

Feedback from small group discussion and reflections

Issues of interest from the review findings

Focus on encouragements and positives, joy in creation and inspiration rather than worthiness. Find other enthusiasts in the church to work with, highlighting issues and to persevere with.

Share examples from a diversity of contexts – using newsletters, websites etc

Encourage the simple sharing of transport – not just because of carbon savings, but to encourage fellowship. Take the 'embarrassment' factor out of this.

People feel powerless against 'big, scary weather patterns.'

Individuals feel they need to do something but still waiting for someone to take the lead. Government pressure would help a lot.

Companies seem to be doing more than churches although that may be just 'greenwash'. There is a reluctance in churches to accept that we are 'running a business'. Policies coming from the top would help to achieve things. Emphasizing risk management.

Climate change is still not seen as part of most people's faith.

Understanding of individual association with climate change and its impacts is still low i.e. 'it won't affect me'.

The questionnaire was carried out amongst people who have had some involvement with climate change/ MEA information – most people still a long way behind in their thinking re climate change. We need help to get through to people who have no interest. – More work on how theology links to poverty and climate change. How about 'ice cream parties', ideas that are fun and celebrate sustainable living.

1. What are the key benefits and barriers of improved networking among faith groups concerning climate change issues?

At a national level, networking of faith groups is either not working or not defined enough. There is no one message emerging from the churches and Christian organisations. There is some existing networking, particularly at local level, but its not visible enough, and there is no one joint message coming through. (What about loving our neighbour as ourselves?) We should network much more effectively and develop a jointly owned 30 year plan, a long-term vision that politicians lack. It should be anti-consumerism, focusing on sustainability and acheivability. Such a plan could be broken down locally into smaller achievable chunks (eg 'in two years our school, church, community will be.....').

Harness campaigning with much greater clarity at national level.

Strengthen regional networks, not just ecumenically but with NGOs.

Ecumenical links are often rather dry. Practical action and working together on climate change may revitalize them.

2. What is needed to stimulate rapid progress for church buildings to model a low carbon future?

MEA have the technical skills and understand the practical difficulties. Could they be involved with training up the architects who do quinquennial reports? Can an energy audit be built into this process? Can making energy efficiencies be built into the process so it becomes an expectation, rather than something to opt in or out of?

Share technical case studies and MEA's experiences in 'persuading' Diocesan architects.

People often respond better to 'outsiders' than to the usual suspects.

There is huge variation in church buildings in terms of size, construction, usage, age etc. Guidance needed about whether investment is worthwhile for small churches only used on Sundays.

3. How best can members/supporters/champions be mobilised and supported regarding action on climate change?

Find the 'right person' to be local enthusiast – championing without preaching and criticizing.

Share experience in 'new areas' by bringing people together. Face to face encounters are very positive. Take MEA experiences into new areas.

We need to know our customers – and every church will be different. We need to tailor workshops and presentations to particular profiles. In particular there is a need to profile groups such as a younger generation motivated by fear.

Ideas for building community responses, and encouraging working together. It helps to bring in 'outside' faces to encourage change as the usual enthusiasts are easier to ignore.

4. How can ideas from these recommendations best be taken forward? What should MEA's role, if any, be in this?

Mythbusters: Please could MEA research facts and figures to back up many of the common arguments raised – an easy response plus the technical data to back it up – eg "it takes more energy to produce a low-energy light bulb than it saves during its lifetime". "It uses up more energy to drive to the recycling centre with my cardboard and plastic bottles than will be saved by recycling them." etc.

From partnerships with eco-organisations and businesses locally for innovative financing and support through referrals, financial deals etc

Can MEA play a role in 'untangling' the different messages and help encourage more effective networking. If so how?

Some pilot workshops are likely to be held in Shropshire during the next 6 months, as part of a county-wide programme to train up people to identify fuel poverty. These will provide an opportunity to put some of the review recommendations into action on a small scale.