

Torbay Christian EcoAction

December 2024 newsletter

This is our December newsletter. Belated happy Christmas and all very best wishes to you for the coming New Year. Squeezing it into the last few days of December, and January will be distinctly in the middle of the month.

As previously, this newsletter is coming in PDF form but also with a link at <https://davidhodson.com/torbay-christian-ecoaction-december24-newsletter/> if that is easier for you to distribute. If you want a word version, let me know. If you want to unsubscribe, email me. If you know of anyone whom you think would like to receive, again let me know. As previously, it is a mixture of events, resources and news. If anyone has anything they would like appropriately publicised, please let me know.

Tear fund quiz: 16th November at 7:30 PM

Thank you for everyone who came along. It was a really enjoyable evening. Thank you to Clare and Judi for many of the arrangements. Thank you to everyone who turned up and took part. We raised about £500. Still available to give and here is the just giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/eco-action-group-st-matthias-torquay-1727862195317>.

How green is your garden: 18th January at 2 PM: **Cancelled**

You will have received my email a couple of weeks ago about the cancellation of this event. We did so with much sadness and regret. We had been planning since the summer. We had some really interesting speakers on topics including edible gardens, small gardens, community gardens, gardening for well-being and similar. Which left 2 talks scheduled from the very beginning of our planning. Curiously we thought, we couldn't find anyone to talk about what plants were best for a coastal environment, so important in this area with strong sea winds, the nature of the soil and the salt in the air coming off the sea. But we felt we could have overcome this.

It was the other which was fundamental. The more explicit environmental aspects of gardening, such as using or not using peat and related topics. We tried everyone! Garden centres, local authority, environmental groups, climate change groups and anyone else whom we could remotely find. We went as far as Plymouth and Exeter. A complete blank. Which started to become not just

surprising but potentially suspicious. Why could we not find anyone when all of the gardening programmes on television, and similar media, tells us not to use peat? I don't know if this is the reason but we then started to hear, unattributably, that professionals and those in the know would prefer to work with peat and were very aware of the shortcomings of the alternatives. We have no idea if this is the real reason and it may have been just a few conversations. We know gardeners successfully using alternatives. But for whatever reason, and despite trying over 3 months as extensively as was viable, we could find nobody willing to come and talk on this topic with any degree of reliability and authority. We felt the absence of covering this topic went to the purpose. Of course we could have gone ahead without but we felt that it would be failing to serve our purpose. It would have been no doubt an enjoyable series of talks but ultimately not what we are doing and our intentions. Hence reluctantly we cancelled.

If subsequently we discover a reliable and confident speaker, perhaps even to people willing to debate the topic, we may yet revive. It's almost finished and can be put together quickly and comprehensively. We think it's got an appeal quite broadly which is why it's all disappointing. So maybe another time but at the moment we couldn't go ahead. Apologies of course

Torbay Climate Partnership

Following Torbay Christian Eco-Action being invited to join the Torbay Climate Partnership organised by the council and comprising organisations across Torbay working in the environmental and climate change arena, I attended the first meeting on 6th December. No amazing news or revelations to report. Instead really impressed by the work being undertaken in this area by so many people and so many organisations. A real commitment to make sure the importance of ecological issues is being brought into the classroom for that generation. Clear messages from the council of what they want to do, using council resources, for transport, waste disposal, improvement of housing stock and much more. Discussion about longer term issues going well into the next decade. I was much impressed. It will also mean it is far more likely we will find out what else is going on and we can share amongst our Christian community here in Torbay. I will keep you posted

Torbay new climate action plan: a Greener Way for our Bay

You will remember the consultation on this at the end of last year and I know a number of us took part and tried to encourage others to do so to support the environmental work for our council. Their plan has just been produced and can be found here <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/pr9190/> and I encourage us all to read at

least the summary if not more. It says it plans to make homes more energy-efficient which is a big issue for us here in Torbay as the housing stock is very heat inefficient. It wants to protect the natural environment, help businesses to become more sustainable, encourage public transport and similar. It has immediate action and long-term plans. Interestingly, the 2030 net zero target has been dropped and now it looks to a national 2050 net zero target. My feeling is that although 2030 was now effectively impossible, putting it back to 2050 is far too long away. In fairness, they have targets for interim progress in 2035. The report is 49 pages long and very readable and I commend highly. It sets out 10 key things to help reduce Torbay carbon emissions. I'm setting them out at the end of this letter and do read. I suspect we would all be supportive. What's crucial is what happens next. There is a timetable of action within the report

Fossil find in Paignton

As part of understanding our local environment, it was announced a week ago that there had been a groundbreaking fossil discovery at Saltern Cove, the fascinating geological area just beyond Paignton heading towards Brixham. It is fossils of trees believed to be 377 million years old. They provide a unique glimpse into the previous landscape of Torbay. More details here:

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9250/>

Christmas tree recycling

SwisCo are working with Rowcroft for recycling Christmas trees, collected from the boundary of the property, with a donation suggested of £10. More details here:

https://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/events/christmas-tree-collection/?fbclid=IwY2xjawHQ57VleHRuA2F1bQIxMAABHeZeM7aEp_pqLP9lFFTsBmPrwYDDWexPP4TkacgR3j_HO0ppUUvbYyxioQ_aem_BeygSMDiXFoS4Kry4xPw2Q

