

CHESTER WORLD DEVELOPMENT FORUM REPORT ON ACTIVITIES MAY 2018 TO APRIL 2019



CWDF continues to be very committed to the worldwide ending of poverty and hunger, within the context of respect for the earth and sustainable development: and we do our best to encourage and take part in local action to help achieve these goals. It seems to get more challenging with such a range of activities to be covered: Climate Change is paramount but other aspects such as poverty, education, and health and all other areas of the Sustainable Development Goals are so important.

Another year has passed and we have sought to keep these goals in mind in our programme and in the key issues we seek to pursue: we have particularly focussed on climate change and allied issues such as fracking and sustainability and how we treat natural resources. But this year we have celebrated 25 years since CWDF began. We had a Celebration at Hoole Community Centre in June when we



reflected on what we had achieved over the past 25 years. It was a really good evening when we were joined by our present and previous MP. The big challenge now is how we can ensure a sustainable future in a quite different world, but which still has the key issues which we were founded to confront. A difficulty we have is a membership getting older and a difficulty to recruit new members, especially younger members.

We have sought to keep abreast of key issues in world development and members are involved in a variety of groups and activities involved with world development including Fairtrade. But the world in which we live in the UK has been overwhelmed by BREXIT with difficulty in bringing the key issues we are involved in to the fore. But these past few months Climate Change has hit the headlines through young people striking and major protests in London and some other cities.

Regular Meetings through the Year

The meeting in May 2018 was our AGM when we reflected on the past year and appointed officers and members of the Committee. This was preceded by a talk by Gill Miller, 'Does Aid Work - and could it do better?'

In July the presentation given at the 25th Anniversary event in June was shown again and we had a really good discussion on the future of CWDF. We were also given information about a plan for Chester to become a 'City of Sanctuary'.

In August 2018 we supported MuCAARD when Romy & Linda Tioncgo gave us an update on their work in the Philippines: as always this was a delightful and most informative evening by two special friends of CWDF.

In September **Stephen Maund** gave us the latest news of his development project in Malawi underpinned by a micro loan system. It was most encouraging to see how this project was now operating and the benefit to local people.



In November **Anthony McCarthy**, who works with the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, told us about an ongoing project 'Classrooms in the Clouds' which involved fund raising and visits to Nepal taking a team of Fire Cadets to help with the building of schools. This is such a significant project to provide

schools in village areas where there were no schools or very inadequate schools.

In January 2019 **Helen Tandy** gave a very challenging talk on 'Ethical Investment/Divestment'. She said that it was most important to know where our money was being invested through banks and portfolios because this was so important in the world economy. It was so important that our investments reflected our values,

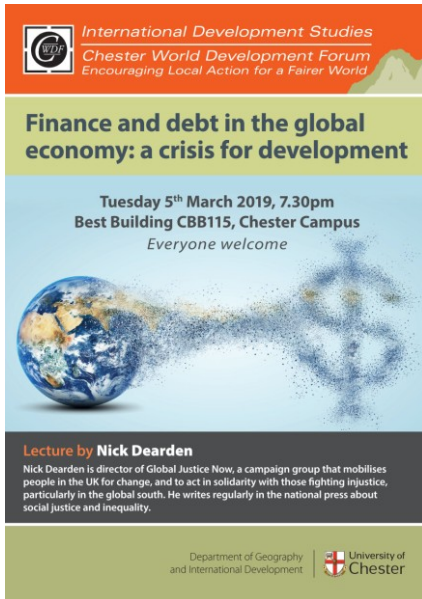
In February we hosted a special evening when **Catherine Green** told us about her visit to the UN COP 24 Climate Conference as part of a CAFOD Delegation. She gave a most informative session about her CAFOD trip; a full background to Climate Change; what COP is and what it covers - Mitigation, Adaptation, Reporting and Finance; the International Panel on Climate Change report and what we can/should do. There were also contributions from Helen Tandy, Chester Friends of the Earth and Colin Watson, Chester Sustainability Forum.

In March 2019 we had a stall at the International Women's Day event in Chester Town Hall. It was good to meet other stallholders and a variety of visitors and to share with them about CWDF.

Also in March we had an Open Session on Climate Change. This was preceded by a talk by **Jude Law**, Christian Aid, on their 'Big Shift Initiative' which we supported by taking petitions to HSBC in Chester and Ellesmere Port. CWDF had decided that we should focus on Climate Change in 2019 and this was an opportunity to recap on the present position and to obtain views on members about how we should move forward. We were keen to support initiatives already underway through



other organisations and to facilitate other events and projects, particularly to get a wider understanding of Climate Change amongst all people living in Chester



Our links with International Development Studies, Chester University are still most important to us and a joint evening was held in March when **Nick Dearden**, Director of Global Justice Now, gave a most informative talk on "Finance & Debt in the Global Economy", exploring its implications for Aid.

Our website is still an important communications outlet with full details of all our events. We regularly communicate with members by email giving them updated information of our events and events of partnered organisations through the Diary and minutes of meetings and details of talks at meetings. The Diary is highly regarded by members and member

organisations. Using email, we have been successful in reducing the number of copies we post to members as this reduces costs, and email gets information more quickly to members.

Members have attended events on refugees, evenings at Quaker Meeting House on 'Hope and Fear in International Politics' and on the need for a new economic approach, and we are members of the Chester Sustainability Forum.

Our finances are mainly needed to pay for room hire for our regular meetings at the Unity Centre plus fairly low administrative costs. This has meant that we have been able to give donations to the Capacity Foundation, the DEC Appeal for the Indonesian Tsunami, MuCAARD and Global Justice Now. Again we did not increase subscriptions.

But it is so important that we continue to have a very positive focus for action, individually, and as a Forum and through campaigning groups on climate change, for achieving sustainable development goals, maintaining the overseas aid commitment, and a compassionate approach to refugees.

*Terry Green
CWDF Chair
May 2018*

CWDF Participating Groups:

Amnesty International Chester & Wrexham Group, And Albert, Cheshire Asian & Minority Communities Council, Chester Bahai's, Chester CAFOD Support Group, Chester Christian Aid Committee, Chester CND, Chester Fair Trading, Chester Friends of Palestine, Chester Muslim Association, Chester Quaker Meeting, Holy Trinity Church Blacon One World Group, Our Lady's Justice & Peace Group, St Columba's Third World Group, University of Chester Dept of Geography & International Development, Wesley Church Centre.

www.chesterwdf.org.uk