

Torbay Christian EcoAction

February 2026 newsletter

This is the February 2026 newsletter. As previously, this newsletter is coming in PDF form but also with a link at <https://davidhodson.com/torbay-christian-ecoaction-february-2026-newsletter/> if that is easier for you and to distribute. If you want a Word version, let me know. If you want to unsubscribe, email me. If you know of anyone whom you think would like to receive, again let me know. As previously, it is a mixture of events, resources and news. If anyone has anything they would like publicised, please let me know. It is a little shorter on items this month. I have been in Australia and although one continues to keep in touch, it's inevitably not so easy. I'm afraid it starts with a couple of items which are really pessimistic, with Trump and Torbay Council both featuring!

Trump reverses laws which discourage fossil fuel emissions

This was the depressing news that president Pres Trump had reversed a 2009 Pres Obama era endangerment finding that a range of greenhouse gases were a threat to public health and had been a foundation of attempts to rein in fossil fuel emissions, primarily from road vehicles. He says it is a huge boost for the motor car industry in the USA, which it might be, and he does refer to the fact that US emissions have fallen, albeit slightly, since 2009 and with new developments such as electric cars. But there is little doubt that it will encourage the use of fossil fuels and therefore the impact on the environment globally. I have read something of the adverse comment within America although it has seemed fairly divided and muted. There's been a huge amount of adverse comment around the world. It is just depressing and discouraging. Here is the BBC take on it although there are many other commentaries in England and around the world: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0zdd7yl4vo> along with a BBC commentary on some of the consequences: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd03ee39945o>

Torbay Council abolishes the blue flags for beaches

The blue flag is one of the world's most recognised voluntary awards for beaches. Over 5000 beaches across 50 countries have been certified. It is a mark of quality. My own swimming beach, Oddicombe, has held it continuously for 38 years. Because it is so well-known across the world and nationally, it is trusted and relied on. So why would Torbay Council abolish them and replace with their own? Because this is what they have done. Initially announced with no public consultation and quickly passed. The council cited reasons of expense and not meeting needs, although that may become ironic in view of what is now happening. It was said that it didn't make it practicable for smaller coves but I haven't read of any other seaside local authority doing the same and please share if you know. The council predictably says that it would raise standards and that the blue Flag organisation has shot itself in the foot in its own blue flag new standards and believes other places will be pulling out. Most will cynically view this as a local authority deciding for his own reasons (shurely no economic or other policy considerations) which

beaches in any one year to support and badge. The threefold criteria (grading perhaps) of excellence, quality and natural seems strange. Most fundamentally, who would trust any local authority, not just Torbay and not just any political party, in assessing the cleanliness and quality of its own beaches. That's the whole point of external verification and national and international awareness. As a tourist, I wouldn't trust a seaside local authority, anywhere in the world, with its own accreditation and verification process. I regard this as a retrograde measure and regrettable. I'm willing to be proven wrong if other councils across Devon and Cornwall successfully do the same. We will see but in the meantime I suspect I and others shall be relying far more on websites like surfers against sewage and similar than what a council official decides for whatever reason to say. A great pity in my opinion. Stories here: https://www.tor-bay-harbour.co.uk/leisure/beaches-and-coastline/beach-standards/?fbclid=IwVERTSAQEc05leHRuA2FlbQlxMABzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAwzNTA2ODU1MzE3MjgAAR7NuNFUf3eiM13LvGrh1OcbuVdbpD2Ycmmj8lo0mGgNHdZzM9WQzv89uvuJdg_aem_M26SC2kJ-NeF9enEro3zYw&sfnsn=scwspmo and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgvlpq7jpo> as well as the council website so you can form your own opinion: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9440/>

Has China become a global green saviour?

For many years, one of the biggest detractions for individuals doing anything for environmental measures was the old canard of Russia and China pumping out huge emissions from outdated machinery, hugely stoked fossil fuel industries and simple unwillingness to do anything about environmental concerns globally. And as China grew, we worried more. Were we wrong? I was very interested in this news story about potentially huge changes afoot in China and we will need to keep an eye on what is happening and other stories. Certainly they seem to have cornered the market in batteries for electric cars. They have made other significant progress in similar directions. Again time will tell but this is potentially very promising. We now need them to play more of a part globally. Their influence is massive on many other countries around the world including many in the so-called Third World to change environmental policies. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has any other insights into this and we can share. Story here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-8d2b6944-4f7a-45b4-96fd-2d92499ff97d>

