

Chester World Development Forum



Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on

Tuesday 12 March 2019 in The Unity Centre

- 1 **Welcome:** Terry Green chaired the meeting
Present: Terry Green, Ann McCarthy (CAFOD), Vicki Jenner, Gerald Grant, Bernard Payne (St Columba's Third World Group), Terry Walsh (Chester CND), Mark Rideal (Chester CND and Chester Friends of the Earth), Katy Rowe (Chester Friends of Palestine and Christian Aid), Brian Rowe (Chester Friends of Palestine), Pam Price (Church Action on Poverty), Tom Ormiston and Tony Walsh (Ellesmere Port Justice and Peace Group), Linda and Stewart Shuttleworth, John Tacon, Lindsay Cussons and Jude Limb (Christian Aid)
Apologies: Prior apologies from Margaret Lord, Sue Bownas.

- 2 **Climate Change and Climate Justice: “from concerns into actions”:**
 - “Big Shift” campaign – update from Jude Limb, Christian Aid NW
(*Just informing us that school students are going on strike again on Friday*)

Re “The Big Shift” campaign and the story so far –

Since Christian Aid began the Big Shift campaign in 2015, the UK government has agreed to phase out coal power, over 5,500 churches have switched to clean energy, Standard Chartered have ruled out funding for all new coal projects and RBS have announced a phase-out of finance to all new coal power projects and thermal coalmines. We're making progress!

But while private banks continue to use their funds to invest in fossil fuel projects, we'll never reach the cleaner and safer future we need.

That's why we're asking HSBC to make the Big Shift away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy. Incredibly, they are still willing to fund new coal – the dirtiest fossil fuel – in three countries vulnerable to climate change: Vietnam, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

So, as part of the Lent appeal, visit your local HSBC bank with a letter asking the bank to take private finance out of fossil fuels. Christian Aid asks that you take a photo outside the bank and send it to the Christian Aid office. The idea is to flood HSBC branches across the country.

In Chester, the local Christian Aid Committee have organised a letter to be delivered on 04 April at 2pm to our local branch of HSBC. Unfortunately, the HSBC branches in Knutsford, Handley, Newcastle under Lyne and Ellesmere Port have not been covered so Jude is asking for CWDF's help.

If counter staff are reluctant to accept the letter then it can always be pointed out that these investments will affect their pensions. There are leaflets which can be handed out to customers.

Tom Ormiston and Tony Walsh offered to cover the HSBC branch in Ellesmere Port – meet at 2pm outside HSBC, 96, Whitby Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 0AE on Thursday 11 April.
 - “COP 24” – key points from Catherine Green's talk 19-2-19: See full report mailed with these minutes. **Key message: Think global, act local**
 - I Gas inquiry – how climate change aspects have been addressed?
The inquiry has exposed tensions between government support for shale gas extraction and the UK's legally-binding commitments to limit climate change. It

centres on whether Cheshire West and Chester Council should have refused planning permission for the Ellesmere Port scheme in January 2018. Councillors argued, against the advice of planning officers, that the scheme breached local policy on sustainable development because it failed to mitigate the effects of climate change. The council argued that the IGas scheme did not comply with the Paris Agreement on climate change, to which the UK is a signatory and that IGas never gave an estimate of the effects on climate change. A broad estimate by FrackFree Dee puts the amount of carbon emissions likely to be produced during the 90-day 'exploration' phase as roughly equivalent to all CWaC activities in the Borough over a year.

A real "spanner in the works" was revealed in a news item from The Guardian newspaper 7.3.19 in the closing stages of the Inquiry: "FRACKING GUIDANCE ILLEGALLY IGNORES CLIMATE CHANGE". Attempts by the government to make fracking easier have been dealt a blow by a High Court ruling. The High Court found that it is important to consider scientific evidence, including **the effects of fracking on climate change**. They found that the government guidance had failed to consider this requirement. The judgment implies that **campaigners can raise climate change as a reason to object to planning permission on fracking sites**. The case was brought to the High Court by anti-fracking campaigners "Talk Fracking" who were represented by solicitors Leigh Day. The judge, Mr Justice Dove, also criticised the way the public consultation on the national guidance was carried out, calling part of it "**so flawed in its design & processes as to be unlawful**." The judgment also suggests that **gas from fracking might not be considered a low-carbon source of fuel**. The British Geology Survey also found increased methane levels near a fracking site, which has been said to show that the fracking industry is 'not living up to the standards expected.'

In the final stages of the inquiry, IGas revealed that they wanted CW&C to pay their legal costs – presumably as a warning for any future planning applications. For further information on the inquiry, go to FrackFreeDee website. The outcome of the inquiry is not expected until October.

- Open discussion to consider how we identify and support the many types of local action already underway, just starting, or being mooted. Who are the key agencies here? Do we need more emphasis on practical, individual actions? What roles for CWDF? Below are some of the ideas put forward by members:
 - LS and SS – Maybe it would be useful to look at the psychology of why people are not interested in or engaging with climate change issues. Perhaps speak at next meeting?
 - Try other ways of being more effective, eg posting on social media. Take example from Chester FoE
 - Raising awareness within church groups - Tony W and TO showing "Laudate Si" – the Pope's message on climate change - in EP.
 - Leafletting but do it in fun way/music/dancing/ involve children.
 - Raising awareness event to be held in Zoo / Storyhouse?
 - Speaker who can make effects of climate change quantifiable / evidence
 - Cathedral workshops are focussing on climate change
 - Tom – CWDF multi-faceted and should stay that way.
 - JT – Positive things are happening in Chester with CFoE, Chester Sustainability Forum, Chester Community Energy Ltd – eg more solar panels to be used on buildings following success of panels on Northgate Arena.

Committee will discuss further, including possibility of having a collaborative event in summer, raising awareness again.

3 Minutes/ notes of Forum meetings, and matters arising:

- Forum Meeting of 15th January 2019 (*previously circulated, including note of Helen Tandy's talk, Ethical Investment & Divestment*)
- Chair to report on key issues covered in Committee meetings held on 4th and 25th February 2019. Mostly discussing aspects of climate change actions.

4 Brief review of recent events:

- **5 March: Nick Dearden talk on national & personal debt** – this was an extremely interesting talk but sadly very poorly attended. **Key message from Nick – finance comes first and people and values second.** (See full report emailed with these minutes)
- **Fairtrade Fortnight** – how did the market stall fare? According to the visitor tally, the stall engaged with 455 people. Final figures are to be confirmed but Heather Swainston thinks over £800 of goods sold in the Fortnight so the stall will have been able to really benefit the farmers and artisans and women in Malawi. HS did a great job of organising a rota. It was well worth doing, not just for the sale of goods, but also in raising awareness.
- **9 March: International Women's Day event**, Town Hall – very successful day with lots of stalls. BP pointed out that CWDF needs something of more interest – something to draw people to stall. TG did lots of networking. TG had email from organisers thanking us for our participation. [If we ever hold an event there, it is worth noting that the sound system is poor.]

5 Consideration of forthcoming events/ activities from "Around the Table" and from the latest issue of the CWDF Diary

Date for HSBC in EP – 11th April 2pm

6 Date of next Forum meeting: Tuesday 14th May, 6.45 for 7.00pm at The Unity Centre. CWDF AGM, with prior talk by Shantele Janes on the work of CHAWREC.