Climate Conversations at Holy Trinity Brussels

September 2019

‘Climate Conversations’ took place at Holy Trinity Brussels on 29 September (which coincided with Harvest Festival). Thanks to all who participated! There was lots of good discussion and a real appetite to understand and debate climate change issues, as well as find ways to live in a more climate friendly way.

Below are links to information sources, and the collected wisdom that HTB members contributed.

The climate crisis situation is extremely challenging. We each need to :

a) get informed about climate change and how we can respond

b) focus on changes that will make as big an impact as possible

c) keep up the conversation, pray, encourage each other.

**The Science**

The following sources were used for the climate science information shared:

* <https://eustaff4climate.info/background-info/>[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + In particular this discussion paper - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1987TpRk4y3WPD_gM2wrVmgg47lYBjRjx/view>

‘*Unprecedented change NOW: A Positive Journey beyond the Comfort Zone, a discussion paper by EU Staff 4 Climate, Brussels, 2019’ © Creative Commons CC BY-4.0.*

* [www.350.org](http://www.350.org)

**Lifestyle ‘audit’**

* A [questionnaire](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EYgwFcbGfwggxBW_nDS834YP2dj2RoPN/view?usp=sharing) for thinking about your lifestyle and finding ways to improve, taken from ‘Creation Matters’ small group resource

**Tips and tricks** - suggestions for ‘treading more gently’ on the planet in our daily lives

*House*

* Don't leave lights on unnecessarily, switch them off when you aren’t there
* Turn off appliances
* Only wash your clothes when you have a full load, wash cold
* Wash clothes less often
* Only run the dishwasher when you have a full load
* Close your curtains and blinds once it gets dark
* ‘Cold proof’ your house – use draught excluders, double glazing, better insulation, turn down your heat and put on a jumper!
* Turn down heating, put on a jumper, socks and use a blanket instead.
* Insulation, insulation, insulation!
* Learn what recycling symbols mean – not always clear
* Compost
* Use a smart meter and smart thermostat
* Solar panels – very cheap, some companies will install them in exchange for the “green energy” certificates alone – but government keeps the electricity
* People Network
* Repair Cafes

*Travel and Transport*

* Fly less
* Use public transport, trains, bikes, scooters or walk – helps you stay fit too!
* Ride your bike – don’t get stuck in tram tracks though...
* Car sharing to church
* Use shortest setting on Sat Navs instead of quickest
* When stopped at traffic lights, if stopped for longer than 6 seconds turn off your engine to save fuel and reduce emissions (NOTE - not everyone agrees with this – in cars that don’t do this automatically, this might kill your battery?)
* Drive at 90 km/hr max to save fuel, money and C02 emissions.

*Food*

* Eat less meat
* Eat less dairy
* Avoid palm oil
* Eat alles op!!
* Sunday fasting, No Meat November, go vegetarian or vegan for a month+
* Eat seasonally – what fruit and veg are harvested now?
* Don’t feed all the corn to the animals, eat it yourself
* Try to buy food not packaged in plastic
* Compost food waste (use the orange bag in BXL!)
* Use all parts of food
  + Bones for broth
  + Offcuts of veg for stock
* Use a pressure cooker, particularly for pulses – cooking time is much reduced and you save electricity
  + Pressure cooker recipe book by Lorna Sass
    - *Vegetarian Cooking Under Pressure*
    - *Cooking Under Pressure*
* If you can cook, cook double portions when you cook and freeze half – means you wont need a takeaway or ready meal if you’ve been away.
* Easy school friendly tray-bake recipes for snacks? Ideas?
* Establish a Rental Shop where you can Rent special Kitchen wear like blenders, cake pans, large coffee makers, etc.

*Other*

* Where in Brussels can you find quality 2nd hand /pre-loved clothes to wear in the office?
  + Saturday October 2nd: “nearly new” clothes sale at the BCWCB (English speaking Ladies club) 509 Rue au Bois, 1150 Brussels (one day only)
* Buy second-hand or from charity shops like Oxfam or Spullenhulp
  + Biggest Spullenhulp store in Brussels is on Rue American
* Buy secondhand books (or give, lend, borrow, library)
  + Serve The City holds second-hand book sales about twice a year at Stone  Manor British Supermarket
* Buy secondhand/reconditioned electronics (mobiles, laptops, etc.)
* Donate unwanted items to charity shops instead of throwing things out
* Get things repaired instead of throwing it out
* Ask your local supermarket or corner shop to reduce waste/buy bio – they purchase stock based on customer feedback!
* Use a reusable mug or bottle/canteen instead of paper/plastic mugs – often shops with give a small discount if you have your own mug for coffee!
* Green your beauty routine
  + Bar soap, shampoo
  + Reusable razors
  + Biodegradable floss
  + Bamboo toothbrush
  + Menstrual cups and reusable pads
* Eco body lotion? Any ideas without plastic?
  + Coconut oil works well (better for dry skin types)

**Activism**

* [Christian Climate Action Belgium](https://christianclimateaction.be/)
* [Christian Climate Action](https://christianclimateaction.org/) (UK)
* [Extinction Rebellion Belgium](https://www.extinctionrebellion.be/en)
* [Extinction Rebellion](https://rebellion.earth/) (international)

**Book recommendations**

* Tim Jackson "Prosperity without Growth"
* Bea Johnson "Zero Waste Home"
* Matthew Pye "No Common Sense: Philosophy Tackles Climate Change"
* David Wallace-Wells "The Uninhabitable Earth"

**Websites**

* World Cleanup Day: <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/>
* World Cleanup  Day Belgium: <https://worldcleanupday.be/fr/home-fr/>
* Green Print (you can instal this on your computer to reduce the amount of paper you use when printing: <https://www.printgreener.com/>
* Zérocarabistouille (blog): <https://zerocarabistouille.be/a-propos/>
* Zero Waste Belgium: <http://www.zerowastebelgium.org/fr/>
* Kami Zero Waste Store: <https://www.kami-basics.com/>
* Homegrade (advice service on housing, particularly on sustainable housing, in Bruxelles-Capitale): <https://homegrade.brussels/>
* Bruxselair (campaign for cleaner air in Brussels): <https://www.bruxselair.org/>
* Ecoconso (environmental advice): <https://www.ecoconso.be/>
* Repair Café (international site): <https://repaircafe.org/en/>
* Repair Café Belgium: <https://www.repairtogether.be/>
* Réseau Transition: <https://www.reseautransition.be/>
* Sustainable Brussels:  [opencollective.com/sustainable-brussels/](http://opencollective.com/sustainable-brussels/)
* Good Food Brussels <https://goodfood.brussels/>

**Facebook Groups**

* Sustainable Brussels [facebook.com/SustainableBrussels/](http://facebook.com/SustainableBrussels/)
* Leo Not Happy (initiative to clean up the scourge of cigarette ends)
* 10 minutes a day BE (one-man drive for us all to spend 10 minutes a day picking up litter on our street)

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