

# Environmental Awareness & sustainability

Some background for the Deanery Synod meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 19.45 at St Andrews

On 7<sup>th</sup> October, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change launched a special report on limiting global warming to just 1.5 degrees above the pre-industrial average temperature (the goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement).

Its message was stark, but with hope. If we don't reduce our carbon emissions rapidly we are on course for a very dangerous 2-degree temperature rise by the end of the century – spelling higher sea level rise, droughts and floods, drops in food production, mass migration, and faster species extinction.

The good news is that if we can keep temperature rises to 1.5 degrees it would be 'manageable'. The solutions are out there; the report points to the need for action particularly in energy (getting off fossil fuel), land use (reforesting was one example), and curbing greenhouse gas emissions from industry and cities, including electrifying transport.



But here's the real challenge: the window to achieve remaining below 1.5 degrees is the next twelve years, and this will require "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society".

What does that mean for Christians and Churches, as part of society? We are likely to be dismayed and fearful, like anyone else. More usefully we can also reflect and draw on what our faith teaches us – about commitment and courage to doing the right thing, about trusting God when we do, about joy in God's love and provision

even in difficulty. And then we can act boldly, bringing hope to others. Moved by love for God's creation – nature and people – we can take a next step, and then a next one and so on, in our own lives and Churches, to reduce our carbon footprint. And we can raise our voice politely but persistently to secure bolder action by government – who have the most power to incentivise change in all aspects of society.

Good change does happen. October 2018 was also the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UK's Climate Change Act, a world-first which has inspired similar legislation in many other countries, and helped drive UK carbon emissions down. Let's join with others in celebrating this; and urge our government to move much faster and consistently to meet the Act's legally binding targets.



**A Rocha UK** is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world.

A Rocha, which means "the rock" in Portuguese, was founded in Portugal in 1983. It's *modus operandi* is based on five guiding principles: Christian, Conservation, Community, Cooperation, and Cross-Cultural.

A Rocha has a fascinating website at <https://arocha.org.uk/> which shows the spiritual and Christian character of their work.