

## ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP NEWS



Cheam & Sutton  
**Rotary**



SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT

**Our Mission Statement: We aim to support the environment by increasing awareness of our members and community and by undertaking sustainable environmental projects.**

**MESSAGE from ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP:** You would have to had to be in hiding this month if you didn't get to witness the regular updates from the COP26 negotiations. Whether you feel it was successful or left too many issues up in the air is for you to decide, but it looked like alignment on some important targets was reached. Now actions must follow the words, led by governments but including our own individual contributions to embracing the changes that will ultimately transform our homes, transportation, diets and many other aspects of our lives. Some nations and communities bear the damaging effects of climate change more than others and will continue to need help, the sort of humanitarian support Rotary is used to giving. For some snippets of COP26 aims and outcomes, see below – there are also some links included pointing to further information and opinion. To mark COP26, the National Lottery Fund announced the “Together for Our Planet” grant scheme, for local organisations who want to undertake projects that raise awareness and take actions that start to address the climate emergency in their communities. Our Environment team has work very hard collectively to put in a bid for “Sewing for the Future of Our Planet”, which would result in a Rotary initiated project with a local sewing studio to offer the chance to people in need to learn new skills in sewing to enable the practice of Repair, Recycle and Reuse. Please cross your fingers that we will be successful!

**John Ballard, Club Environment Champion**

### PROJECT UPDATE:

As a follow up on our crocus planting in October for End Polio Now and the environment, we planted further 700 bulbs to fit in with A Billion Bulbs challenge. Volunteers from our Club and YourSpaceSutton got together to plant 300 Tete a tetes, 300 daffodils and 100 snowdrops in verges near Cheam Memorial Garden.



## Environment Group in November:

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-Completed the planting of a further 700 bulbs (as per the above).

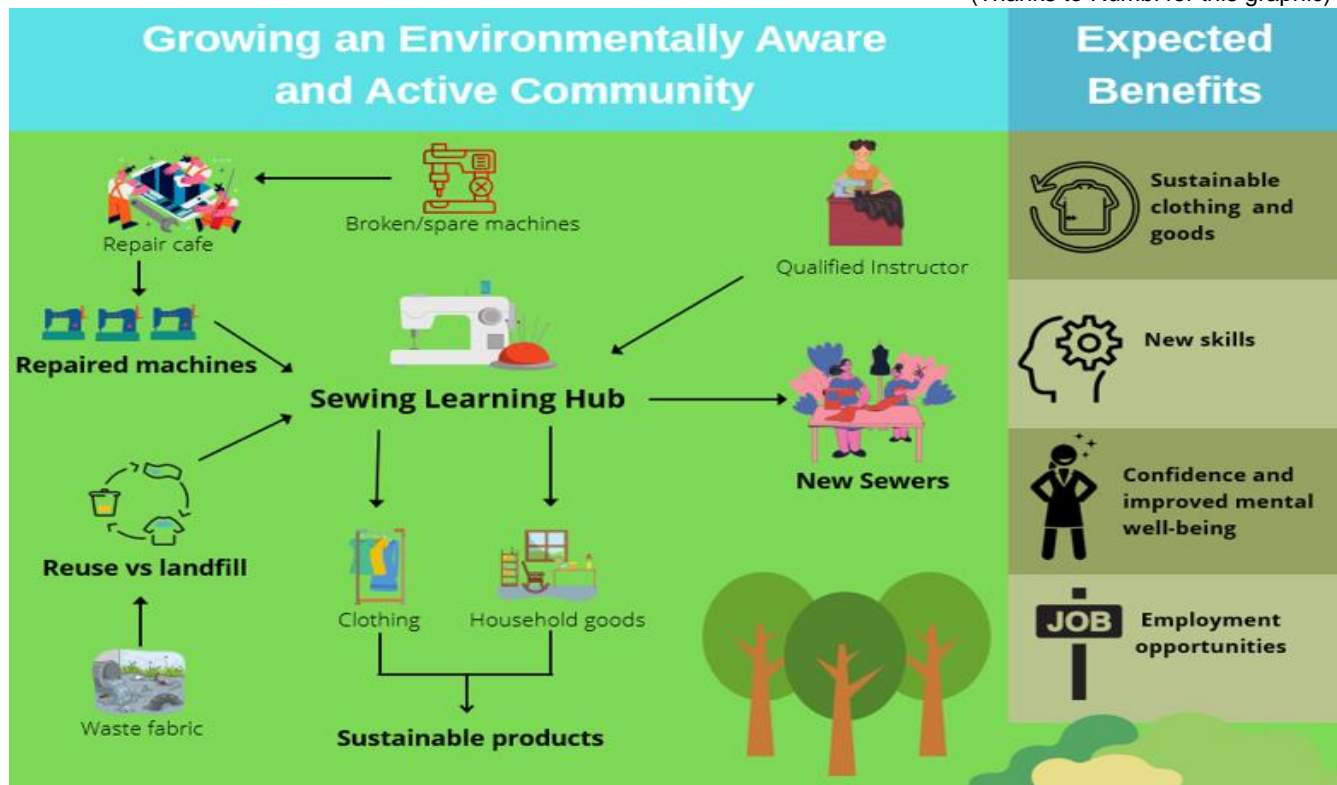
-The Morsbags project is going well – sewers are in the process of making and distributing more bags using donated waste fabric.

