

# **Community and Global**

Becoming an active Eco Synagogue means so much more than looking after buildings in an environmentally-friendly way. It affects how we engage with each other, within our community, and with the wider world.

Although words - sermons, teaching, writing and debating - are important, people will respond more to our actions, such clearing waste from near a railway station and planting a community wildlife-friendly garden there.

## **Involving the community**

The more you engage others in your community, the greater your impact will be. Engaging your community requires you to be creative - think about putting on a film-night; an up-cycling furniture or clothes workshop; a local clean-up. Once you have created enjoyable ways for people to engage environmentally, it is easier to think as a community about what you want to achieve. Top tips:

- Listen to your community members and observe what they are already doing.
- Propose an activity that you know will interest your members.
- Share personal stories about members' eco-journeys as part of your engagement.
- Make the big issues accessible - based on what you are learning about each other and about the community's readiness to take on its environmental responsibility.
- Aim to create something together - a project or an experience - that makes a visible difference.
- Show how the project/experience can be part of a bigger vision.
- PLAN for that vision, involving others in the right way - each encouraged to play to their strengths.
- Evaluate what you are already doing well - e.g., is your building insulated; are your energy-sources renewable; are you reducing your community's food-miles? - and what else you could be doing to make your buildings, land, use of money, waste and travel more sustainable.
- Get involved in local, national and international campaigns and protests.

## **Raising awareness**

A regular newsletter is a great way of letting people know what is going on within the community, locally and nationally and how they can get involved. It can also be a place where people share their reactions to the latest climate or environmental 'news' - how they feel about it and what they feel inspired to do as a result.

It can also be used to promote lifestyle tips and advice for individuals (see Lifestyle resource). From experience, people tend to engage more in community/global responses to environmental matters when they are comfortable doing so at home, so it is important to resource them at all levels.

If you have popular or well-known community members who are happy to play the role of 'Green Champion,' they can also use their own channels to engage people on environmental topics - from the personal to the global - and to signpost campaigns and activities that they can get involved in.

## **Be the change you want to see**

When putting on events, including the Shabbat Kiddush, try to make sure that you are 'practicing what you preach' by using as much local, organic and animal-friendly (LOAF) produce as you can. Think about how you can reduce the amount of waste going to landfill (see the Eco Synagogue campaign to reduce plastic waste).

## **Put on environment awareness-raising events (film screenings, talks etc.)**

We have found that people welcome the opportunity to learn about environmental subjects but that they elicit complex and emotional responses as we grapple with science and economics as well our values and beliefs. We also recognise that we don't all agree on the problem or the way we should respond. There are lots of ways to deepen understanding and discussion.

Examples of events you could run include film evenings, bring a dish events and discussion groups (using only locally sourced, seasonal and organic ingredients?)

### **Ideas for discussions/talks:**

- [Jewcology have an events page with events in the UK, which could inspire more events in your community](#)
- MORE TO COME....

### **Films:**

Films that explain the problem:

- *An Inconvenient Truth*. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. United International Pictures, 2006. A documentary film about former US Vice President Al Gore's campaign to educate citizens about global warming via a slide show.
- *The Age of Stupid*. Dir./writer Franny Armstrong. Spanner Films/Passion Pictures, 2009. A dramadocumentary-animation hybrid which stars the late Pete Postlethwaite as a man living alone in the devastated world of 2055, watching archive footage from the mid-to-late 2000s and asking "Why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?"
- *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream*. Dir./writer Gregory Greene. Electric Wallpaper Co., 2005. This film discusses the dwindling supply of cheap energy in the form of fossil fuels and its effects on society.

- *WALL-E*. Dir. Andrew Stanton. Disney/Pixar, 2008. This animation film takes place after mass consumerism on earth, led by a mega-corporation, Buy n Large, has left the planet covered in rubbish.
- MORE TO COME....

