

Transport pursues measures such as a third runway at Heathrow and new road building schemes, that are bound to make air pollution worse.”

Tuesday 26th February

100bn new garments are made each year, the majority of which are made plastic-based fibre blends. Now, companies are beginning to design garments with a high proportion of recycled content. Parley's ocean plastic football kits and Thread's backpacks are made from non-recyclable plastic bottles. Adidas has pledged to remove virgin plastic from all its products by 2024, while H&M has begun selling recycled polyester sportswear. America's North Face last year unveiled a range of products made from littered PET bottles.

Wednesday 27th February

Black plastic is a particular challenge in the war on plastic waste because it cannot be re-dyed, nor can it be scanned for possible recycling. Aldi and Quorn Foods have pledged to remove plastics from their products. Tesco, Sainsbury's and M&S have collaborated with packaging firm Viridor to develop a scanner that can recognise black plastics. Viridor then separates it for shredding, melting and re-using in new packaging. Since last July, this process has diverted 120 tonnes of plastic per month from landfill.

Thursday 28th February

The cosmetics and toiletries industries produce 120 billion units of plastic packaging each year. Now health and

beauty retailer Lush is leading the transition to 'naked' beauty products. Following the success of its 'naked' stores in Milan and Berlin, it has opened its first plastic-free store in Manchester, where shampoo, shower gels, bath bombs, skincare products etc. can be bought without any plastic packaging. Lush co-founder Mark Constantine said “Once, customers used to worry about how to recycle something they never wanted to buy. Now that we can cut out all plastic packaging, we can give customers better value for money.”

Sources:

The Environment (CIWEM)
www.populationmatters.org
www.businessgreen.com
www.edie.net

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Picture on front cover: Valley in Kashmir, Philip Clarkson Webb

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

February 2019



“The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desire of all who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.” (Psalm 145. 15-19)

“Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?

The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.
(Job 28. 20 & 28)

“The cultivation and expansion of needs is the antithesis of wisdom. It is the antithesis of freedom and justice. Only by a reduction of needs can one promote a genuine reduction in those tensions which are the ultimate causes of strife and war.”
(E.F. Schumacher)

Friday 1st February

Churches Together in Tunbridge Wells are hosting today a meeting on 'Faith, Hope & Action in a Changing Climate' from 6.30 to 8.30 pm. Speakers include Greg Clark MP, the Business and Energy Secretary and Dr, Ruth Valerio from Tearfund. Booking is now closed.

Saturday 2nd February

'Caring for our Common Home' is the title of a conference taking place today from 9am to 4.30pm under the auspices of Churches Together in Cumbria at Keswick School, Village Hill, Keswick CA12 5QR. Talks by Keith Ward on 'Deep Ecology, Creation and the Environment' and by Peter Scott on 'Sharing our Common Home' will be followed by workshops for the sharing of information and ideas. To book a place, <https://caringforourcommonhome.org/booking>

Sunday 3rd February

Loving Father, you have given humankind matchless gifts of skill and ingenuity. Help us now, in this time of crisis, to pool all our resources and work together, in your Name, to save your world from the dire consequences of our ignorance, greed and folly.

Monday 4th February

Britain's demand for electricity fell by 11% between 2010 and 2017, according to a [report](#) from Carbon Brief, despite our rising population and decades of economic growth. More energy-efficient light bulbs, better insulation and higher building

standards have helped homes to cut their energy use while using less electricity for radiators and space heaters. But the biggest cuts have come from the iron and steel industry, despite higher use in other industries. Wind farms and solar have helped boost the share of renewable energy by 4% to a record 33% of the power used in 2018.

Tuesday 5th February

Hitachi has abandoned its £16 billion plan for a new nuclear power station at Wylfa Newydd on Anglesey. This follows the abandonment by Toshiba of plans for a similar plant at Moorside in Cumbria. Dr Jonathan Marshall of the Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit commented that any reduction in output from the UK's nuclear fleet could be more than offset by renewables without compromising energy security. "Electricity authorities are now well-versed in coping with the industry's tendency to deliver late or not at all – after all, the lights remain firmly on in both France and Finland despite their new reactors at Flamanville and Olkiluoto being respectively 7 and 10 years overdue. Government has quietly cut back its expectations for nuclear new build, and that's looking ever more realistic as the price of renewable generation falls and the benefits of the flexible smart grid become more apparent."

