

# Torbay Christian EcoAction

## March 2026 newsletter

This is the March 2026 newsletter. As previously, this newsletter is coming in PDF form but also with a link at <https://davidhodson.com/torbay-christian-ecoaction-march-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 again a little shorter on items this month. We are still in Australia, getting back late next Wednesday although with emirates cancelling flights it's a rather circular route via Shanghai and Russian airspace! I have a few thoughts on green issues in Australia but will write next month otherwise I might not be allowed out at border control.

### Torbay Council abolishes the blue flags for beaches.

I covered this in the previous newsletter. Within a day of sending it, some councillors asked for the issue to be dealt with at full council meeting rather than cabinet. I set out a number of questions which I thought should be answered although there was a lot of ignorance about reasons and rationale. It went to a full council meeting but seemingly the objectors were persuaded and it went through unanimously. I've heard what's been said that the blue flag doesn't adapt well for an area with lots of small beaches and coves. Ditto that it doesn't cover water quality. Ditto that it's become ridiculously expensive. Ditto that some other areas are also thinking about the matter. Torbay Council might be right. At the moment it gives the appearance of being disappointing. We will see especially if other areas follow suit or specifically don't.

### Earth's climate more out of balance than at any time in recorded history

An immensely worrying report, although sadly not a surprising one, from the UN world meteorology bureau says that the Earth's climate is further out of balance than any other time. The world meteorological organisation said that our planet is gaining much more heat energy than it can release driven by emissions of warming gases such as carbon dioxide. This energy imbalance heated the ocean to new heights last year with impact on the ice caps. The UN secretary general reiterated the call for countries to move away from fossil fuels to renewable energy and yet we are having a war in the Middle East which seems, at least in part to one or more participants, to be about fossil fuels. The last 11 years were the 11 warmest years in records since 1850. This is seriously worrying. But readers of this newsletter will not be surprised as it has been sadly a common theme. We have to get this message across in our churches to give more information and suitable responses. The story is here: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c203rdxkezwo>

### Dartmoor and pony grazing

Dartmoor seems to have been riven with dispute and litigation of late with the case regarding wild camping having gone to the Court of Appeal recently. Now pony grazing having an impact on the environment. For those who may be interested, here is the story: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0z0x4gg5jo>

### The opening of the coast path around England

One of the immense pleasures and joys of living in this area is the south-west coastal path and I'm sure most of us have hiked parts of it at various times. A project over many years has opened up a similar path around much of England. This has been quite difficult because of land ownership adjoining the coast and well done to everyone for this. The details are here and we can pay a visit when in any other part of the country. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy0dxexdd8xo>

### Whale entanglement on the humpback highway

Apologies for an obscure item, distinctly not Torbay -related or is it? Those who visited Sydney over the years may have visited the fish market. Brixham but much bigger. A large number of outlets selling fish directly caught that morning. Used extensively by the large Asian community in Sydney. With some very nice eateries. It has a sentimental attachment for my wife and I as we became engaged on a pier at the fish market going into the harbour. But it was showing its age. An incredible new fish market has been built nearby which we visited last week. Even more fish selling outlets with incredible Pacific and South Sea fish. Lovely restaurants. But I mention because it has also a lecture theatre at the centre. And when we were there for the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit there was a talk on the above and I popped in. There are lots of whales going up and down the eastern Australian coast; anyone who has watched finding Nemo will remember. And they get entangled in nets. But even as an outsider I asked a question about the impact of climate change on the oceanic movement of whales and greater risks. Curiously they didn't think there was much. There wasn't the opportunity to share the Torbay experience where we have noticed fish and marine life coming in from the Mediterranean because of the warm waters in the channel. But I'm not sure they can be so complacent. If it's affecting us here in the northern Atlantic, it must be the southern Atlantic having a similar experience with the nearness to Antarctica. I set out and link for any interested. What it did also get me thinking is how much we would benefit from something similar, a large lecture area, in the new Brixham fish market. There is a consultation ongoing to which I responded urging them to look at what has been the Sydney experience. I encourage you to respond. Brixham is a valuable industry locally but we can use the facilities far more to understand, and have explained, what's going on in our bay, channel and the northern Atlantic. We need to have far more cooperation and communication between environmental concerns and the fishing industry. <https://www.oceanwatch.org.au/support-our-whale-entanglement-mitigation-program/>

The link to the consultation is here: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/harbour-growth/>

### Government funding for flood resilience

The government has promised £46 million for 70 schemes in the south-west to help reduce risk of flooding and coastal erosion. 49 are in Devon, receiving about £35 million. It will be Axminster, Exeter, Paignton and powderham. However it's a relatively small amount in the scheme of the damage occurring including in the significant rain and floods earlier this year. For us in Torbay, the work on the flood defence scheme in Paignton is fundamental as it is the area of greatest vulnerability in Torbay. The story is here <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgzdglw284o>

### Torbay Marine EcoFest: 18<sup>th</sup> July

Many will remember our very successful EcoFest in November 2023. We are strongly considering holding a similar event on the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> 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: 21<sup>st</sup> November

Please note this will now take place at St Matthias on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> 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. When I am back, I will follow up to see how I can make sure that I have a web link for this newsletter because they do excellent work.

### 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 march newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/33e505f95dd7/pcga-eneews-mid-march-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, not least as it is not easy working off one screen, 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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