

Yorkshire Synod Elders' Conference – 17 April 2021

Summary of ideas submitted to 'Action Ideas' account during the day (full transcript below)

Getting your church on board

- Beverley held a Green day - invited stalls - an energy company came and did a green audit offering actions - large and small.
- Ilkley have a film club, shown 'An inconvenient truth' followed by discussion (other films available)
- Keep pressing on affirming to congregations - without scaring / boring that this is serious.
- Hold a congregational green audit

Church buildings and land:

- We should be looking at our buildings and the costs of maintaining them not only financially but also in relation to the climate
- When doing building work etc, challenge builders re materials used.
- Hold an energy survey
- Some churches have flat roofs. Could put plants on them for insulation and to reduce energy usage.
- Could allotments or produce grown in church gardens contribute to foodbanks?

Post Covid church:

- Embed ideas relating to climate change in all our planning for the future.
- need to be flexible as we move forward remembering to include environmental issues in our thinking. Look to the ecumenical possibilities which could mean the better sharing of resources.
- Zoom will feature in the post Covid church. Holding events and meetings like this online will reduce travelling.

Thoughts for synod:

- It would be good to share experiences of contacting our MPs with one another across the Synod, for mutual encouragement and support
- Synod Ecology group to promote local churches/areas/M&C Groups to promote and organise lobbying their MPs
- It would be good for Synod to form action groups for different issues. We heard how Rachel Mander can help with lobbying MPs. We concentrated on climate change, which is fundamental to our survival, but there are a lot of other important issues too. We can often feel powerless alone so it would be good to work together.

Personal response

- How do we change habits?
- Has the URC declared a Climate Emergency and what does that mean in terms of action?
 - Caring for Creation with the URC website offering suggestions mirrored in the information provided as part of our Conference
- Are you willing to be the contact person in your church for Eco issues? Please let Val know or your Green Apostle: greenapostle@urcyorkshire.org.uk

- In the workshop on personal changes it became clear that we just don't have enough information on which to base informed decisions. We need to know the full carbon footprint of goods and services in order to make a decision (complicated by there being other ethical considerations too. Perhaps a push for this information to be clearly visible is something we can all lobby our MPs about.

A prayer from Simeon Mitchell

God of the wild, the wise and the wonderful –
of arcing skies and miniscule, jewelled wings –
set my worship free to explore beyond these walls.
Re-ignite me, excite me and creatively delight me
as your word comes newly alive
through the colourful witness of your world.
Re-tune my senses, sharpen my mind
and quicken my spirit to your presence
as I look, hear, smell, touch and taste more of your goodness
and lead me out into greater adventures
of discovering you and caring for all you have made.
Amen

Recommended resources

- Living Spirituality Connections www.livingspirit.org.uk is a hub for people to find resources and events
- Doughnut Economics www.kateraworth.com
- Eco Church arocha.ecochurch.org.uk
- Climate Sunday www.climatesunday.org
- Rachel.mander@hftf.org.uk

And here are some more links from Helen at A Rocha (Eco Church):

- [Muddy Church](#)
- [Hazelnut Community Farm](#) - an example of a church outreach initiative and one of our Partners In Action
- <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>
- [Climate Stewards](#) will help you calculate your carbon footprint
- <https://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/advisor-network/> The A Rocha Advisors Network has volunteer members with experience in church buildings and land who might be able to answer your questions and give advice based on their own environmental projects.
- Receive updates from A Rocha, including a quarterly community update from Eco Church called Eco Church Connect: <https://arocha.us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=69f4c1083320061706fe47874&id=5156dbcd14>
- All of A Rocha's upcoming events: <https://arocha.org.uk/events/>

Video of the open sessions of the conference <https://youtu.be/5BRzHIJpY7c>

Full transcript

- 10:11:36** **From Linda Courage to Action Ideas (Privately)** : Hi Simeon - I am part of Living Spirituality Connections www.livingspirit.org.uk We act as a hub for people to find resources and events - happy to advertise events like this for you. I'm at linda.courage60@gmail.com
- 11:46:20** **From Alex** : <https://www.kateraworth.com/>
- 13:15:57** **From Val Morrison to Action Ideas (Privately)** : Zoom will feature in the post Covid church.
- 13:17:00** **From Max Dudley to Action Ideas (Privately)** : Some churches have flat roofs. Are A Rocha recommending plants on roofs for insulation and to reduce energy usage?
- 13:19:45** **From Val Morrison to Action Ideas (Privately)** : need to be flexible as we move forward remembering to include environmental issues in our thinking. Look to the ecumenical possibilities which could mean the better sharing of resources. Eco church - people want more information
- 13:24:40** **From Ágnes Zsednai Salem to Action Ideas (Privately)** : It would be good for Synod to form action groups for different issues. We heard how Rachel Mander can help with lobbying MPs. We concentrated on climate change, which is fundamental to our survival, but there are a lot of other important issues too.
I feel very passionate about the NHS and especially nurses' pay and the chronic shortage of doctors and specialist nurses. But I feel powerless alone. Can we set up a group to work on this and make the government act to avoid the complete collapse of our health system?
- 13:25:21** **From Ann Coates to Action Ideas (Privately)** : from Group d 1. Beverley held a Green day - invited stalls - an energy company came and did a green audit offering actions - large and small. 2. How do we change habits ? 3. Ilkley have a film club , shown 'An inconvenient truth' followed by discussions (other films available) 4. When doing building work etc challenge builders re materials used. 5. hold an energy survey .6 keep pressing on affirming to congregations - without scaring / boring that this is serious. 6. How do we avoid climate change overload --- as Brexit and Covid overloads??? & hold a congregational green audit
- 14:51:55** **From Val Morrison to Action Ideas (Privately)** : 1. Reduce travelling for meetings and events like this
- 14:55:29** **From Val Morrison to Action Ideas (Privately)** : 2. embed ideas relating to climate change in all our planning for the future. 3. Has the URC declared a Climate Emergency and what does that mean in terms of action? 3. should we be looking at our buildings and the costs of maintaining them both financial and in relation to the climate?
- 14:57:41** **From Jamie Kissack to Action Ideas (Privately)** : It would be good to share experiences of contacting our MPs with one another across the Synod, for mutual encouragement and support
- 15:03:46** **From Simeon Mitchell to Action Ideas (Privately)** : Please could the slides from Rachel Mander's presentation be circulated

- 15:05:59** **From Rod Morrison to Action Ideas (Privately)** : Synod Ecology group to promote local churches/areas/M&C Groups to promote and organise lobbying their MPs
- 15:30:30** **From Alex** : Are you willing to be the contact person in your church for Eco issues?
Please let Val know or your Green Apostle: greenapostle@urcyorkshire.org.uk
- 15:31:32** **From Jane & Andy Simmons to Action Ideas (Privately)** : I can see a way that my two chosen workshop experiences come together. In the workshop on personal changes it became clear that we just don't have enough information on which to base informed decisions. We need to know the full carbon footprint of goods and services in order to make a decision (complicated by there being other ethical considerations too. Perhaps a push for this information to be clearly visible is something we can all lobby our MPs about.
- 15:34:36** **From Simeon Mitchell** : <https://www.climatesunday.org/>