Encouragement for your flower arranging team

It may be thought this is one extreme to the other and perhaps it is. But I was very touched by a story of a parish church which had taken its environmental concerns in the distinctive aspects of flower arranging to the general Synod and had managed to get a motion through accordingly. Please pass to your flower arranging teams with their thanks and for their encouragement. The story here: https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2026/13-february/news/uk/synod-votes-to-embrace-sustainable-use-of-flowers-in-churches?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Image%20social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwdGRzaAP7IPhjbGNrA_shMmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNydgMGYXBwX2lkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHj2O3-

[1To6Nc4jOV6ESxq4gODE0wqlsNZFaA0Pxum0jZO9DotBSeW02DO4Qg_aem_CYZXRpN
Kw9IY8JbXWuLCoA&sfnsn=mo](https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2026/02/%E2%80%98we-must-be-agents-of-change%E2%80%99-the-primate-of-brazil-addresses-the-church-of-england-synod.aspx?fbclid=IwdGRzaAP8ZnRjbGNrA_xmHmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyDGMGYXBwX2lkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHvRhdaAqqB3MNaT_a5fdlfzqBlqk4pJ9adKS8BQN-3mxDfTHpgNbkMHCMWuXb_aem_4ofNA3N_fmLxlpCC9mHuOO&sfnsn=mo)

We must be agents of change says the primate of Brazil

Whilst on the general Synod, I was interested to read this speech by the senior cleric of Brazil to the general Synod about environmental justice, not least following the rather unsuccessful COP conference in Brazil last autumn. It was very realistic in its terms and well worth a read and I recommend:

https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2026/02/%E2%80%98we-must-be-agents-of-change%E2%80%99-the-primate-of-brazil-addresses-the-church-of-england-synod.aspx?fbclid=IwdGRzaAP8ZnRjbGNrA_xmHmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyDGMGYXBwX2lkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHvRhdaAqqB3MNaT_a5fdlfzqBlqk4pJ9adKS8BQN-3mxDfTHpgNbkMHCMWuXb_aem_4ofNA3N_fmLxlpCC9mHuOO&sfnsn=mo

Community forests: planting trees in Devon and Cornwall

I was very encouraged by this item about tree planting in Devon and Cornwall in the last few years including in South Devon. Amongst all the depressing news, there are many wonderful local initiatives going on of which this is one. Well done to everyone involved. Story here: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx28d1g0ddyo>

Torbay Marine EcoFest: 18th July

Many will remember our very successful EcoFest in November 2023. We are strongly considering holding a similar event on the weekend of 18th July, but concentrating on marine elements. Our seaside, our coast, our bay, our channel, our oceans. It is very early stages of planning but please make a note for your diaries and hopefully much more in the February newsletter. If you know anyone who is involved in this already and you think would be a good speaker please let me know. We would be hoping to have stalls and demonstrations by organisations and again please let me know. This is an initiative from Clare and a small group is being put together by her for initial planning and we would like to hear from everyone please. It promises to be very important and interesting

A Rocha silver accreditation

We had a meeting at St Matthias in January to discuss the above and what will be involved in obtaining it, from the small green group to the entire congregation. We felt very much that the A Rocha website wasn't particularly clear and we are looking into it over the next 4-6 weeks to take a decision. If any other groups in Torbay are either working towards silver or already have silver, please do get in touch with me so that we can share experiences and understand what you have done and thank you. I've heard from some churches already and thank you and will be compiling what information we have over the next couple weeks

Tearfund Quiz: 21st November

Please note this will now take place at St Matthias on the evening of 21st November, a week later than initially announced, in order to avoid clashing with another event and please put in your diaries

Creation Care

Might I also recommend the newsletter from the Creation Care team at the Exeter diocese. I don't have a web link easily to hand and the only link I can find on the web is 2024 and if anyone has a link to the up-to-date newsletter please let me have it so that I may share

One Torbay: Torbay Council weekly newsletter

Our local council produces a weekly newsletter of developments. I include some in these newsletters although I'm conscious to avoid any suggestion of political elements. But there is a strong environmental theme to the newsletter. May I recommend strongly subscribing. It really is most informative. More details here <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKTORBAYCOUNCIL/subscriber/new?preferences=true>

Devon wildlife trust newsletter

Again I recommend their newsletter and I will share next month

Similar work from our friends in Plymouth

Here is their February newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/0af56dced387/plymouth-churches-green-action-enevs-mid-february-2026?e=9dd45dc4a5> There are lots of events and campaigns and resources set out in their newsletters and it's great to be mutually involved across South Devon. I won't try to repeat here and do please read and thank you to them. There's a lot going on across Plymouth area

Thank you for getting this far.

Please let me have any items you want me to distribute including from your organisation or church or news items for information

Best wishes and God bless.

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