



MEETING

Northern Dioceses Environmental Group (NDEG)

Meeting Record

Date: Wednesday 4th November 2020 from 10-11.30am by zoom

Present

Paul Kelly	Lancaster F+J Environment Group
Ellen Teague	Catholic journalist J+P, Vocations for Justice, Tablet
Edward de Quay	Environmental Advisory Group, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales
Mark Wiggin	Caritas Diocese of Salford
Katheryn Ansley	Caritas Diocese of Salford Catholic Social Teaching
Bob Turner	GCCM (UK)
Bernadette Jordan	St Marys, Horwich, Bolton
Anne Peacey	Diocese of Hallam J+P Commission
Margaret McSherry	Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission Environment
Fr Matthew	Archdiocese of Liverpool Environmental Task Group
Chris Myers	Hexham and Newcastle Diocese J+P
Lya	Hexham and Newcastle Diocese J+P
Ben Gilchrist	Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury
Stephen Garsed	Lancaster F+J Environment Group

Apologies

Steve Atterton	J+P Archdiocese of Liverpool (retired)
Fr Hugh Pollock	Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission
Fr Eamonn Mulcahy	Spiritans
Emma Gardener	Diocese of Salford
Sarah George	Caritas Bolton & St. Osmund's Church
Anthony Brown	Our Lady of the Valley Parish (Diocese of Salford)
Joseph Howson	Lee House Centre for Mission Awareness
Mark Rotherham	Independent & Lee House Centre for Mission Awareness
And Others	

Chair: Mark Wiggin Caritas Diocese of Salford

Agenda

10.00am	Welcome and opening prayer
10.10am	Introductions
10.25am	Climate change and the Church with journalist Ellen Teague

10.40am	Q&A session
11.00	Tea break
11.05	News round - across the dioceses and projects Plans during Covid-19 pandemic, next meeting and summary
11.30	End of meeting

The meeting opened with a Christian prayer in union with creation by Pope Francis.

The meeting was recorded only for transcribing purposes and complied with GDPR.

These minutes can be freely shared especially with diocesan colleagues.

As part of the introductions participants were invited to share one action or quality to make real Care for Our Common Home:

- ❖ “Sincerity of pledges
- ❖ Listening to Pope Francis
- ❖ Kindness
- ❖ Passion
- ❖ Respect for others
- ❖ Understand others points of view
- ❖ Urgency to act by people in power
- ❖ Working together
- ❖ The voice of young people
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Collective voice
- ❖ Decision makers clear thinking
- ❖ Live what you preach
- ❖ Linking schools and parishes to create intergenerational families
- ❖ Great leadership
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Synchronised effort
- ❖ Training priest and exposing clergy to a developing world experience
- ❖ Taking forward the environmental agenda and evangelising as Good News”

Presentation: Climate change and the Church with journalist Ellen Teague

Ellen’s early awareness of environmental matters was as a volunteer in Nigeria where climate change was leading to increased desertification and droughts. Working with Cafod at the time of the Ethiopian Famine, reading the works of the Columban priest Sean McDonough and the pro-environment activities of the Jesuits led her to learn more about climate change, the impact on food insecurity and the links to migration and refugees exacerbated by war. Through the work of Pax Christi, Ellen made the important connection between the environment and the Peace movement recognising the inter-connection of the environment, poverty and peace.

Key points:

1. Climate change is a 'Frontier issue' i.e. we've not been here before
2. Bishop's made one major statement on the environment last year but need to make more
3. The US Bishops have been divided on the subject and as the USA is a big player on the world stage this is not helpful
4. Leadership needs to be more visible from Church leaders
5. It's not easy for the laity to penetrate Church structures to influence
6. There are many effective voices ranging from Johnathan Porritt to Martin Newall (Passionist) to the Conference of Religious

Call to action:

1. Dioceses to disinvest from fossil fuels
2. Zero carbon emissions by 2030
3. Educate and energise faithful on the urgency to change
4. Advocate for the investment in Justice and Peace workers
5. Prepare for COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021
6. Support parishes to take up the Live Simply award

Ellen noted

- There are many good and accessible webinars on climate action
- Liturgy is an important area to develop further to engage the faithful
- Alliances with the secular world are crucial and very important
- Encourages us to write-up any initiatives and take photos and she will place in the media somewhere. E-mail Ellen Teague for information on the NJPN Environment Group - vocforjus@aol.com

Environment activity the northern dioceses

Shared news and discussion on networks and diocese developments acknowledged that there are very few clear routes into the Church structures and dioceses to share good practice and advocate for change. Frustration that the adoption of policies and strategies was slow. Good news stories are not being told and shared by the Catholic institutions and diocese who are actually making progress. There is a need to get the good news out there to parishioners

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

Edward De Quay - Environmental Advisory Group, reported on the collective statement the Bishops put out last year on the environment; they are developing effective processes rather than settling targets; promotes diocese working together to achieve a net zero carbon emissions.