Wednesday 6th February

The Committee on Climate Change in its October [report](#) said that up to 12 million homes will face an increased risk of annual

providing safe drinking water in India and introducing biogas cooking in Vietnam to reduce fossil fuel use.

Thursday 21st February

The National Audit Office has warned that the Government's plans for a new environmental watchdog, as set out in the draft Environment Bill, risks jeopardising its independence if it has to rely on DEFRA funding and if its head is appointed by the Secretary of State. "There is still no single figure or team in government responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring action across all departments to ensure that the Government's Environmental Plan is delivered. The UK currently has 161 environmental reporting obligations to EU bodies that may fall by the wayside after Brexit if strong safeguards and independent scrutiny and enforcement is not maintained."

Friday 22nd February

Fatih Birol, head of the International Energy Agency, speaking at Davos, said that electric vehicles (EVs) barely scratch the surface of global energy demand. Even if there were 300 million EVs on the road, they would cut just 1% off total CO₂ emissions. Coal dependence in Asia and the developing world can make a mockery of electric cars, especially in China where half of all electric cars are being built. "Cars are not the driver of oil demand: it's trucks, petrochemicals and aeroplanes. Asia has only just started to fly."

Saturday 23rd February

According to Dr Birol of the IEA, the biggest driver of rising energy use in China, India and the ASEAN states last year was air conditioners. In the case of India, these use 3 times as much energy as in Japan, due to rickety grids, dirty power plants and building design. "Some say they don't like nuclear, others that they don't like solar because of its intermittency. This is absurd. If we are going to be serious, we need all available technologies, including carbon capture and storage."

Sunday 24th February

Lord, you know the obstacles your people face in adapting their lifestyles to the new imperative of sustainable living. Support the trailblazers, we pray – those who are committed to change and can lead us towards a better way of living. Help us all to set our sights on zero-carbon living by 2030 and to work together to achieve that goal.

Monday 25th February

[Air pollution](#) shortens the lives of 40,000 UK citizens, costs the nation an annual £20 billion and disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable. The Government's Clean Air Strategy includes a commitment to new legislation, yet gives little clue as to how improvements can be made. There is a target to halve the population exposed to particulate matter (PM emissions), but none for Nitrogen Oxide emissions, despite a High Court order requiring action. On the one hand, the Department of Health say they are committed to tackling air pollution, on the other hand the department of

Puerto Rico also discovered in its rainforests a 98% drop in insect biomass since the 1970s and an 80% decline in the leaf canopy. These trends were matched by declines in lizards, frogs and birds that rely on invertebrates for food. With forest temperature having risen by 2°C. in the last 30 years, the scientists believe climate change to be the primary cause of this collapse. Population Matters comments: "Time is running out to save the little things that run the planet's life support system."

Sunday 17th February

Loving Father, give us a deeper understanding of your purposes, that we may be steadfast amid the turmoil of our times. May our faith never fail, nor our love grow cold, nor our hope become faint. Help us to fix our eyes on Jesus, who for our sake became poor and willingly endured the Cross for our redemption. Amen.

Monday 18th February

A study on Greenland ice, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and using data from NASA, shows that Greenland lost around 280 billion tonnes of ice per year between 2002 and 2016 – enough to raise sea levels by 0.03 inches annually. The pace of ice loss quadrupled between 2003 and 2013. If all Greenland's ice sheet were to melt, sea levels would rise by 7 metres, drowning most coastal settlements such as Miami, Shanghai, most of Bangladesh and many Pacific islands.

