

God of power and mystery
Who made the universe out of nothing.
everything that exists owes its being to you
and without you there would be neither time nor space,
landscape nor any companion creatures:
We thank you for the gift of life on earth;
For the ground beneath our feet and the sky above,
For water and air and the morning light.
Help us to see this world as you do, with the same loving eye.
You who reign for ever and ever. Amen.

I am grateful for the opportunity to come here today as someone who lives locally, in BaNES, but I particularly want to come here representing the faith community. Those that have a spirituality, a faith in some kind of deity, a greater being, or in Mother Nature. That created this beautiful and extraordinary world we live on. We clearly have a huge responsibility to look after the planet for future generations but also for us now. It is quite clear what impacts on life itself the current trajectory has brought us to and the catastrophic place we are heading. We didn't listen to scientists in 1990, 2015 and will we take very much notice of the latest IPCC report. This amazing creation we are destroying in a generation.

I am not a scientist, I am not an academic in climatology but it is so abundantly clear the threat we are all living through....

I happen to come here today as a Christian; I personally believe in a creator God. A God who I imagine must be literally weeping and watching us destroy his beautiful creation. The arrogance that we seem happy to make a financial gain from the destruction of this beautiful planet that we see being destroyed in front of our eyes at an extraordinary pace:

- the eco-systems, the extinction of so many creatures,
- the polar ice caps and glaciers melting,
- the desertification of agricultural land in the Global South but also in Europe,
- fires destroying huge swathes of forest that hadn't thus far been cut down

And yet we continue our CO2e emissions at an unrelenting pace.

I recently attended my Eco Church, a local church service that has been dedicated to ecological themes for over 10 years. Excuse me for reading the following prayer which I hope will convey some meaning to all of you who have a belief in some sort of greater being;

God of Life. Our planet is dying. We are responsible for the destruction of species and eco-systems.

Save us, for our death-dealing systems that rely on fossil fuels, that strip-mine the commons, that convert Your natural world into cold, hard cash.

Give us wisdom and courage to find new ways of living. Empower our children who are striking for the climate. Shield all who work for a healthy environment, particularly indigenous earth-protectors. Gift COP26 with robust and workable solutions to mitigate the very worst effects of climate disruption.

Oh God, this we pray. Amen

I also come here as a parent; I am so scared for them and the world we have brought them in to. We are seeing the shocking results of climate change now, what will their world look like when they are my age?

Many of you will have children, grand-children.... I read in the Daily Mail just this week that in a study based on surveys of 10,000 children 40% of them did not want to have children due to their concerns. The article went on to say;

The majority of young people are filled with anxiety over climate change, a new survey has revealed.

... more than three quarters (77 per cent) thought the future was frightening and nearly six in 10 said they were very or extremely worried about climate change.

More than half said they had felt afraid, sad, anxious, powerless, helpless and/or guilty, and almost half (45 per cent) said their concerns negatively affected their daily life.

Young people also feel governments are failing them, betraying future generations, lying about the impacts of actions taken on climate change and dismissing people's distress about the issue, the findings suggest.

It is shockingly ironic that Bristol Airport is owned by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.... A group of school students from North Somerset have made a video film appealing directly to teachers in the Ontario region in Canada to take a hard look at the environmental and social impact of their pension fund investment in Bristol Airport. You can see their concerns on U-Tube They are investing in the destruction of their future, of their planet

You have surely seen what all the climate scientists are saying, predictions about feedback loops and tipping points. Only it is happening far more quickly and is more catastrophic than predicted. You have seen the news bulletins daily! Every news bulletin seems to contain really concerning stories about climate change, yet some continue regardless. The expert witnesses here just last week telling you the damage aviation pollution creates. Clearly, we have to fly less and we have to appreciate the *true cost* of the cheap subsidised flights.

Those starving in Africa due to droughts, increased mortality on every continent, from heat exhaustion; the highest being in Central and South America (up to 76 per cent in Ecuador

and Columbia) and South-East Asia. Every year heat kills tens of thousands of people. Heat killed over 100,000 people in 2018 in the European Union, when high temperatures soared. A new study suggests that higher temperatures driven by greenhouse gas emissions was at fault for 37 percent of heat-related deaths globally. The world has only warmed around 1 degree centigrade so far [that is on average and affects some areas disproportionately], but that's already enough to kill roughly 100,000 people every year if you apply this paper's estimate to the entire world. – what will be the effect of 2 or 3 degrees increase in temperature [above pre-industrial levels]?

Widely reported on the BBC news this week;

"Climate change: World now sees twice as many days over 50C"

The number of extremely hot days every year when the temperature reaches 50C has doubled since the 1980s, a global BBC analysis has found.