-Registered our interest in joining the Queen's Green Canopy project, awaiting a meeting with Sutton Council on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

-The Young Environmentalist Competition has been followed up both in person and social media circulation. There have been some enquiries and the deadline for submission is on December 18<sup>th</sup>

-Completed our application for the National Lottery Fund grant for our “Sewing for the Future of our Planet” The summary of our project is in this graphic:

(Thanks to Rumbi for this graphic)



**UPCOMING EVENT:** Litter Picking on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 11.30am at Cheam Memorial Garden.  
**Volunteers please contact Gary ASAP.**

**With Christmas around the corner, here are some ideas for environmentally friendly gifts:**

Gift of a Book: “Speak Up for our Planet”

Have you read this book? It's a well-researched study of climate change, what is happening and how it could turn out. There's an optimistic view of town centres with fewer cars and more trees, and a pessimistic view of how things will be if we take no action. Plenty of imaginative but realistic suggestions of things we can do.

You can also borrow it from the Speak up for our Planet Climate Change library <http://ow.ly/GmQN50GII08>

Gifts from Friends of the Earth group:

-Planet Protectors: [friendsoftheearth.uk/take-action/have-fun-together-get-your-planet-protectors-pack-today](http://friendsoftheearth.uk/take-action/have-fun-together-get-your-planet-protectors-pack-today)

-Save the Bees: [friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/donate-save-britains-bees-get-your-christmas-bee-saver-kit-today](http://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/donate-save-britains-bees-get-your-christmas-bee-saver-kit-today)

Gifts from the Wildlife Trust: [thewildlifetrustsshop.com](http://thewildlifetrustsshop.com)

Jigsaws to help EndPlastic: <https://www.rotary.nl/winschoten/Puzzel/Jigsaw-puzzle-Rotary-in-action-English>

Wooden toys instead of plastic ones.

Can you come up with ideas for more “green” gifts? Please share with us

In November, CLIMATE CHANGE occupied the news because of COP 26 taking place from 31 October to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

### What is COP26?

The **Conference of the Parties (COP)** is an annual event that brings governments together to discuss and review how climate change is being managed domestically and internationally. The first COP meeting was held in 1995 in Berlin, Germany. It is the main decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an agreement made by 197 countries to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions and avoid dangerous climate change.

The twenty-sixth COP (COP26) was scheduled to take place last year but it was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Every year, it is hoped that COP meetings result in agreements between world leaders to take measurable action on tackling **climate change**. But some meetings run more smoothly than others. One of the most positive sessions was held in Paris in 2015, which established the Paris Agreement, a legally binding treaty in which leaders pledged to limit global warming. They promised to try to keep global temperatures to well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels, and ideally below 1.5°C.

The Industrial Revolution began in Britain in the 1700s, and it marked the start of major greenhouse gas emissions. As emissions rise, **our world keeps getting hotter**. At the moment, the world is on track **to get 1.5°C hotter by the 2030s**. If Earth gets even hotter still, disasters are likely to unfold around the planet. Every fraction of a degree's warming will make a huge difference to our future, so it was a big moment when leaders agreed to aim for 1.5°C. The treaty was signed by 196 countries. It included rich countries offering financial assistance to poorer countries to reduce emissions. The treaty is assessed every five years and was one of the main discussions of COP 26.

The aims of COP 26 were:

- **Secure global net zero by mid-century, and keep 1.5 degrees within reach**
- **Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats**
- **Mobilise finance**
- **Work together to deliver**

The first focuses on measures such as the phasing out of coal and the reduction of deforestation, for instance, that will reduce **carbon output to 'net zero' relative to 1990 output** – and allow the **target of 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming relative to pre-industrial levels** to be achieved. The second acknowledges that communities within delegate countries – both human settlements and surrounding environments – will **continue to feel the effects of climate change regardless**, and must be supported in their efforts to protect against, and reverse, these damages. The third focuses on the money needed to achieve these goals. And the last – potentially the trickiest of all – emphasises the need for true global co-operation to make any of it possible.