Tuesday 19th February

A report from the European Commission finds that the UK leads all other EU countries in giving the fossil fuel industry £16.5 billion a year in subsidies. Throughout the EU, fossil fuel subsidies have remained unchanged since 2008, despite both the EU and the G20 nations having long pledged to phase out the subsidies, which hamper the need for a rapid transition to clean energy in order to fight climate change. UK subsidies for renewable energy were just two-thirds of those spent on fossil fuels. Germany, Spain and Italy all gave more subsidies to renewable energy than to fossil fuels. FoE commented: "Spiralling climate change is going to cost people and our economy huge sums of money through the damage, disruption and instability it causes. So it's astonishing that the UK government is still throwing taxpayers' money at some of the world's largest oil and gas companies."

Wednesday 20th February

Aldi, which has more than 900 stores and 11 distribution centres in the UK, is now a carbon-neutral business, having cut its greenhouse gas emissions from its sales floors by 53% since 2012, through purchasing 100% green electricity and implementing a certified energy management system throughout its business. It plans to offset the remainder of its UK and Ireland emissions by working with ClimatePartner to invest in projects such as conserving forests, protecting wildlife and educating children in Peru about environmental conservation,

flooding by the 2080s based on a 1 metre increase in sea levels. But oceanographer John Englander, former head of the Cousteau Society, argues that sea levels will rise higher and faster. "We should be planning for a metre of sea-level rise as early as mid-century. For those designing buildings and infrastructure lasting a century, it would be better to plan for a 2-3 metre rise now. Regardless of best efforts to reduce carbon emissions and slow the warming, the glaciers and ice sheets, mainly on Greenland and Antarctica, will continue to melt for a very long time. The melting of ice on land is the major cause of higher sea levels and cannot be stopped for many decades due to the excess heat already stored in the sea, now about 1°C. warmer than a century ago."

Thursday 7th February

Desalination plants for converting seawater into drinking water and water for agriculture have been in use since the 1950s, but it takes an estimated 300,000 barrels of crude oil a day to run Saudi Arabia's 30 desalination plants. According to the World Bank, the gap between demand and supply of water throughout the Middle East and North Africa is around 42 cubic kilometres a year, and this figure will increase five-fold by 2050. Now however solar-powered desalination plants are under development at Cranfield University. Under this system, seawater flows into domes via glass aqueducts. Banks of mirrors trap concentrated solar energy, so speeding up the natural process of evaporation. The water is distilled, collected in cauldrons and

boiled. This produces dense steam which falls inside the dome like a rainstorm of clean pure water, which is then piped to reservoirs and wetlands. Each dome will deliver around 200,000 litres of clean water per day - enough to meet the needs of 8,000 people, including water for agriculture and farm animals. A field demonstration has been designed and costed. The next step is to build and demonstrate it at a site in Spain.

Friday 8th February

In coastal Bangladesh, heavy monsoon rains and rising sea levels combine to flood fields, where the salt and sediment left behind make the land barren. Now Practical Action is developing the concept of floating farms. These are large bamboo cages that sit half underwater and half on the surface. In the underwater part, families can breed nutritious salt-tolerant fish. On the floating raft above, they can grow vegetables. Up to 3 cycles of production can be completed each year. www.practicalaction.org/aquageoponics

Saturday 9th February

A Festival of Transformation, organised by Global Aware, takes place today from 9.30 to 3.30 at Bristol City Hall, College Green BS1 5TR. The aim is to inspire and encourage action for a sustainable and hopeful world. Inspired by God's Kingdom values and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the focus will be on positive empowerment to bring change, with many practical opportunities for common action. Keynote speakers are Ruth Valerio

and Chris Wright. For tickets go to:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/festival-of-transformation-tickets-50127664193>

Sunday 10th February

Loving Father, you have given us matchless gifts of skill and ingenuity. Help us, in this our time of need, to pool our resources and to work together, in your Name, to save your world from the dire consequences of our ignorance, greed and folly.

Monday 11th February

The WWF report Living Planet 2018 finds efforts to protect the world's mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish are failing, as we continue to live beyond the planet's means, wiping out life on earth in the process. WWF's chief executive said: "We are the first generation to know we are destroying our planet and the last that can do something about it. ...The collapse of global wildlife populations is a warning sign that nature is dying. But instead of putting the world on life support, we are using a sticking plaster." WWF calls for UN member states to agree a new global deal for nature and people at its 75th assembly in 2020.