The Church of England environmental days and key events calendar

This helpful calendar gives details of the many key dates in the environmental calendar. They will be of different interests to different people but is very informative. Once one knows of the events, is easy to find out more via Internet searching of course. It can be downloaded here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/environment-calendar-2025.pdf>

Energy-saving week

This is 17th-23rd January when there is a series of events designed to, as it says, save energy. There is a very helpful website here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/event/energy-saving-week-2025>

Opening up to EU fishing: impact on environmental policies

I try to avoid partisan political remarks and this one is a little sensitive. Apparently as part of the intention of opening up freedom of movement and work for those under 30 in the EU to come to this country, and vice versa, EU fishing boats will again be given access to UK waters. In my understanding, since we left the EU, the UK has put in place various environmental policies including in relation to so-called bottom trawling. This is when the fishing boat simply drags a net scooping up no doubt a lot of fish but also destroying the seabed. By some reports, this will not apply to EU fishing boats. If so, and I hasten to say specifically only if so, this would be disastrous. If anyone knows any more and reliably, please share

Church of England net zero carbon 2030 impact report

This 38 page report has just been published for the period January 2023-March 2024. It builds on existing work already undertaken. Crucially, page 32, it looks at the next phase, 2022-2025 and then into 2028 and then finally 2030. I commend it to you. It can be found here: https://issuu.com/churchofengland/docs/nzc2030_-_annual_report_2024_singlepagesfinal?fr=sNDNkZDc3NTY2MTU

A Rocha Eco Church

They run the accreditation scheme for eco-churches and several of us have bronze accreditation and are working towards Silver. They have just launched a survey to find out more of what is happening around the country completed to help build up a better picture: <https://mailchi.mp/arocha/new-eco-church-survey-go-live?e=50ef6b4fa9>

Exeter Diocese creation care newsletter

I mentioned previously that the Exeter diocese has revamped its creation care work and has launched a regular newsletter known as "Seasons". Not just for Anglicans. If anyone would like to subscribe, let me know.

One Torbay: Torbay Council weekly newsletter

Our local council produces a weekly newsletter of developments. I include some in these newsletters although I'm conscious to avoid any suggestion of political elements. But there is a strong environmental theme to the newsletter. May I recommend strongly subscribing. It really is most informative. More details here

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKTORBAYCOUNCIL/subscriber/new?preferences=true>

Similar work from our friends in Plymouth

The December newsletter of the Plymouth churches green action can be found here: <https://mailchi.mp/6b72053b5df2/pcga-eneews-mid-december-2024?e=9dd45dc4a5>. There are many events to which we in Torbay would be interested. Advance notice that Ruth Valerio is coming back to South Devon, on 15th March. This is a daytime eco-fest event and do go along.

Thank you for getting this far.

Please let me have any items you want me to distribute including from your organisation or church or news items for information.

Best wishes including for a very good, blessed New Year in which we will hopefully make better progress for a better environment

David Hodson

dh@davidhodson.com

10 key things to help reduce Torbay carbon emissions from the Torbay climate action plan

1. *Help more people live and work in homes and buildings that are energy efficient - priority areas will include insulation of existing buildings, transitioning to heat pumps and setting high standards for new buildings built in Torbay.*
2. *Make sustainable transport and public transport more accessible and affordable - the aim will be to give people more choice on how they travel, focusing towards sustainable, low-carbon travel options.*
3. *Ensure that roads and paths are safer and more accessible for cyclists and walkers - making it easier for people to cycle or walk will improve both air*

quality and public health, and for provide accessible, affordable, and efficient travel options for all residents.

- 4. Reduce waste and increase recycling - the amount of waste we create, especially food waste, needs to be reduced and the Action Plan aims to reduce this and also encourage local growing.*
- 5. Enjoy and protect our marine and natural environment - projects include a new comprehensive plan to restore and protect natural habitats within Torbay and projects to help our local sea grass thrive.*
- 6. Help 'green' our businesses and create new jobs with the environment at their heart - Initiatives include helping around 250 businesses by 2025, led by the Make it Net Zero Torbay, and launching a green tourism programme.*
- 7. Ensure the community is at the heart of local action - actions include community, schools and business engagement to raise awareness and promote saving energy, reducing waste, growing food, protecting and enhancing the natural world and walking and cycling.*
- 8. Monitor progress and set up initiatives that celebrate success - the Action Plan will be reviewed annually and the Torbay Climate Partnership will celebrate Torbay's successes by sharing stories on social media and other channels.*
- 9. Help everyone understand why change is needed and how sustainable choices will make a difference - this will be done on an ongoing basis via publicity, and engagement with partners and the community.*
- 10. Work with nature and the local community to prepare for a changing climate - While reducing carbon emissions is essential, Torbay's plan also includes adaptation measures to prepare for climate impacts. This involves assessing risks to public health, infrastructure, and biodiversity, and helping us to prepare and be more resilient.*