Lancaster Diocese

Policy still in draft form; J+P Newsletter still popular and in circulation covers environmental issues, divesting from fossil fuels and making ethical investments. Supportive Bishop.

Leeds Diocese

Has many small projects and individuals engaged and the Cafod/J+P connection is strong.

Liverpool Archdiocese

Has adopted an environment policy; a strong J+P tradition in Liverpool

The Archdiocese a task group highlighted work includes:

- Carbon reduction
- Energy & waste management
- Ecumenical working
- Links well with the Environment work of Hope University

Hallam Diocese

Not yet adopted a policy. Operates with the Church Marketplace programme and good ecumenical working. Bishop Ralph enjoys a good relationship with the group.

Hexham and Newcastle

It's a journey started

- Social and Environmental Policy agreed by the Board in 2019 based on Laudato Si;
- J&P Council has made environmental action and poverty as key priorities;
- Pursuing divestment and ethical investment policy - James Buchanan from Operation NOAH spoke at our recent AGM on the case for divestment and ethical investing;
- Eco community being established by Lya Vollering at Minsteracres, The Passionists Retreat Centre - living simply, in harmony with nature and sustainably; establishing a contemplative garden to promote biodiversity and growing vegetables.

Shrewsbury Diocese

Signed up to the green energy agenda. Advocacy support was offered by Ben Gilchrist (CEO Caritas Shrewsbury) as this needs organising and promoting within the Church. He also stressed the need to strengthen links to the grass roots through local authority networking.

Salford Diocese

Operates a Laudato Si Committee and has the development of the centre at Wardley Hall. An Environment Strategy post has been created and Emma Gardener is about to start work on developing a pilot with an Oxford University college and St Mary's University to look at ways to become carbon neutral in the diocese and share with other diocese the learning.

News Updates

Bob Turner, a Cafod school volunteer trainer, has a new Plastics awareness presentation for schools.

National J+P Conference 2021- Following the postponement of this year's NJPN Annual Justice and Peace Conference at Swanwick, a successful virtual conference

was held. The NJPN Conference Planning Group will reconvene to re-focus on the environment in the run-up to COP26 in November in Glasgow.

Theology of Fratelli Tutti and Laudato Si - Fr Eamonn Mulcahy is spending time in an advisory role, retreat giving and support to clergy and religious promoting an understanding of the encyclical Laudato Si and will incorporate the new Fratelli Tutti.

Journey towards a New Cosmology and a new way of living - Joe Howson is working on:

- A series of seven films (hosted on line)
- Presenting the New Universe Story
- Seven short films (2 to 3 minutes in duration)
- Presented in a poetic, prayerful, meditative way
- Seven key moments in the story
- Each film can be experienced by itself as a mediation in the majesty and beauty of creation
- Each film will also be supported with supplementary information on the science and theology that supports the content of the film
- Collectively, the series will hold together, beauty, awe, wonder, science and theology

The purpose is to enable/encourage the participant to make a profound connection with creation and this connection will be supported by rigorous science and the latest theological understandings.

THE NEXT MEETING IS PROPOSED FOR JANUARY FEBRUARY 2021 - DATE TO BE AGREED

Please let Mark Wiggin m.wiggin@caritassalford.org.uk know if you do not want to be on this address list to receive correspondence from the NDEG. Thank you.

Useful links

North West Environment Link (NWEL) is a partnership of environmental voluntary sector organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of members in the North West. <https://www.vsnw.org.uk/green-bullet>

Get ready for COP26 <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/news/Get-ready-for-COP26>

Hope for the Future provides tailored research, training and ongoing support to help your church build a working relationship with your local MP. The first landmark along this journey is being fully equipped and supported through an in-person meeting - <https://www.hftf.org.uk/faith>

The Tablet and ICN - example articles :

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40760>,

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40753>,

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/search?word=ellen+teague>.

Green Christian Festival 25-27 October (understanding of what constitutes 'security') - see <https://greenchristian.org.uk/press-release-bishop-warns-we-are-earthing-hell/> and <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40771>.

Webinars on ethical investment with Operation Noah - the second was on impact

investing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwU-Zla_3KY,

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40740>,

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/40534>.

Vocation for Justice: <https://columbans.co.uk/how-you-can-help/subscribe/vocation-for-justice/>

'Theology Resources' on the Bishops' Conference website

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/environment/>