



MEETING

Northern Dioceses Environmental Group (NDEG)

Meeting Record

Date: Friday 24th June 2021 from 10.30am-12.00 noon by zoom

Present

Edward de Quay	Carbon Transition Officer, Laudato Si Research Institute, Champion Hall, University of Oxford
Lya Vollering	Hexham and Newcastle Diocese J+P
Mark Wiggin	Caritas Diocese of Salford
Fr Eamonn Mulcahy	Spiritans, Manchester
Anthony Brown	Our Lady of the Valley Parish (Diocese of Salford)
Bob Turner	GCCM (UK)
Bernadette Jordan	St Marys, Horwich, Bolton
Anne Peacey	Diocese of Hallam J+P Commission
Geoff Thompson	NJPN
Margaret McSherry	Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission Environment
Ladislav Maluch	Lalley Centre Allotment Project
Katheryn Ansley	Caritas Diocese of Salford Catholic Social Teaching
Christine Matthewson	St John the Baptist parish, Rochdale
Ben Gilchrist	Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury
Justine Silcock	J+P Liverpool and Live Simply Award assessor
Emma Gardener	Diocese of Salford

Apologies

Paul Kelly	Climate Change group - Leeds J&P Commission and NJPN Environment Group.
Fr Hugh Pollock	Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission
Chris Myers	Hexham and Newcastle Diocese J+P
Steve Atterton	J+P Archdiocese of Liverpool (retired)
Stephen Garsed	Lancaster F+J Environment Group
Sarah George	Caritas Bolton & St. Osmund's Church
Joseph Howson	Lee House Centre for Mission Awareness

And Others

Apologies for those left off the Present and Apologies lists or inaccurate roles attached to them! Please contact m.wiggin@caritassalford.org.uk to correct details.

Chair:

Mark Wiggin Caritas Diocese of Salford

Agenda

- Opening prayer
1. Welcome and introductions
 2. Updates from the last time we met
 3. The future of the NDEG - Discussion
 4. NJPN July Conference and COP 26 updates
 5. Newsround
 6. Meeting ends

Opening prayer - Reflection with Fr Eamonn Mulcahy

Purpose of the meeting: Future of the NDEG

1. To discuss the future of the group and its value to the Catholic environment agenda that has been developing at a pace over the last few years.
2. To reflect on its value to bring people together at an inter-diocesan level
3. To be more collaborative and representative of all dioceses.

1. National perspectives

The setting up of the Northern Diocese Environment Group was originally a response to the need for some greater traction between organisations promoting environmental issues in the Northern dioceses with the aspiration to help shape and support policy and practice in the dioceses themselves. A hope was that by bringing us together there would be a sense of mutual support and collective working together rather than a sense of working on our own. The presence of so many from the Justice and Peace networks has been a main stay of the NDEG connecting it to the local dioceses and their emerging leads on environment issues.

Ed de Quay shared a useful diagram showing the diversity of environmental groups and noting overlap in membership. There's too much to keep track of! Note the Guardians of Creation and Live Simply as important developments through the Bishops Conference. The environment is an underfunded area of Church work and vital that it can develop and become effective in contributing to change.

2. The value of the NDEG

Participants were invited to reflect on the value of the group. Feedback included:

'I believe the NDEG has significant value and certainly hope to be able to contribute to its continuation. As dioceses establish environmental leads who are themselves networking together I feel we should think as a group how we can facilitate connections between existing long-standing practical expertise and the new leads in each curia. Making the most of mutual support, sharing effective ideas and practice, and stimulating new directions - so a mixture of hearing from people with new inputs, sharing what is happening and resources across the region, and pooling ideas to overcome barriers. Doing this at regional level particularly makes sense to

me when it comes to sharing resources and personnel. I would also like to see ways of linking (but not merging) with other similar regional environment groups'

'this is a valuable forum for sharing ideas, resources and offering support to each other as we seek to move forward with environmental actions'

'a valuable networking opportunity'

'one important role for NDEG is to disseminate information to where it can be used'.

'valuable networking - diocesan leads can link to grassroots activity'

'supports the development of each other's work'

'sharing ideas and resources, offering support'

'connecting parish and schools work with leads and organisations undertaking activity'

'it connects us to each other'

'useful info sharing; there are enough organisations producing resources perhaps'

'talking, sharing, encouraging valuable in this group'

'signposting to where needs help'

'structure can stifle, nothing wrong with meeting to share, support and encourage'.

'forming a more powerful platform together; urging one another on'

'getting people to talk to one another'

'good to have connections - and not feel isolated'

'people need hope, confidence and leadership'

'value of meeting and sharing ideas and inspiring further work'

Summary of the discussion

Key emerging thoughts were:

- this is valuable group that is not intimidating - the size of 15-20 is good but we need to bring younger people in!
- sharing and collaboration with other dioceses brings and emphasis on the inter-connectedness and is useful for taking back to our communities and promoting back home
- diocese leads need to connect with all the local organisations that they can to everyone's mutual benefit
- encouraging lay leadership in the church is needed
- reaching out to people of other faiths re COP as an opportunity but difficult - coming together on a regional basis - mainly focussed on campaigning is crucial
- stay as the NDEG put when appropriate network with other diocesan groups and networks towards a collaboration of a One Church Approach.

3. National Justice and Peace Network

Anne shared the work of NJPN. The NJPN is trying to encourage grassroots involvement and wish to have a named diocesan link in most parishes and networks for a line of communication; a lot of overlap in this area of social action; NJPN will strengthen links with CBCEW and also European links; parish links are through grassroots networks and commissions; interconnectedness is important; trying to work with lots of partners and unexpected ones; ecumenical work (e.g. JPIT; Christians Aware); support from religious communities is also important. Finally, engaging young people to attend the conference - and hearing the asks of the young important.

