

Notes of Informal Meeting of Climate Emergency Committee 8 December 2020

Present: The Revd G Kent (Chair) Cllr R Coleman-Taylor (Mayor) Cllr M Taylor, Cllr J Williams and Cllr T Roberts

Apologies Received: None

Absent: Cllr P Ripley

Other Members Present: None

Guests: Ms Julia Mercer (Calderdale Extinction Rebellion), Ms Dongria Kondh (Treesresponsibility)

Support Staff: Susan Miles (facilitator and minutes)

1. Presentation by Julia Mercer – Calderdale Extinction Rebellion (XR Calderdale)

Ms Mercer explained that XR has three core principles/values:

- a. Tell the truth about the situation
- b. Act now (XR's objective is to be carbon neutral by 2025, Friends of the Earth by 2030 and the UK government 2050). XR has been recognised for its mass demonstrations and arrests – they believe there is a real need for urgency.
- c. Go beyond politics – we should be led by the decisions of the Citizen's Assembly (different from the Peoples' Assembly)

She said that the local group shares these values with the international organisation. She said that they have a shared vision for change and believe in working with (every part of) everyone and don't believe in blame and shame or finger pointing.

XR Calderdale started in 2018 (with the London demonstration). They participated in the Spring rebellion in 2019 and a climate hustings, had an outreach stall in Hebden Bridge and put a banner on Stoodley Pike (this appeared on YouTube, the same year. There is another group in Halifax, though the Calderdale group focus more on the Upper Valley. There are 130 XR groups in the UK.

Ms Mercer said that three levels of action were required locally (by lobbying, nudging and informing):

- a. Your own estate – the buildings and vehicles you own – introduce electric cars and bikes which will need charging points
- b. Supply chain – choose 'green' suppliers for energy
- c. Influence others in the wider borough – for example lobby against fossil fuels

Ms Mercer said that XR Calderdale would be happy to help TTC engage and educate residents. She suggested that TTC could have an event in the Town Hall where residents are invited to see how they can reduce their energy bills and increase insulation.

She said that it is possible to find out 'how climate friendly' Calderdale is by entering our postcode on the Climate Action website:

<https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-climate-friendly-your-area>

The assessment for Calderdale said:

'The Calderdale area needs to do much more if climate catastrophe is to be averted, particularly on home insulation, renewable energy, tree cover and public transport. Action on climate change will also improve health, help nature, and boost the economy. Compared to other areas this local authority area has made less progress on addressing climate change.

In Calderdale 38% of emissions come from housing, 27% from transport, and 35% from industrial and commercial activity.

There are different estimates of how fast the UK should reduce greenhouse gas emissions if it's to do its fair share in combating climate breakdown, ranging from 7% to over 25% per year. Researchers at the Tyndall Centre have published a detailed carbon report for every local authority and say that Calderdale should reduce its emissions by at least 13% per year'.

Ms Mercer said that the Carbon Trust offer to do local audits but this is chargeable.

Ms Mercer went on to talk about the Friends of the Earth action plan which has 20 actions. XR Calderdale support the priority actions which are:

- a. Make space for renewables, nature and active travel in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan
- b. Make efficiencies in TTC estate in areas such as energy, renewable energy and energy storage
- c. Install EV and E-Bike charging points (UK has lowest provision in Europe)
- d. Plant trees
- e. Divest fossil fuels

Useful website resources are :

Climate Emergency: <https://www.climateemergency.uk/>

Take Climate Action (Friends of the Earth): <https://takeclimateaction.uk>

Ms Mercer went on to talk about the regenerative culture of XR called 'Trust the People' which incorporates mindfulness (including gratitude) and 'reconnecting' starting at the individual level and moving to wider society. Ms Mercer quoted Caroline Lucas who has said 'It is important that politics is done with people and not to them'. Ms Mercer said that a key shift was required to progress towards this. The first Peoples' Assembly (bottom up

democracy) took place in Spring 2020 in Birmingham. This involved self-selected people attending. Ms Mercer said TTC could organise something similar for Todmorden and suggested that Greg Frey would offer support to make this happen. Part of this would be identifying the barriers to participation and that the culture would be one of listening.