**ROTARY and COP26:** In a speech Nov. 10 at the UN Climate Conference, Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta announced that mangrove restoration will be a central focus of Rotary's environmental work in the year to come. He spoke at the beginning of the ministerial-level roundtable Nov. 10 at the Commonwealth Pavilion, after a warm welcome from Commonwealth Secretary General Baroness Patricia Scotland, QC, and ministers of the environment or forestry from the commonwealth nations of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Pakistan, Seychelles, Maldives, and Tanzania, as well as the representatives from several global environmental organizations. Rotary of Great Britain and Ireland cited President Shekhar's roundtable at COP26 as "the biggest showpiece event of his COVID-hit Presidential year so far."



## Our member Rumbi Gumbie attended COP26 and she shared her observations with us:



I attended COP26 in Glasgow from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. This was the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) hosted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Parties are countries and there are 197 members. NGOs and Civil Society Organisations can sign up as observers, this means that they can attend COP26 but have to be invited into the meetings with the Parties.

I attended as an observer with the Margaret Pyke Trust, an NGO based in London, as the Population, Health and Environment Manager. My job is to work primarily with conservationists who look after the environment and endangered species, on the importance of the health of the communities they serve. The intersection between human health and the environment is still new and developing. I was at COP26 to help raise awareness to how increasing women's reproductive choice by removing barriers to family planning, and educating girls, are some of the many ways to address climate change. I was in the blue zone which is an area taken over by the United Nations, where members and observers set up exhibitions (pavilions) and meet to discuss issues affecting climate change.

There were many scientists and experts who were showcasing their brilliant innovations and examples of how they were addressing climate change in their fields. Some notable pavilions included the Water, Nature and Science pavilions organised by the International Union of Conservationists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC). The Margaret Pyke Trust held an event together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and MSI Reproductive Choices which I had some input organising. The topic was "Removing Barriers to Health and Education: an essential climate adaptation and resilience strategy"

I enjoyed being in the 'Action zone' where the world's media reported on the daily activities at COP26. It was the most attractive part of the conference. It was the room with a huge globe at the centre and a slogan that read 'We can do this if we act now'. I saw a few notable faces like the journalists Christine Amanpour from CNN. There were also other prominent celebrities like John Kerry, Greta Thunberg, Leonardo DiCaprio and Ed Miliband. Unfortunately, I missed the one celebrity I would have liked to take a picture with, the former US president Barack Obama!

The two most important groups present were the youth and indigenous people particularly from small island nations who are feeling the worst effects of climate change. There was a focus on hearing their voices through different forms of expression that included art, music and dialogue. I found the youth particularly effective at using social media to communicate the issues being discussed as they were happening. However, not everyone who is affected by climate change was represented. I found myself wondering if a family belonging to the Batwa indigenous people of Rwanda and Uganda who are displaced from their ancestral lands due to preservation of forests (that are now endangered) would ever know that there was such a conference as COP and what came out of it that would help to address their concerns.

All in all, although the organisation of the event could have been better (warm coffee and sometimes stale sandwiches!), there are many brilliant scientists, experts and activists who are doing amazing work. We have all that we need to address climate change, it is now to the world leaders to be decisive and serious about the commitments they make. I also feel that it is our responsibilities as citizens of the world to support our leaders, educate ourselves on the issues of climate change and influence decision and policy making at the local and community level.

– Rumbi Gumbie

The message that has come out of COP26 can be simply summarised as:

- We have to do what is necessary to keep global warming at maximum 1.5 degrees by decreasing carbon emissions: phasing out fossil fuels, developing clean energy sources
- Protecting the eco-systems: supporting clean ocean projects, supporting sustainable farming, protecting forests and animal life.  
Forest and oceans absorb 50% of the carbon emissions, therefore countries need to stop deforestation. We need to increase tree planting and protect our oceans and soil.
- Inclusion of climate education into the school curricula

**AND WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT TO DO ALL THIS TO SAVE OUR PLANET.**

### ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR IN DECEMBER:

#### **World Soil Day – December 5**

This is a day to help us to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.



Soil Association says: The solution to Climate Change is under our feet....

Did you know that healthy soils act as a carbon sink? They have the potential to store more carbon than the atmosphere and all the world's plants and forests combined!

### OTHER FEATURED LINKS:

Leaders gathered at [#COP26](#) to seek solutions to the climate crisis, people around the world are taking [#ClimateAction](#) and pledging to do their part in Keeping the Promise of the [#GlobalGoals](#). Join them in reducing your food waste and taking other steps to create a better future for all! <https://bit.ly/Keeping-The-Promise>

### **Was COP26 a Success? - Greenpeace**

[Boris Johnson's "green industrial revolution" speech to the CBI](#)

[Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 – the big picture \(Speak up for our Planet\)](#)

[9 things you can do to protect the natural world](#)

[Our plan for a more sustainable Sutton](#)

[https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200670/environmental\\_sustainability/2025/what\\_can\\_you\\_do](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200670/environmental_sustainability/2025/what_can_you_do)