‘ACTION FOR LIFE ON EARTH 2021’ - July 23rd- 25th July 2021 NJPN Conference is planned to go ahead given easing of the current Corona virus pandemic restrictions. A few places are still available for the Annual Conference which is looking at ecological conversion and care for Creation. Visit: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/

4. Parish Links

Ben Gilchrist - Caritas Shrewsbury - discussed the challenge of work at parish level and how the links that diocese environment leads can make to parishes is crucial. There was, however, some frustration from some quarters about parishioner level work and the lack of urgency and real engagement at this crucial place where Catholics gather!

Anthony Brown - St Michael and St John's in Clitheroe - has a Live Simply Plan they are sharing with the primary school in consultation with Bob Turner. They are not applying for the award yet because there is not enough whole church and community engagement in the work still led by a few people.

Bob Turner expressed hope that a website could be developed for parishes as a ‘one stop shop’ as there is some excellent parish projects out there to be shared and duplicated. We need a Lancaster J+P style newsletter in Salford Diocese.

Others expressed the need for hope and leadership at parish level and to win over hearts and minds of parishioners.

Christine Matthewson from St. John's Rochdale had set up an environment group in Rochdale to respond to littering and fly tipping. The local action has been shared with Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and there are useful connections to make at GM strategy links - <https://www.vsnw.org.uk/green-bullet>

5. Poverty and the environment are interconnected

We discussed the importance of not losing sight of the connection between poverty and the environment and that the inter-consecutiveness that is expressed by Pope Francis in Laudato Si is crucial to retain in all our work.

We discussed food poverty, those on low incomes and the use of allotments and growing produce. Important to engage with nature and the land. See Caritas Diocese of Salford's Lalley Centre allotment, Collyhurst, Manchester. Also Caritas Salford is part of a Greater Manchester Citizens working group on the environment especially relating to transport and clean air.

6. News and Information

Live Simply Awards

Assessments now done on Zoom, linking to more dioceses. Schools can apply as can parishes.

Rooted in Faith

In schools Caritas and the Diocese with the Education Dept. has created 'Rooted in Faith' an activation of young people in schools to take action.

Hexham and Newcastle Diocese

The Environment Group set up by Bishop Robert is planning an environment day at our Youth Village on Sep 18 when we will launch our new policy and establish a network of climate champions to help deliver sustainability across our Diocese. The J&P Council have also written to Bishop John following the pastoral letter at Pentecost to encourage the Bishops Conference to take stronger action on tackling the climate and ecological emergency. This really is a decade of critical importance for our common home and we need to call for more urgent action at all levels of society.

Disinvestment campaign

Important that sharing diocese work and perspectives on fossil divestment work is noted. Assuming people know Operation Noah's divestment work - Bright Now - the campaign for fossil free churches. See: 10 reasons to divest from fossil fuels:

<https://brightnow.org.uk/news/global-divestment-announcement-10-reasons-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/>

Also here is a link to the Independent Catholic News article on global divestment announcement: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/42223>

See also justice and peace link: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NW-NJPN-Justice-and-Peace-E-Bulletin-mid-June-2021.pdf>

Bishops Pastoral Letter for Pentecost 2021

It was the decision of the Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland to unite in promoting a Pastoral Letter for Pentecost Sunday which included the following:

‘But we cannot leave the healing of our common home and the wellbeing and care of our brothers and sisters merely to a response from industry and governments. Our own local concern and action is necessary and has far-reaching consequences. We all have a part to play, each and every one of us, in the routines, choices and decisions of our everyday lives and our aspirations for the future. The actions of parishes, families, schools, and individuals will have a significant impact on our efforts to restore our common home. There are now many resources, freely available, to advise us

on our choice of food, saving of water and electricity, suggestions about travel, waste, and re-use. These are measures that everyone can employ, in some degree, with minimal inconvenience and change. They are effective ways in which we can each reaffirm our personal vocation to be stewards of creation’.

Quaker resources

Quaker UN Office in Geneva has produced 3 booklets that could be useful for schools and groups. They are written in the context of the run up to the UN COP26 Conference in Glasgow. [How to be a Hero for All our Children](#). This little booklet (A6 or extended version in A5) focuses on connecting readers with the latest climate science, suggested personal actions, and questions for politicians.

Its aim is to reach those new to, or uncertain about, climate change and how to help. You can share digitally, or put printed copies through doors/hand out in community meetings. The publication can be viewed on the website- <https://quno.org/resource/2021/4/how-be-hero-all-our-children> where paper copies may also be requested. ‘How to be a Hero’ is the final instalment in a [trilogy of QUNO publications](#), the first for policy makers ([The Government Official Toolkit to Urgent Climate Action](#)), the second for climate activists and this is third.

Lancaster Diocese Faith and Justice resource links

Two resources prepared for use in secondary

- a) The video reflection is 6 minutes highlights the teachings of world religions on climate and environment.
<http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk/download/environmental-issues-celebrating-creation/cop26-resources/Lancaster%20Diocese%20FJ%20Commission%20Creation%20Reflection%202.mp4>
- b) A short power-point introduction to the COP26 summit
<http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk/download/environmental-issues-celebrating-creation/cop26-resources/COP26%20SHORT%20INTRODUCTION%201.pptx>

The New Story Eco Community

has an eco-newsletter attached to this email see <https://new-story-eco-community.org>

26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is from 1st -12th November 2021, Glasgow.

THE NEXT MEETING - 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.