The article goes on to say;

"The increase can be 100% attributed to the burning of fossil fuels," says Dr Friederike Otto, associate director of the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford

Indeed the World Health Organisation states that climatic changes already are estimated to cause over 150,000 deaths annually. That figure obviously relates to a 1 degree warming of the world, the rate will clearly increase at an ever-increasing rate.

There is a legal requirement to be carbon neutral by 2050, there is moral obligation to do so much better than that just look at the recent IPCC report...,

Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.

And many climate scientist's predictions are even worse with the domino effect of the feedback loops and tipping points.

And you know, you have heard in this very room, from other presentations, just how damaging the emissions are from aircraft and the disproportionate impact that they are having on this dying planet. You have heard the evidence from: Professor Kevin Anderson, Sam Hunter-Jones, Finley Asher and others. You have heard the facts they presented to this inquiry; they are not motivated by money but motivated by the need to tell the scientific truths about the destiny we are facing.

We have also heard the false and dishonest claims about the carbon neutrality by Bristol Airport and the absurdity of ignoring the emissions from aircraft flying from the airport or the polluting cars driving to the airport making profits for the airport from their disproportionate car-parking fees. Unlike most airports there is no rail connection and the bus service is poorly integrated.

Dan Norris, the new Metro Mayor was democratically elected earlier this year and clearly stated that he was against the airport expansion. He recently has written;

*As a teenager growing up in our area, I remember a slogan of the time: "Think globally, act locally." That couldn't be more apt
I'm sticking to my commitment to oppose Bristol Airport's proposed expansion. That isn't about stunting economic growth, as some may paint it, it's about taking urgent, pragmatic action to protect our irreplaceable planet.
Of course we need more jobs here as we move from a brutal pandemic, but in green industries, not airports, investing in projects to be carbon neutral by 2030*

Dan Norris, actually added this week; *"Now is not the time to expand Bristol Airport"* The Labour Metro Mayor will propose a motion, seconded by B&NES Council's Lib Dem leader Kevin Guy, at a special meeting of WECA; the West of England Combined Authority's Joint Committee which he leads....meeting, scheduled for next Tuesday (21st September), will call on all four local council leaders to reject Bristol Airport's latest expansion plans

Remember as well as Metro Mayor, Dan Norris is a former MP and was Environment Minister. He lives in Pensford, Somerset. He was democratically elected on this platform of opposing Bristol Airport expansion....

We also hear from many others, including from the faith community, who know and understand the science, such as His Holiness Pope Francis, in a Ted talk within the last year (as well as previously) he stated;

*Science tells us, every day, with more precision, that urgent action is needed -- and I am not dramatizing, **this is what science says** -- if we are to keep the hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change. And for this **we must act now. This is a scientific fact.***

That was from one of the world's most important and enlightened religious leaders, the Pope.

Unfortunately, however, you will have heard the bizarre assertions of CBI SW's Ben Rhodes who seems to believe that increasing flying, with the implicit further destruction of the planet, is a rational way to proceed, to raise income to aid research re carbon neutrality. *Commercially viability* carbon neutral aircraft are at best decades away or more likely to be pure science fiction. Bio fuels are not the answer as with failing harvests and desertification we will need every acre we possess to grow food

Maybe those that wish to fly could all pay commercial rates, rather than the subsidised fares and a levy from them put into research – rather than encouraging people to fly due to cheap flights & then spend their money abroad rather than assisting our economy.

In Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg's prayer for the day on Tuesday this week on Radio 4, he prayed about our need to think in greener ways and minimise carbon emissions. He stated that net zero is among humanity's most urgent goals. He prayed about inner renewal; and rededicating ourselves to establishing a just and compassionate society. But most important today is an environmental re-working of our relationship with nature and with greater humility. God gives humans dominion over all creatures, but dominion means responsibility. He quotes Isaiah and his vision of a world in which 'They neither hurt nor destroy in all [God's] holy mountain.' Adding "it's a mountain we urgently need to climb. God, give us the strength and determination to do so together" – he prays.

A Moslem view;

My responsibility to the planet is not just as a campaigner, but as a Muslim; to me, the two are now synonymous. Muslim community leaders have been very clear that neglecting to reduce our carbon footprint is neglecting our religious obligation. We were appointed by God as stewards to care and preserve this green and beautiful earth. I have both a civic and religious duty to ensure that I am proactive, because I will be accountable for my choices

Honestly, is there really anyone in this room when they take their heads out of the sand can honestly support the airport expansion; they are literally stealing something that is not theirs to steal, including life itself. We have to radically reduce our carbon emissions now!

I have heard it said, I have heard the accusation of nimbyism;

- planes flying over our heads in the early hours of the morning
- cars driving on unsuitable roads through our small villages
- turning green fields into tarmac for car parks to increase the profits of Bristol Airport

[it is the area where they make most their profits so are pro driving and not keen to encourage public transport – buses, there are no trains to this airport!]

