

WEST SOMERSET AREA QUAKER MEETING

EARTH ACTION GROUP

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021



PHOTO FROM HUW MORGAN

THE EARTH ACTION GROUP has not met in person for over a year and as convenor, I thought a newsletter might be a good way to keep West Somerset Friends abreast of developments locally and nationally.

We would welcome both feedback and contributions from Friends on environmental and associated matters, both practical and spiritual. It would be great to hear of your local initiatives or groups you are involved in. Thank you to those who have done so for this edition. (Send to ainsworth.john@yahoo.com)

I anticipate producing another edition in mid May-sooner if you send me lots of content.

John Ainsworth

The testimony to simplicity and sustainability looks at the world as a whole and sees in every living thing and in every natural system something of value to be respected. It bears witness to God's work in the whole of creation.

(from Anne Adams published in Quaker Monthly 1994)

We are in the year of COP 26 In Glasgow. We aim to keep WS Friends abreast of developments and of how Quakers prepare for this celebrating our sense of spiritual connection to the environmental agenda locally and nationally.

So we would love to have contributions from all Friends in the area (and beyond) that express our passion for a better world. Perhaps words that inspire you; maybe local actions you are involved in; and pictures that show the beauty of the world.

WHAT IS COP26 AND HOW CAN QUAKERS PREPARE?

COP 26 is the 26th UN climate change conference of the parties and will bring countries together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is being hosted by the UK in Glasgow from 1st to 12th November (having been postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic).

This is a crucial time for building the movement for climate justice. People in Britain and beyond want radical action to prevent climate breakdown – and we must make sure that the UK government knows that.

Many people in the UK share a deep concern for the damage being done to the Earth, our home. In our concern, we recognise that every place is sacred and that we all have a responsibility to protect the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Journey to COP26

10 - 11 April 2021, happening wherever you are

An invitation for people of all faith communities and none to join together remotely and share our belief in the sacredness of all life, ahead of the UN climate talks, COP26.

On Saturday 10 April and Sunday 11 April we invite you to participate in this celebration of our environment by making a short journey to any place that is sacred to you.

Your journey could be to your garden or local park, or a day long hike! If your sacred place is your own living room it could even be a spiritual or virtual journey. It could be taken as a group or individually.



Anyone can participate in the Journey to COP26. Here are some steps you can take:

1. **Start organising your journey.** You could do this with friends, family, your faith community or on your own. Think about which places are sacred to you and how you might want to travel. Your journey could involve an event at the end, such as a meeting for worship, a community art exhibition or planting a tree together. It could also be an opportunity to get local politicians or local media to respond to the issue of climate change and draw attention to the COP26 negotiations.
2. **Email us for bespoke help.** If you want advice, support or ideas for what to do for your Journey to COP26, please get in touch! Email Oonagh Ryder, Activism Support Coordinator: oonaghr@quaker.org.uk.
3. **Join our mailing list.** We will share information about preparing an action in the run-up to 10 & 11 April, and share news of who else will be participating.

In 1993, the year of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, Friends were increasingly asking: "what can we do in relation to these environment and development concerns which are of central importance?" – of importance to the survival of the planet itself, to the quality of life, to the provision of basic needs for all, for a just and peaceful world. What can we do that is Quakerly and that complements the activities of others?"

(from Wendy Rees published in Quaker Monthly 1993)

WOODBROOKE AND COP26

“Spiritual Preparation for COP26” is a monthly series of sessions between February and October led by Oonagh Ryder and Tracy Martin to build a community of witness, reflecting on what we can do and to nurture our spiritual resilience and resistance to climate breakdown. Friends are invited to attend as many or as few as they are able.

Details are on the Woodbrooke website – www.woodbrooke.org.uk ;there is no charge but you should book in advance. The next session is on Tuesday 20th April from 7.00 to 8.30 p.m.

OPSW SPRING SERIES – WHAT LOVE CAN DO- HOW QUAKER FAITH IMPELS US TO ACT IN THE WORLD

The Spring Sessions will look at issues including the spiritual roots of our work, working with decision makers, climate and racial justice peace campaigning, and more. There will be time for discussions, question & answer sessions, and participatory activities. Everyone is welcome. If you have never heard of Quakerism before - or you're thinking about how we can act in the world to create peace and positive change - you are welcome. You do not have to be a Quaker so please share widely with all those you think may be interested.

They are mostly on Tuesdays and Thursdays either at lunchtime or early evening starting on 20th April. Information and link to book at www.quaker.org.uk/events/qpsw-spring-session-what-love-can-do

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS: QUAKERS AND THE UN CLIMATE TALKS: HOW DO WE SEIZE THE MOMENT?

Curious about COP26? Wondering how to take action? Join an online workshop for your region to find out what Quakers are doing and how you can get involved.

The workshop for Friends in London, the South East and the South West (a pretty big region!) is on Wednesday 23rd June from 7.00 to 8.30 p.m. Bookings via www.quaker.org.uk/quakers-and-the-un-climate-talks

This information was in Quake! for 1st April which all LM clerks will have received.

THE GOOD NEWS PAGE

Nationally

Last week, the government finally confirmed that its ban on funding for overseas fossil fuel projects will take effect immediately. In their announcement, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy noted that they had received over 42,000 responses from individuals, with 95% arguing for an immediate ban on fossil fuel funding from March 2021 onwards.

Locally

Somerset West and Taunton Council have agreed to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill.

The CEE Bill was drafted by expert scientists, lawyers and academics, and sets a viable pathway for the UK to follow by:

- *Requiring the Government to ensure that the UK reduces greenhouse gas emissions in line with its legally-binding international obligations to limit global heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels*
- *Requiring the Government to protect and restore habitats, woodlands, wetlands and the wider natural world*
- *Establishing a representative Citizens' Assembly to involve people from all parts of the UK in deciding which policies are needed to avoid irreversible environmental damage.*

Buses of Somerset are restarting the open top bus from Minehead to Lynmouth from 22nd May – the Exmoor Explorer. More options for car-less travel.

And also coming up this year

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK runs from 18th to 26th September organised by the Climate Coalition with plans for activities across the UK to create the momentum and pressure for the UK government to up its game on climate change for the COP 26 summit.

Our next edition might include local events now more is allowed post lockdown. Email me with what is going on in your neck of the woods. ainsworth.john@yahoo.com



MONOPRINT FROM SARAH BOVEY

What then can theology say to conflicts between nature and economy? I would suggest that the key lies in the concept of reverence. To be reverent means to be concerned with the integrity of a thing or person; to value it for itself; to work with it symbiotically, in celebration of its being. and not with a graceless spirit of mere utility.

(from Alastair McIntosh published in Reforesting Scotland 1995)

We must be both carbon cutters and climate marchers; it is not a choice; we must be both things to convince others and to urgently influence government and business leaders

(from Rachel Howell, who advises the Scottish government on climate change)

SHARE WHAT INSPIRES YOU, WHAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN AND ANY LOCAL INITIATIVES YOU KNOW ABOUT.

CAN WE MAKE THIS A REGULAR NEWSLETTER FOR ALL WEST SOMERSET FRIENDS?

THIS IS JUST A START. Contributions to ainsworth.john@yahoo.com