Ms Mercer pointed out the Citizens' Assembly was a top down organisation where the government invited a randomly selected group (100) of the UK population to meet for six weekends to identify what should be done.

In the question and answer session it was suggested that large scale online platforms could be used to enable a large-scale event.

The chair thanked Ms Mercer for her inspirational presentation.

2. Presentation by Dongria (Penny) Kondh – Treeresponsibility

Ms Kondh started her presentation by urging council pension schemes to divest fossil fuel shares. She went on to talk about the history of Treeresponsibility, the first organisation in England focused on trees.

Ms Kondh described the previous Treeresponsibility initiative (together with the Town Council) to prevent the planned opencast mine between Bacup Rd and Cornholme. She said that this was vital as previous open cast mines elsewhere had caused landslides and emissions. It also had the potential to increase local flooding. The application went to a public enquiry and was rejected. Ms Kondh said that it is particularly important to look after the health and resilience of the landscape.

Ms Kondh said that Treeresponsibility has been in existence for almost 25 years and that they had built up a new group that will take over from them in 2/3 years called 'ForUsTree'.

Ms Kondh said that Treeresponsibility was keen to set up a 'hedge fund' for the installation of 5000km of hedges (involving training local children to plant them) on the Upper Valley. She said that it is difficult to plant trees in many upland areas but hedges would 'slow the flow' and would potentially be less problematic than trees. The suggestion is that a hedge be planted alongside the stone walls. She said that the Woodland Trust funds the planting of trees in public areas which are mainly on the valley bottoms rather than the uplands where they are especially required.

Ms Kondh said that the publication 'The Source' was produced following work with the National Trust, Yorkshire Water, wild animal groups, the Canals and Rivers Trust and Slow the Flow. She said that the Environment Agency is about to do a study on water flows and their impact.

It was suggested that Treeresponsibility might consider applying for a small grant from TTC towards the 'hedge fund'.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to ask Town Clerk contact to Ms Kondh with technical advice on how to go about setting up a fund and how to apply for a TTC grant.

It was also suggested that information about Treeresponsibility be put on the TTC website.

The chair thanked Ms Kondh for her inspirational presentation.

3. Scoping out Requirements for Moorlands

It was agreed that a dedicated meeting be set up on Monday 18 January 2021, 2-4pm to look at this so an update can be made to the next Climate Emergency Committee on 10 February 2021.

Cllr M Taylor said that he had reviewed the existing policy and that much of the content is still valid, such as the reference to peat and the prevention of off-roading. The gaps included the prevention of flooding. He mentioned that it would be useful for the informal CEC to request presentations from the West Calderdale Badger Group and the Todmorden Running club (Reg Spooner). Alternatively, this could possibly be done by email correspondence.

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk agreed to send a copy of the existing Moorlands Policy to members.

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk to keep a list of organisations the informal CEC committee would like to invite to meetings/consult with.

4. Free Trees – Woodlands

There was insufficient time to discuss this. The chair believes that the planting of trees should be part of a wider tree strategy.

5. Set up Further Joint Meetings with Calderdale and Hebden-Royd Councils

To be discussed at a future meeting

6. Additional Ideas and Links to Follow up

Members to review the content of the list provided.

7. AOB

It was suggested that Cllr M Carrigan be approached to see if the Assistant Town Clerk could be offered additional hours to give further support to the Climate Emergency Committee.

Action: Chair to raise the possibility of securing additional hours support from the Assistant Town Clerk with Cllr M Carrigan.

8. Agenda Items for Future Meetings

- Scoping for the Moorlands Policy
- Set up further joint meetings with Calderdale, Hebden Royd and other local councils
- Free trees – Woodlands Trust

9. Date of Next Meetings

The date of the next informal meeting is Monday 18 January 2021 2-4pm

The date of the next formal meeting is Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 7.30pm.