



Elected Members & Faith Communities Event 26th April 2024

The event welcomed people of Faith & Belief to come and meet Elected Members, prospective & current MPs to discuss issues and concerns around climate change, biodiversity loss and climate justice. The intention was a collaborative approach that would lead to actions on the issues that matter and for Elected Members & MPs to take back to their parties, and ultimately to commit to actions in their election manifestos.

Political parties attending the event were Conservative Party, Green Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrat Party & Reform UK Party.

The event was opened by Colin Usher, an Elder at the West Kirby United Reformed Church, who spoke about the need for places of worship, and residents of Wirral to Learn, Share, Resource, Act on Climate Change acting as one, now & with urgency’.

The event began with a **Q & A panel**, Chaired by Peter Owen, Chief Executive of Energy Projects Plus and Chair of the Cool Wirral Partnership. Panel members came from all five parties that are represented in LCR, or that have announced their intention to stand in the next general election. Questions to the panel ranged from local, to national to global, covering issues such as quality of water, nationalisation of utility companies, and overseas development grants.

To ensure the the views of faith communities were heard by politicians, a carousel of table discussions took place the views below came from group dicussions, *politicians were invited to join tables to participate and listen in the discussions. The areas for discussion came from a planning group.*

The information below are the issues that matter to the constituents in Wirral

Renewable & alternative energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar panels for everyone • <u>Climate change is about resilience</u> • Stop spending on arms, and subsidies to oil/arms manufacturers • <u>Mersey Barrage</u> - issues with <i>land</i> and too much money. It uses underwater tidal THIS SHOULD BE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE • Renewables give the best figures for energy = nuclear is on its way out • Last coal powered station has shut • Carbon capture store is used to prolonged fossil fuels (NOT BLUE HYDROGEN) • 38th Anniversary of Chernobyl • <u>INSULATION & BETTER HOUSING</u> – this includes new housing • <u>GO GREEN = BETTER & CHEAPER</u> • Cannot afford not to go green energy = renewable payback in 6 years
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cars as a status symbol</u> – we do need EV’s! but fewer cars are needed • More walking/cycling • Improve the Bidston-Wrexham rail line



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower train costs • Attitudes/perceptions around public transport • Taxi's and car sharing • <u>Cars are a necessity for many</u> • <u>Better public transport</u> which is reliable; more frequent, accessible, proximity to bus stop
Biodiversity, biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of scrub and protecting soils • Biodiversity to be measured against ancient levels not the depleted levels • Respect our community and nature comes from investment in people, support and lift child benefit cap to allow a parent to stay at home • Tell people about the true cost of putting artificial grass and concrete in gardens • Investment in planning engagement with BNG part of law including domestic extensions etc • Wirral tree planting is great • Protections for tenant farmers and subsidies for farmers to achieve BNG
Incentives to go green/Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheaper public transport • Safer walking/cycling infrastructure to stop car use • True reclamation of cost for non-public vehicles • Legislation/tax on companies that pollute/cause waste • Incentives for home insulation • Subsidies for renewable energy on home • Electric car charging infrastructure across the whole county and with all new housing / accommodation • Incentivise house builders through legislation/taxes
Education and training skills, - retraining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People should be required to retrain with no loss of pay, • Look to Scandinavia! • New housing and bills <u>must</u> be legal requirement to be eco / carbon neutral! • Teaching the basic skills- easy changing a plug • Repair and reuse. <p>A) Need trades people and green industries e.g. Retrofitters heating engineers. Local training courses for local trades people needed, Increase the use of local workers, provide jobs for the future</p> <p>B) Need to 'train' the public Increasing and developing knowledge as locally has an impact - through community groups; faith groups Green policies are not expensive values</p> <p>C) The teachers working with young adults (colleges) are stuck in the past tutors need to align themselves with current issues, do they understand the current issues? Is it in all curriculum course specifications? CPD</p>

<p>School – Climate literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are terrified, 85% young people in Global North have climate anxiety! – who can they talk to – they feel helpless open lines of communication with adults/experts – youth vice- ask them, consult about safe space – give back control – take actions- local change e.g. schools citizen assembly. • More teaching on climate literacy, this needs to be imbedded, DFE sustainability guidance, to funding /resources, sustainability leads, climate action plans, if in OFSTED-criteria will make it happen • Eco schools isn't sustainable, down to keep individuals in place
<p>International relationships and actions/climate justice and treaties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should publicise where <u>all</u> migrants come from, many migrants are coming here are fleeing climate emergencies, persecution or war – floods, droughts, fire • International Aid Budget cut by 0.2% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DfID scrapped. b. Existing funds – not going to the right places/projects it should go to places like NGO's, local supplies, who decides? c. Funds to Yemen/Afghanistan have been cut. d. not for arms, need to control our arms industry, employ people, defence spending is higher than Russia (3rd highest in the world) e. 40% (of Aid Budget) is supporting refugees in the UK, should this be from a different budget? • UN COPs should be able to solve Climate Justice, but can they be trusted to? UK has soft power, G7. • Fair trade • More open voting in parliament less Whips, especially on international issues like climate change and helping the poorest in the UK and globally. Vote for good not PARTIES
<p>Zero waste/waste & recycling (domestic waste)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easy for people sorting at home, difficult for busy people. Provide simple binary choices. • Plastics • Biffa Contract? • Wirral is 285/330 in the worst 10%. • Waste clothing – fast fashion; worn out clothes; landfill • Return to retailer - Retailers e.g. blister pack, party balloons, Cosmetic packaging.
<p>Build Environment</p>	<p>– Built environment & retrofitting - how to train people to retrofit/ how to build in environmentally sustainable way; Notes not taken, group too busy discussing to take notes!</p>



The event was closed by Zarah Ross, Faiths4Change who thanked everyone for their participation, and reiterated the Cool Places of Worship Pledge:

***The World cannot wait
We commit to work together to care
for our planet and all life, through
prayer, lifestyle and action***

Cool Places of Worship - For information about the Cool Places of Worship project, or to talk about how your place of worship can get involved please contact:

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Cool Wirral Partnership Find out more about the wider Cool Wirral Partnership on [Wirral Council's website](#) or [download the report](#).

Cool Wirral Climate Hub Visit the Climate Hub - Wirral has an ambitious target to be net carbon neutral by 2041 and we all need to play our part. Check out the Climate Action Hub to find out more <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/hub-page/climate-action-wirral>