

Chester World Development Forum

Minutes of the Forum on Tuesday 14 December, 7pm at The Unity Centre



- 1 **Welcome:** Gill Miller gave the welcome in Terry Green's absence
Present: In person: John Tacon, Gill Miller, Lindsay Cussons, Ann McCarthy, Vicki Jenner and Kathryn Gornall. Via Zoom: Arnold Wilkes, Linda and Stewart Shuttleworth, Peter Spiers and Mark Bendall
Apologies: Angela Macquiban, Tony Walsh, Heather Swainston, Terry Green, Bernard Payne

The meeting opened with the showing of a short film "Climate change: one of Africa's biggest issues". The film ran for about 20 minutes. Apologies to those for whom the link proved a problem. The film is available on this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo-4Bjz6Z_0

The film looks at some of the very serious consequences of climate change affecting many countries in the continent such as flooding due to the increase in the number and severity of storms, extreme heat resulting in severe droughts and a plague of locusts that have completely destroyed crops which is still ongoing. It then presents case studies of 4 African countries exploring their issues surrounding climate change. There followed a short discussion about some of the issues it touched upon. The following is a very brief summary of some of those issues.

- South Africa – issue of reliance on coal.....SA is responsible for half CO2 emissions in Africa. This is because 90% of the country's electricity is produced by coal. 82T people are employed in the coal industry. People's livelihoods have to be considered. SA needs massive investment in sustainable energy and the creation of new jobs.
- Nigeria – issue of displacement of peoples..... is experiencing extreme heat in the north of the country and with this increasing desertification causing people to move to find water resulting in conflict between pastoralists and farmers. Also in the Lagos, rising sea levels causing wholesale destruction of communities who live on the coast.
Also in Nigeria – issue of gas flared from oil wells in the Niger Delta would have provided the whole continent of Africa with a year's worth of electrical power - if it had been harnessed instead of being wastefully burned off.
- Kenya - issue with rising water levels.....Tectonic plate movements which are - according to the film - causing land in the Rift Valley to sink and this in turn is seemingly causing the lakes in the Rift Valley to become larger. It was notable that a school abandoned because of the rising water level appeared to be crumbling away remarkably quickly, which made us think about the sustainability of aid projects.
- Tunisia – issue with rising sea levels.....leading to coastal erosion and loss of marine habitats which vital to the tourist industry. Tourism forms the main employment – in fact 1 in 10 Tunisians are employed in the tourist industry. One solution would be to seek co-operation from Mediterranean countries to tackle climate change.
- One other issue - we know that oil and gas should remain in the ground if we really want to tackle climate change. The question is whose oil and gas should remain in the ground. Nigeria has very low greenhouse emissions and the economy is very reliant on the production of oil and gas. US on the other hand is in the top 3 countries for oil production and has massive greenhouse gas emissions. How do we make that choice
- So plenty to think about!

Business Meeting

- 2 Minutes of the post-COP26 Forum meeting held on 16 November, and matters arising:** No matters arising
- 3 Finance update:**

Thanks to a membership payment from Cllr Paul Bowers who joined on 16 November, our petty cash went up to £16.27 before JT paid AM's expenses of £3.44, leaving £12.83 in cash.

The last bank statement showed a balance of £210.68. Since then, JT has paid 2 x £30 by cheque to CHAWREC for room hire, so when the cheques clear we will be left with £150.68 in the bank, and a total of £163.51.
- 4 Communications update: website and social media**

Twitter: GW hasn't posted much since the last Forum meeting but there has been good "traffic" due to that meeting from different groups and retweets

Facebook: Likewise not much has been posted but has been more interest due to the last Forum meeting.

The last forum meeting post received 14 likes and also had a reach of 218 people which is always good news.

There has been 32 new page likes (up 700%) and an 85% increase in page visits suggesting that we are gaining more interest, albeit slowly.
- 5 Issues and questions we wish to discuss with Chris Matheson, MP, in our meeting on 28 January 2022**
 - Do we have Afghan refugees in Chester and are we supporting the applications. Where are they being housed? What do you think about work of Home Office with regard to resettlement programmes?
 - How is parliament going to persuade the British public to go back to where we were in aid budget?
 - The UK government has rebranded its development bank, currently known as CDC Group, as British International Investment, moving yet more aid money away from where it's needed most.

CDC always had a dubious track record when it came to tackling poverty. Now, the government has even dropped "development" from its name and with it any pretence that it will use the bank to close inequalities.

Along with development organisations and trade unions, including CAFOD, Christian Aid, the National Education Union, TUC and Unison, we have written an open letter to the Foreign Secretary Liz Truss outlining our concerns.

(This is an area of concern that JT highlighted from a message he received from Global Justice Now)
 - What is the Labour Party's policy on the aid budget? Which countries should we give aid to? For instance eg India
 - How does Labour plan to engage younger people in these important issues?
 - Does he think students should follow Greta's example and join a school strike to force faster action on the climate emergency?
 - What is Alok Sharma doing behind the scenes to work towards the next meeting in Cairo in 2022?
 - What we can do as a Forum to campaign on development issues?
- 6 Reports from members on their recent activities and plans for campaigning in 2022:** Nothing to report
- 7 Diary update –** No further updates

- 8 **Date of next meeting:** January 28th 2022 with MP, Chris Matheson – 7.00pm in The Unity Centre. (Please note the change of date from our normal second Tuesday of the month)
- 9 **Home-made lemon cake – not available on Zoom !!**