

Climate Emergency Network. Bottom Up.

Many of you will know that Meeth is part of the UNESCO-designated North Devon Biosphere Reserve. It covers the entire area of land draining to the Rivers Taw and Torridge, and the sea out beyond Lundy. As an internationally recognised site, ranking alongside the World Heritage Sites, the North Devon Biosphere Reserve is determined to be an exemplar to the rest of the UK, for the sustainable management of the land, and nature. However, the Biosphere system is very different to other Protected Areas, which have traditionally had a 'Top-down' format, so that a government designates a particular Protected Area, sets up a team to manage it, and gives that team some responsibility, some authority and some money (though never enough). The Biosphere is expected to operate the other way, bottom-up, collating the efforts of many individuals and organisations for the greener future, including the climate emergency.

In Devon many Parish Councils are declaring a Climate Emergency, but are less sure what to do about it, as so many of the obvious levers of power lie in Westminster, or Exeter, or even Torridge DC in Bideford. Many, though, do understand that it is the action of individual people and groups who matter. The answer lies in talking to each other, finding good ideas from all over the area and spreading Meeth's own good ideas, whether coming from the council, other groups, or individuals. We ask every Parish and Town to nominate a Climate Emergency Reporter, who will give a report on progress every year to both the Parish Council and to the Biosphere team. This person may or may not be a councillor, may or may not claim any particular expertise in environmental matters, may do it on their own, but more likely gather a team around them.

Once names have been submitted, networking can start. The Biosphere team will be listening, and will be prepared to help with expertise, but they will not be telling parish reporters what to do or how to do it. This really is a bottom-up exercise. Before long I trust the Network will decide on some organisation of its own. I am told that a network of parishes would not find it difficult to access Lottery and other funds.

Over to you, councillors and people of Meeth. You do not need to take the slightest notice of this initiative, but you may have to explain to your children and grandchildren why you decided to take no action.

Contact Parish Clerk, or Peter Howard, 01837 83362, peterjhoward27@gmail.com or Peter Jollands, 01237 471564, pjollands@gmail.com .