

## U3a Countdown to CoP Summer School, Sept 2023

### Climate change and biodiversity loss – WHAT CAN I DO?

This activity was carried out as an experiment during the Summer School. It seems to have proved its worth as a group activity to stimulate ideas, reflection and discussion.

It is based on the principle that the actions, to tackle climate change or biodiversity loss, that different people can undertake varies hugely and is strongly influenced by whether - or not - they have spare time and/or spare money.

At the start of the Summer School, we put up five flip chart sheets with the following headings:

- Time poor, but well off.
- Spare time but not money.
- Short of both time *and* money.
- Spare time *and* money.
- Not dictated by spare time or money.

During the course of the following two days the participants were encouraged to make suggestions for actions under each heading, using Post-it notes.



Then on the last day participants used self-adhesive coloured dots to 'vote' for those suggestions which they thought would be the most impactful. Each person was rationed to 5 dots. With the benefit of hindsight, probably 5 dots per sheet would have produced more informative voting.

The following tables show the results. These serve to illustrate the wide range of ideas and could provide a rich source of group discussions. In our experiment there were approximately 30 people involved. The act of deciding what to put up on Post-it notes and then the action of reading what other people had written provided plenty of scope for reflection and learning.

## Time poor, but well off

Votes	
*****	Fully insulate your home.
*****	Change to an ethical bank.
****	Give money to climate charities like Client Earth.
***	Don't buy 'stuff' you don't need.
**	Buy local and better quality so it lasts longer. Change banking. Invest in clean energy projects.
*	Fund education about climate. Donate by Direct Debit so any charities' incomes are secured. Become a member of the Centre for Alternative Technology, and donate. Disinvest from fossil fuels. Get an electric car. Share resources in a useful way – ethical investment. Invest in carbon-free businesses, e.g. Thrive Renewables. Review your own spending and sustainability.
	Waste less. Don't be guided by fashion. Sponsor research in green energy development. Insulate house / build passive house. Buy a Passivhaus / have open days. Buy land and donate it to start a forest. When going on holiday consider the climate. Remain positive and look harder to make time, by focusing on the most important 'wicked problem'. Donate to wildlife trusts/charities. Donate to climate change charities. Buy an electric car. Bank with a 'green' bank, e.g. Triodos

## Spare time but not money

Votes	
*****	Lobby politicians (local and national). Value the quality of your life, not the quantity of your possessions.
****	Join groups to campaign.
***	Be proud that you shop 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand / pre-loved (you are being very planet-friendly!). Rewild your garden or help someone else.
**	Join a community garden or orchard. Share skills and local repair room or similar.
*	Use your voice. Consider what you can make / cook. Walk to events / use public transport.
	<p>Use a community fridge / set one up.            Start an allotment project.            Get an allotment (if you can!).            Grow your own.            Let part of your garden (if you have one) go wild.            Volunteer.            Go into schools / visit Brownies &amp; Scouts.            Join an environmental /climate group.            Volunteer at nearest wildlife centre (or make bug hotel if not near).            Volunteer for wildlife trusts / charities.            Campaign and vote.            Join campaigning groups / talk to people.            Be an activist.            Run / support a group.            Buy less stuff.            Encourage other groups you are in to retrofit their buildings.            Change investments / lobby your pension company.            Show others how to save money by taking climate action (e.g. low cost meals without meat).            Read – both sides.            Find out about ‘Too good to Go’ initiatives and use them.            Increase personal fitness by reducing car use.</p>

## Short of both time *and* money

Votes	
*****	Batch cook from scratch at weekends – make is sociable with family/friends.
****	Be an activist – who can you influence?
**	Don't beat yourself up – a lot of people doing a bit all helps. Share equipment, tools, etc among group of neighbours (e.g. slow cooker, washing machine, bicycle). Use your vote. Reduce car use, increase fitness and use public transport.
*	Learn to cook. Stop using supermarkets. Let your garden go wild. Use charity shops for clothing and presents.
	Reduce food waste by using Apps like Olio. Batch cook and save for later. Read and question climate concern. Use natural cleaning materials, e.g. bicarb. Learn some free stress reduction techniques (try your library / internet for support). Travel less. Advocate for people in similar situation. Use Ecosia instead of Google. Cook from fresh – use wonky veg.

## Spare time *and* money

Votes	
*****	Don't take a cruise: explore Europe and UK by train.
***	Join eco-groups and be active in them. Retrofit your home and then open it to the public occasionally.
**	Support and fund education re the environment. Stop flying. Use trains not planes. Donate by Direct Debit to secure charity income.
*	Start a community interest project for environmental benefit. Educate yourself in areas of less knowledge, e.g. effective campaigning. Volunteer for environmental / climate charity. Some carefully considered insulation. Change your transport. Buy local food (organic if possible) and cook from scratch.
	Change to an ethical bank. Invest directly and match fund in areas where you have expertise/interests. Join groups to help others. Share skills at a Repair Room or similar.

## Not dictated by spare time or money

Votes	
****	Lobby your local council and organisations to join Race to Zero (UN framework for action plans).
***	Tell your political reps (or candidates) how you will vote according to their climate and nature policies. Lobby your local MP. Give time in your day for reflection.
**	Walk where possible / walk more. Talk stories not data. Think about the effect on climate before travel.
*	Reduce / re-use. Lobby, lobby, lobby, lobby. Let your grass grow – mow edges and paths. Spread the word.
	Make friends and rebuild community spirit around you. Don't fly unless you have to. Talk with random strangers about the weird weather. Talk to people with influence. Go to discussion groups. Love, live, share and practice all the R's