Films that create inspiration for solutions:

- *Beyond the Tipping Point?* Dir./prod. Dr Stefan Skrimshire, 2010. A documentary film about climate, action and the future. See [www.beyondthetippingpoint.com](http://www.beyondthetippingpoint.com)
- *Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in challenging times*. Swarthmore Lecture 2011, Pam Lunn. A recording of the 2011 Swarthmore Lecture plus accompanying slides. Available from the Quaker Centre, Friends House.
- *In Transition 1.0*. A film about the Transition movement, created using footage contributed by Transition Initiatives from around the world. Work on the follow-up, *In Transition 2.0*, is now under way. See [www.transitionnetwork.org/transition-movie](http://www.transitionnetwork.org/transition-movie)
- *Just Do It: A Tale of Modern-day Outlaws*. Dir. Emily James. Left Field Films, 2011. This film claims to lift the lid on climate activism and the daring troublemakers who have crossed the line to become modern-day outlaws. See [www.justdoitfilm.com](http://www.justdoitfilm.com)
- *The Economics of Happiness*. Dir./writer Helena Norberg-Hodge, Steven Gorelick, John Page. International Society for Ecology & Culture (ISEC), 2011. This documentary is about the worldwide movement for economic localisation. See [www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org](http://www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org)
- *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*. Dir. Faith Morgan. The Community Solution, 2006. The film seeks to educate audiences about peak oil and the impact it will have on transportation, agriculture, medicine and other industries. Cubans share how they transitioned from a highly mechanised, industrial agricultural system to one using organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. See [www.powerofcommunity.org/cm/index.php](http://www.powerofcommunity.org/cm/index.php)
- MORE TO COME....

Films that reawaken our connections to the earth:

- *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition & Gaia*. A documentary film written and presented by Dr Stephan Harding. It is an emotional and scientific journey that explores the complexities of our relationship with the Earth, and contains interviews with leading thinkers in the field of ecological awareness. See [www.animateearth.com](http://www.animateearth.com)
- *Home*. Dir. Yann Arthus-Bertrand. Prod. Denis Carot & Luc Besson, 2009. This documentary film uses striking aerial footage from around the world to highlight the diversity and fragile balance of life on Earth. See [www.homethemovie.org](http://www.homethemovie.org)
- MORE TO COME...

**Create opportunities for people to engage with politicians and campaigns**

Such activity may start with meeting your local Member of Parliament (MP), Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) or Member of the Welsh Assembly. If our communities are essential vehicles for our discernment they may be no less relevant to our political activity. One starting point might be to invite your MP to visit your synagogue and having an informal conversation with him or her over kiddush.

Meeting an MP in your synagogue illustrates a collaborative way of working as it is likely to be easier to explore problems together in this context. You can then follow up with more direct questions.

- [‘Toolkit for Action’](#) from Quakers in Britain
  - [Tips for how to engage local MP](#)
  - [Quaker guide for engaging local MPs](#)

Various campaigns that communities could take part in:

- [1010](#)
  - “We run positive, practical projects focused on tackling climate change at the community level, and turn these local actions into a force for bigger changes.”
- [The Transition Network:](#)
  - Transition is a movement that has been growing since 2005. It is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, they are able to crowd-source solutions. They seek to nurture a caring culture, one focused on supporting each other, both as groups or as wider communities.
  - In practice, they are reclaiming the economy, sparking entrepreneurship, reimagining work, reskilling themselves and weaving webs of connection and support. It’s an approach that has spread now to over 50 countries, in thousands of groups: in towns, villages, cities, Universities, schools. One of the key ways it spreads is through telling inspiring stories, and that’s what we aim to do on this website. We really hope you feel inspired to take part, we’d be honoured if you did.  
[Find a network nearby](#) or [start a new one](#)
- [Green Faith:](#)
  - “GreenFaith is an interfaith coalition for the environment that works with houses of worship, religious schools, and people of all faiths to help them become better environmental stewards.
  - We believe in addressing environmental issues holistically, and are committed to being a one-stop shop for the resources and tools religious institutions need to engage environmental issues and become religious-environmental leaders.”
- [Living The Change](#) (American org)
  - <https://livingthechange.net/time-for-living-the-change> which is useful campaigning tool to join other groups, resources for local events, media toolkits, ideas of things to do and networks to connect to

## **Events for local people to enjoy local area and environment**

Things you can do to encourage local people to connect more with nature:

- [Encourage young people to play outside](#), or [use some of these nature activities for kids and families](#)
- Gardening projects through the synagogue. *Check out the 'Land Management' section in the Land resource (5)*. Or try out 'wildlife gardening'? [Gardeners' World magazine have put together a whole range of projects you can do](#). Encourage birds, animals and pollinating insects to visit your garden, with the help of their wildlife-themed projects and practical videos.
- [Use these resources to connect to nature](#)

## **'Greening' peoples' interactions with your synagogue**

- Put on a green fairs or farmers' markets
- Set up car-sharing schemes, encouraging cycling
- Minimising resource use and encouraging members to do the same (training in reducing energy, notices about turning off lights, displays, events)