Tuesday 12th February

The [Sea Shepherd Conservation Society](#) was founded in 1977 to protect and defend our oceans wherever governments fail to enforce internationally-agreed laws. It now has 14 ships around the world to stop illegal whaling and fishing - the largest non-governmental navy in the world. The ships are manned by some 200 volunteers from 30 countries whose only reward is the

satisfaction of saving aquatic lives and protecting the integrity of our threatened oceans. Recent successes include the shutting down of the Southern Ocean toothfish poaching, the 110-mile successful chase of the *Thunder*, proved to have been conducting illegal fishing, and the capture and arrest of 15 Chinese vessels caught illegally fishing off East Timor. Sea Shepherd's partners, Parley for the Oceans, sponsor beach clean-ups around the world. It partners the government of Ecuador in patrolling the seas around Galapagos National Park and has official partnerships with Mexico, Peru, and a number of African countries.

Wednesday 13th February

The tropical Andes of Ecuador are one of the world's hotspots for biodiversity, with more orchid and hummingbird species than the whole of Brazil and more biodiversity than the entire USA. Yet, in 2018, the Ecuadorian government, without public knowledge or consent, granted mining concessions over 4.25 million acres of forest reserves and indigenous territories in violation of Ecuadorian law and international treaties. The first country in the world to include 'rights of nature' in its constitution is now ignoring that commitment. The Rainforest Information Centre reports that nearly all the 311,500 ha Basque Protector Kutuki-Shaima Reserve, where 5,000 indigenous Shuar families live, has been concessioned. The impacts of large-scale opencast mining within rainforest watersheds include mass deforestation, erosion, contamination of

water sources by toxins such as lead and arsenic, and desertification. Mining transforms a lush rainforest into an arid wasteland incapable of sustaining either diverse ecosystems or human beings. The RIC petition is at:

<https://www.rainforestinformationcentre.org/save-ecuadors-forests-from-mining> and their crowdfunding campaign <https://is.gd/ecufund/>

Thursday 14th February

A report from the Environment Audit Committee calls on the Government to drive global efforts to secure a 'Paris Agreement for the Seas' to help save the world's oceans from climate change and plastic pollution. Its chair, Mary Creagh, said: "Our children deserve to experience the wonders of the ocean, but climate change poses a double whammy of threats from ocean warming, deoxygenation and acidification, which are decimating marine life. The government's 'out of sight, out of mind' attitude on the seas must change." Specifically, the CCC is calling on the Government to eliminate unnecessary plastic waste earlier than the current 2042 limit and to stop waste exports to countries with poor recycling infrastructure. It is estimated that, unless drastic action is taken, the volume of waste plastic in the world's oceans is set to treble within 10 years.

Friday 15th February

A report commissioned by *The Lancet* and recently published calls for a new 'planetary health diet' which requires consumption of

red meat and sugar to be halved and consumption of vegetables, fruit, pulses and nuts to be doubled. The diet addresses the major role of farming in driving climate change, the destruction of wildlife and the pollution of rivers and oceans. Unhealthy diets are the leading cause of ill health worldwide, with 800 million people currently hungry, 2 billion malnourished and a further 2 billion overweight or obese. World scientists recently concluded that the food system is broken. Industrial agriculture is devastating the environment as forests are razed and billions of cattle emit climate-warming methane. "Humanity has never before aimed to change the global food system on the scale envisioned. Achieving this goal will require rapid adoption of numerous changes and unprecedented global collaboration and commitment – nothing short of a Great Food Transformation."

Saturday 16th February

Insects comprise two-thirds of all life on earth. They pollinate flowering plants, decompose waste, control pests and serve as prey for millions of other species. They may be small and hard to notice, but their global decline has become so serious that even city dwellers are reporting the windscreen phenomenon, when driving long distances no longer leads to bug-spattered windscreens. Now scientists monitoring the numbers of flying insects in German nature reserves have [recorded](#) a 75% drop since 1989. They attribute the decline to the destruction of insect habitat and the rise of agricultural pesticide use. Scientists in