

# **BEDFORDSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM A POSITION STATEMENT**

BCCF believes that climate change is an established scientific fact and that we all have to work together to prevent or mitigate the dangers which it poses to all life on this planet

We believe that the steps necessary to achieve this will occasion and accompany enormous changes in lifestyle, particularly in the West, which has contributed most to creating this threat. We do not believe that the steps which have to be taken are necessary only to maintain our current standards of living. Many of these standards, in themselves, are unsustainable.

We believe that a major effort must be made to reduce pollution and our output of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, particularly CO<sub>2</sub> (by 60-80% by 2050), and methane. This must be a matter of the utmost urgency; we have very few years left to avert disaster. Wide ranging action must therefore be increasingly implemented now.

We support the devotion of large public and private resources to the realisation of this, in order to avoid the expenditure of even greater resources later, as in the Stern Report. This is why individual efforts, while important, will be unavailing without strong political leadership and concerted action by big business, governments, the United Nations and all wealthy organisations, the only ones with the power to effect the necessary changes on the scale needed. The effects of climate change will spare nobody.

We must look hard at all our current and projected energy uses and restrict them to those that are essential, such as heat, light and transportation, abandoning those which are incidental. A world in which energy and other resources have appeared plentiful, unlimited and relatively cheap is ending. We are moving from a fossil fuel based civilisation to a vastly different one, the full shape of which is not yet clear. The essential needs must themselves be realised with maximum efficiency. We must regard resources vital for life as we would water in a desert, necessary for all, absolutely precious and in short supply. No one can be allowed to have more than their fair share.

As a consequence, vital energy and other resources must be administered more on a co-operative, than a competitive basis, as part of a carefully regulated environmental market alongside publicly administered provision in those areas where markets are inappropriate.

To achieve these ends, there must be a transformation of our energy resources from carbon rich to zero carbon. This means that there must be a major concentration on a wide diversity of sustainable energy technologies and the phasing out of fossil based

facilities. We urgently need a strategic assessment of the options for achieving the target, using different technologies in different locations to manage the effect on the natural environment. We think that a number of difficult questions still need to be answered before nuclear can be part of this.

Such dramatic changes must be brought about on the basis of persuasion rather than compulsion, though in certain circumstances human greed, selfishness, lack of awareness or apathy may make the latter necessary. To avoid compulsion, BCCF is uniquely placed, because of our partnership between individuals, local authorities (democratically accountable for decision-making and the allocation of public funds), statutory and non-statutory bodies in Bedfordshire. To this end, our main stance must be to act as a forum within which expert views are looked at/listened to and discussed, with a view to enabling everyone to come to a rational and considered response.

We are not a campaigning group, are non-party political and welcome members from all parties and none; this does not mean that we do not have any views or opinions. However, in general terms, BCCF will identify with measures to reduce practices which produce noxious gasses and waste and thus with proposals for systems which are free of them. We cannot bring these changes about; we can indicate better ways on the basis of facts and reason, sometimes offering advice as a “critical friend” to affiliates and groups with which we might be associated as individuals. We would seek to publicise best practice and influence public policy.

On the basis of this bedrock of beliefs, we will in the main seek to maintain a position of impartiality over specific issues, respecting the existence of a diversity of views when based on substantial evidence, scientifically verifiable facts and rational argument. We will seek to provide a platform for the expression of well-founded views and encourage a move towards a reasonable consensus, either until the weight of evidence for one side becomes overwhelming to any rational person or there is a demand from at least two thirds of the whole membership for a particular view, if possible avoiding a clash with stated policies of affiliates.

This is not to say that we will be neutered by neutrality. We recognise that this is a difficult line to tread, but only in some situations. We will vigorously resist climate change deniers, for example, and are sure that common sense will see us through the more difficult situations. Above all, our policy must be based on a presumption in favour of action, not talking about it.

References: ToR, Aims & Objectives, BREF5

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WEB-SITE : [bedsclimatechangeforum.org.uk](http://bedsclimatechangeforum.org.uk)

