man on the moon, but the technology and techniques required to achieve this incredible feat didn't happen all at once



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earth. But the technology and techniques required to achieve this incredible feat didn't happen all at once, nor did they happen by accident.

It took vision and leadership from President Kennedy to kickstart America's ambitions in this area, and then it took determination, resources, success (and failure), plus a whole heap of luck, to find the magic formula that put Apollo 11 into space and Neil Armstrong on the moon.

Armstrong even acknowledged that his role was just a small part of the huge effort that had come before him - "That's one small step for [a] man..."

And even as we tackle these huge tasks, we never really know what we might learn from them along the way - unintentionally, perhaps, but hugely beneficial. From memory foam to cordless vacuums, the space

race of the 1960s created the technology for many different items that we now find ourselves using on a daily basis.

While we may not be racing to the moon right now, there are other challenges that we face together as a planet, and climate change is surely the biggest.

Truly tackling this enormous, existential problem isn't something we can do overnight, nor is it something anyone can do alone. We all need to play our part.

And there are massive opportunities if we do, including right here in Chelmsford, across Essex and in the East of England as a whole.

That's because we have lots of innovative, world-class businesses, researchers, entrepreneurs and universities all capable of turning innovation into technological and economic advantage for our city, our county, our region and our country. If only we would support them in doing so.

Think about it. The technology that could be invented right here in the race for net zero could be sold to other countries around the world, all

facing the same challenges.

But as it's a race, there's a danger that we let others get a head start of us, leaving us behind, and making us reliant on others' inventions, perhaps from China or other fast-growing economies.

What a shame it would be if we lost our advantage because we failed to see the opportunity that we have.

If only we would invest and give our businesses the certainty that they need to match that investment and to innovate, create and grow.

And that's why I feel it's so very, very short-sighted of the new Reform leadership at Essex County Council to scrap the council's net zero ambitions.

Sadly, it's a fundamental misunderstanding of how the world works to say that there's no point Essex County Council doing its bit as it's only a drop in the ocean compared to the effort required by places like China.

That totally misses the point. It isn't just about climate change and reaching net zero emissions (as important as I believe that is) - it's about not being left behind.

It's about supporting our businesses, and utilising the incredible skills and expertise we have in this country to retain and grow our competitive advantage.

And what happens if we don't? Well, we've seen it before - a brain drain that sees the very best talent leave our country, taking their skills elsewhere, and making us all the poorer for it.

I assume the leadership of Essex County Council doesn't understand this, which is a shame, because they are choosing to make us all poorer and dependent on other countries. So much for patriotism.

I, for one, believe that our country has huge potential. I want us to be investing in our amazing British businesses and giving them the certainty, the support and the freedom to grow.

You don't do that by making things harder for them. And the first bite in this huge task needs to be taken now.

I hope the new administration at Essex County Council will reconsider their approach.

Marie