

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

We were all saddened by the death of Chrissy Ogilvie, deputy leader of our group, in December. Chrissy played a major role in running the group (not least in introducing us to Zoom during lockdown), and was an unfailing source of ideas and enthusiasm. We shall miss her.

Our November meeting attempted to answer the question: “How green are our supermarkets?”, basing our discussion on an ITV programme first shown last June. We were impressed by the way that some supermarkets appear to be tackling waste and reducing the carbon footprint of their supply chains. There’s still a long way to go, though, and several of us felt that supporting local shops was more environmentally responsible. The programme emphasized that supermarkets are very responsive to consumer demand – if enough of us demand less packaging, for example, it will happen. So what are we waiting for?

Our December meeting took the form of a discussion on human population, led by Don Scott. There are now apparently over 8,000,000,000 people in the world, a number that is still rising, though not as fast as it was a couple of decades ago. Don outlined the impact of rising population in a number of different areas, including food, pollution and living space. Differing views were expressed on how many of our current problems were due to overpopulation and how much to overconsumption, though there was general agreement that the kind of forcible population control once practised in India and China was totally unethical. Thanks, Don, for leading a lively and thought-provoking discussion.

In January we were treated to a presentation from Andrew Vickers of SLDC, detailing how the council were dealing with the multiple challenges they are currently facing – steadily increasing amounts of waste, confusing product labelling (only about 40% of “compostable” potato starch wrappers actually decompose in compost heaps), and new types of hard-to-recycle products like e-cigarettes and Christmas cards with embedded batteries. Andrew dealt skilfully with a whole range of questions from the audience, and there was general agreement that it had been an entertaining and informative session. Thanks, Andrew!

*John Eakins*