No all these are important points but it is not nimbyism. Rather than not being in our back yard, it is a global issue; not on our planet! I am here today because of the planet, God's incredible creation that we are all guilty of destroying.

I am a member of Christian Climate Action;

Christian Climate Action is a community of Christians supporting each other to take meaningful action in the face of imminent and catastrophic anthropogenic climate breakdown. We are inspired by Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. Following the example of social justice movements of the past, we carry out acts of public witness, nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience to urge those in power to make the changes needed.*

*those that are derived from human activities

Since November 2018 we have worked closely with Extinction Rebellion and have become known as the Christians in XR.

I know many people who have made huge sacrifices due to their concerns; they have been arrested, received large fines and even gone to prison. While they make a huge sacrifice financially and with their freedom, others are happy to profit financially despite causing death and destruction to the earth with its catastrophic financial cost as well as the cost to life itself. There are parallels from past with the lies told by the tobacco industry faced by accusations of causing death through their industry. However, the consequences from this, is far more catastrophic.

Isaiah 24:4-6 NIV

4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers,
the heavens languish with the earth.

5 The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes
and broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.

I pray that is a prophesy of what is to come.

Earlier this month, the Government published a policy paper; "Valuation of greenhouse gas emissions: for policy appraisal and evaluation" In this paper carbon values are used in the form of a cost-benefit analysis to assess whether, taking into account all the factors such as the impact of climate change and the environment. It clearly sets out that to meet our *statutory* obligations towards net zero, [and they are *statutory* remember!] we need to meet our 5-yearly carbon budgets.

The government has to take full account of climate change impacts of all projects appraising and evaluating their carbon values. They have to ensure the climate impacts of policies are fully accounted for and be transparent and consistent in decision making.

It is quite clear, when one takes in the overall evidence that has been submitted to this inquiry, the overall intended increase in flights and thereby the overtly planned increase in climate change gasses, would conflict with this government paper as well as our legally bound commitment to reduce our carbon equivalent gasses. It would also be extremely embarrassing with our leadership in COP26. Therefore, with all that we have heard in this room, we can be completely unequivocal that this application for the expansion of Bristol airport must be refused.

If you will excuse me, I would like to finish with a prayer that we finished with at the recent Eco Service:

Lord our God, you renew the face of the earth
And bring newness to our world:
Restore the waters,
Refresh the air,
Revive the land,
Breathe new life into your creation,
And begin with us.

Thank you

References:

Grist a non-profit newsroom focused on exploring solutions at the intersection of climate and justice;

<https://grist.org/climate/how-many-people-has-climate-change-killed-already/>

The World health organisation website

<https://www.who.int/heli/risks/climate/climatechange/en/>

Friends of the Earth website

<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/policy-positions/aviation-and-climate-change-our-position>

Keynsham Voice 02.09.2021

https://issuu.com/keynshamvoice/docs/keynsham_voice_september_2021_issue

The Guardian 23.08.2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/23/climate-crisis-made-deadly-german-floods-up-to-nine-times-more-likely>

The Weekin... 13.09.2021

<https://theweekin.co.uk/news/latest-breaking-news/reject-bristol-airport-expansion-urges-metro-mayor/>

The Metro 26.06.2019

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/06/26/as-a-working-class-muslim-i-dont-fit-the-description-of-a-climate-change-activist-10061803/>

The Guardian 14.09.2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-58494641>

Sci-Dev Net; Bringing science & development together through news & analysis

<https://www.scidev.net/global/news/rising-heat-related-deaths-linked-to-global-warming/>

The Daily Mail 14.09.2021

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9989039/Youngsters-filled-anxiety-climate-change-international-study-finds.html>

School students from North Somerset school

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwpB6aLOnVU>

Prayer for the day, Radio 4 14.09.2021

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000zkql>

[18:47, 02/09/2021] +44 7540 249471: Golden Rules

Overall you need to remember you are there to influence the inspector not to be deflected off course by the barrister, Mr Humphreys.

1. Always answer yes or no to the question (they always ask closed questions) then quickly follow up with 'however'.

'Yes, however' & then go on to say what you want to say.

2. If he interrupts you (he will if you are saying something he doesn't want the inspector to hear) just politely say ' can I please finish what I was saying'.

3. It seems one of his tactics is to ask questions that are meant to confuse or don't make sense. In response say 'I don't understand the question can you rephrase'. He will try again. He may be rude. However if the question still doesn't make sense ask him to rephrase again. Eventually you'll get something you can answer & he'll have lost his tread.

4. Check you have references for any facts you quote.

5. Only answer questions he has asked. Don't be drawn into discussion, he's trying to catch you out.

Remember that you will be asked to submit a written version of your statement for the records.