

NORTHERN DIOCESE ENVIRONMENT GROUP
NORTHERN DIOCESE ENVIRONMENT GROUP (NDEG) MEETING
Zoom

Date Tuesday 19th September 2023 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Present

Mark Wiggin (Chair)	Caritas Diocese of Salford
Sr Margaret Atkins	Boarbank Hall, Cumbria
Paul Kelly	Climate Action Group – Leeds J&P Commission and NJPN Environment Group
Edward de Quay	Carbon Transition Officer, Laudato Si Research Institute, Campion Hall, University of Oxford
Emma Gardener	Head of Environment, Diocese of Salford
Joe Burns	J+P Commission Diocese of Leeds
Trish Sandbach	Leeds Diocese J+P
Susan Ward	Liverpool Archdiocese J+P
Barbara Hungin	Justice and Peace Commission Middlesbrough Diocese
Minnie Fraser	Environmental Lead Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Emily Cahill	Environment & Learning Officer Diocese of Salford.
Margaret McSherry	Climate Action Group – Leeds J&P Commission
Columba Timmins	Hallam Diocese.
Sue Ward	Liverpool Archdiocese J+P
Sue Grubic	Lancaster Diocese J+P
Justine Silcock	Liverpool Archdiocese
Stephen Garsed	Lancaster Diocese
Bob Turner	Salford Diocese & Cafod Schools Volunteer
Pablo Guidi	Archdiocese of Liverpool

Apologies

Anne Peacey (Justice and Peace Middlesbrough Diocese), Anthony Brown (Our Lady of the Valley Clitheroe), Joe Howson (Lee House)

Welcome and Introduction

Mark Wiggin as Chair of the NDEG welcomed everyone to the experimental time of 6.00pm and in particular welcomed Sr Margaret Atkins as our guest speaker.

Opening Reflection

Led by Joe Burns, Leeds J&P Commission

Key speaker

Sr. Margaret Atkins, our main speaker, is a Canoness of St Augustine in the community at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria. She was a Senior Lecturer in Theology at Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds. She has particular interests in virtue ethics, in the ethics of healthcare and of the environment, and in St Augustine. In her talk she shared her experiences on *learning, spirituality and the environment*. Her theme "*grounding action in personal formation*" was with references to her work in theological education/formation and provided a stimulating opportunity to think about environmental issues from a moral and spiritual perspective. Focusing on three inter-connected dimensions of faith formation, Sr. Margaret took *mind* (Truth) *heart* (Love) and *spirit* (Truth + Heart) to share her insights and experience of aspects of our growth in faith at different times of our development.

The talk was followed by breakout groups reflecting on the input of Sr. Margaret.

Feedback

The key speaker and evening led to plenty of very positive feedback that included: "so clear and well-structured", "Fabulous meeting", "Wonderful", "Great Session" and "a thought-provoking evening."

Feedback on the 8th June NDEG meeting in Leeds

This was the first NDEG face to face, in-person meeting since the pandemic. Thanks to Joe Burns and the Leeds J+P Commission for the hosting, venue and providing lunch. Also, for using Eventbrite to promote the meeting and widen participation in the network.

John Paul de Quay led an excellent workshop that linked personal ecological conversion to the wider needs of parishes to become more joined up with diocesan and community initiatives to tackle awareness and action for the environment. This was followed by Helen Hayden who helped us to understand the connection between the climate emergency and local poverty and how tackling the climate emergency in Leeds benefitted its citizens on low incomes.

One proposal came from John Battle whose idea was for NDEG/SDEG members to get together with the bishops, along with their Environment Leads, to engage and discuss progress to the environmental challenges we all face. The spring 2024 Bishop's Plenary might be the opportunity to do this.

News

A straw poll of those at the meeting confirmed that the Catholic Church in England and Wales has really stepped up to the plate in the last 5 years on environment issues and especially climate change. There was some very positive feedback from the dioceses present that parishes, as well as schools, were responding with their own action plans as well as supporting their dioceses.

The Salford Diocesan Trustees have decided to divest from fossil fuels. Their voice in pressing for change by the oil companies was not listened to so they have divested.

They issued this statement recently:

As a Diocese our investments are guided by the principle of stewardship, putting our care for people and our common home at the centre of all that we do. We are committed to being responsible and active investor, using our influence to challenge companies to set ambitious targets and make the lasting change we need. As part of this commitment, we also regularly review our investments monitoring our impact and responding to changing landscapes. In recent weeks it has become clear that both BP PLC and Shell PLC have altered their stance and are no longer ambitious enough in their decarbonisation pathways and transition plans. We would be failing in our duty to our common home and our brothers and sisters, if we decided not to act. We must take a stand against companies that do not align with our principles and that put their profits ahead of the common good. We will therefore divest from both companies by the end of 2023. This ends our direct investment in fossil fuel production. We will continue to use our voice to champion for dialogue, change and action.

The Season of Creation returns for another year, inviting Christians across the globe to come together in prayer and action for the good of our common home. Running from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to the feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4th October, this month-long celebration offers us time to reflect on the needs of our planet and what we can do in our communities to make a difference. For further information, resources, and prayers, please visit <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news>

The Laudato Si' Movement will be running a special animator's course for 18–35-year-olds starting soon.

You can register your interest here <https://laudatosianimators.org/lisa-youth-europe/>

Here is a link to my Parish webpage in case you are interested <http://www.olotv.org.uk/parish-groups/laudato-si>

Upcoming events

Salford Diocese have a care for creation service on 4th October at St John Fisher 7pm if anyone would like to join us.

Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission hosting a Care of Creation event on Sat 7th October at St Bernadette's in Lancaster. Address is St Bernadette's Catholic Church, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 4HT. The theme of the event is 'Let Justice and Peace flow'. Keynote speakers include Sr Margaret Atkins, Dr Stephen Garsed, Dr Paul Kelly, John Paul de Quay. Tea and coffee will be provided but please bring your own lunch.

For further information or to confirm your attendance at the event please contact Sue Grubic ldfsue@gmail.com or text 07791444417

To arrange a visit to the Laudato Si Centre please contact laudatosi@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Future meetings

A meeting will be held before Christmas – details and date to be sent out shortly.

We will also keep in contact with the Southern Diocese Environment Network and hopefully have a joint meeting in the New Year. We also hope to bring together in 2024 the Bishops and all the environment leads from every diocese to a joint meeting with the Northern and Southern dioceses environment networks.

As always if you know anyone who would like to join the meeting, please let Mary Scully know (m.scully@caritassalford.org.uk) and she will add them to the mailing list.