

YHRAF Climate Change Conference held on 13 May 2008

Comments/Questions

From Ed Stentiford, Bardsey Parish Council to Paul Hudson

The population is currently 6.4bn and is likely to be reach 9bn. Climate change is directly related to population. It is likely we cannot afford to have any more children?

Paul Hudson: The Biofuels acts and growing crops for bio-ethanol is one of the worst decisions made in my personal view. European leaders are recommending growing wheat for biofuels, USA grows corn (maize). To grow these crops they use nitrogen based fertilisers, producing nitrous oxide which is a greenhouse gas and dangerous to the atmosphere.

A lot of the problem is down to economic expansion and population growth. George Bush said that technology is going to have to find a solution to this. The Industrial Revolution was based on technology. USA needs to grasp the opportunities and lead the way in developing green technology.

From Dave Cherry, Leeds City Council to Paul Hudson

From studies in Leeds we note that the winters are getting warmer but have noticed a cooling trend in the spring, why is this?

Paul Hudson: Where we are in Yorkshire, Spring is heavily influenced by the North sea and East North/Easterly wind direction. Why Spring is not showing a warming trend like Summer and Winter, is a mystery. May is showing a cooler trend. July used to be one of the wettest months and it is now our driest period, but there are exceptions, last year for instance.

From Helen Wright, East Riding County Council to Paul Hudson

Evidence suggests that climate change is manmade but is it?

Paul Hudson: There is overwhelming evidence to support this but it is badly explained.

Natural climate change occurs when there is a variation in the output from the sun, there is evidence that this is having a cooling influence at the present time. The observed warming is therefore only explained by the climate changes being generated by human activities. See my speech notes for details.

From Ed Stentiford, Bardsey Parish Council to Paul Hudson

You are high profile, are there moves within the BBC about trying to make this a bit clearer? Perhaps there are opportunities you may have in that role to put the key message to the men and women in the street.

Paul Hudson: I am the BBC's first Climate Correspondent for the North of England, and still weather presenting. There is a fine line between giving facts and preaching. Some comments I get are hostile, there may be economic hardships in the short

term. In a recent interview, I indicated that Harrogate has the worst carbon footprint in the county. One interviewee said that he had been working hard for 40 years and was not going to stop going on foreign holidays or using his car. People are trying to find excuses not to consider the climate change.

I only have 2 ½ mins to get the message across. The BBC view on the manmade climate change has moved because of the IPCC comments. It is time to move and get away from this scepticism. A lot of people don't want to believe it.

From Mr Ken McRitchie, Vice Chair, Vox & Pontefract Community Partnerships to Cllr Arthur Barker, Chair of the Climate Change Steering Group.

Regarding the charges for traffic in cities etc, is it time the Government started looking at vehicle manufacturers and methodologies of car design?

Cllr Arthur Barker: Designers are factoring 5% improvements in their engine design every year. We are dependant on technology delivering a lot and it will definitely play its part.

Dr N Jones, Atwick – there has to be a logical approach to this. We should ask companies and ask councils. Is the Government going to apply some logic? Adaptation has got into the bill. The Government is slow on the uptake but they will get there.

Ed Stentiford, Bardsey Parish Council – asked whether there was any other funding. Do we have to go to someone else? Local action comes down to regional climate change partnerships.

Clearance of the gullies in a flash flood situation is an important issue.

Heather Garnett, North Yorkshire County Council – Parish Councils have to recognise that the Local Authorities don't have sufficient resources to do things like cleaning the gullies out as they would like. Parishes can use their precept to borrow the money to put in projects which will help other projects within the village. This partnership working with your Local Authority is perhaps a constructive way forward.

From Jenny Haines, CPRE – Heat in urban areas can actually be reduced by planting. Green infrastructure – it has lots of other benefits and helps reduce run off.

Summing up session

Mr S Platt, Sprotborough/Cusworth Parish Council

We have heard far more about adaptation rather than mitigation. Two small items not mentioned. Public transport we should be insisting that we should be travelling by public transport instead of by car. We should try and ensure that all of our parishioners have the best insulation for their homes so that they are using as little energy as possible. Shops should have the green roofs but also solar panels etc they should be making as much energy saving as possibly can. We are not pushing to do what we can, we should be pushing more. In 1940 we had a problem and we stopped an invasion now we are been invaded by a horrible climate. and we are not

doing anything about it. Nothing coming from the press or the radio it is not happening.

Really got to constructively get the parish councils together to look at all sorts of technologies.

GW The conference was deliberately aimed and advertised as adaptation We have had a long day if we had tried to do mitigation we would need several days I am afraid . We are as RAF sensitive to the “preaching” problem mentioned by Paul Hudson . Mitigation is more invasive to present personal behaviour but adaptation is future action so can managed more as a community activity

GW thanked the speakers who have been excellent. Anna has shouldered most of planning and thanks to Askam Bryan Secretariat for organisation