

ACTION AREA:

Speaking out



In this Action Area, we stand up and take action with others. We engage with those in power and we share our vision for a fairer, more sustainable world.

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.

Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

(Proverbs 31:8-9)

Start a conversation

There are lots of ways we can build a fairer world for everyone – through prayer, protest, education and engaging with those in power. Think of something that has changed for the better in your local community or in the wider world. What did people do – individually and/or collectively – to make change happen?

1. Influencing others

In 2017 there were some 50,500 churches in the UK. Are we stewarding our resources for the good of our communities and all of God's creation? Add up the assets of our institutions, plus the resources of individual Christians, and we can have a huge impact. If you are taking action locally to connect faith and finance, how could you encourage the wider church to act too?

Resources and ideas for action

- Find out more about your denomination's ethical investment policy. Could you help develop this further?
- At regional and national gatherings are people considering ethical issues in relation to catering, single-use plastics and food waste?

- Join or start a group in your Diocese, Synod, Circuit or District to work towards an **Eco Church denominational award**.
- Become a **Bright Now Champion** with Operation Noah's campaign for fossil free churches.

Did you know? In May 2020, 42 faith institutions from 14 countries, including 21 from the UK, announced their divestment from fossil fuels. This was the largest-ever joint announcement of divestment from fossil fuels from faith institutions. It came from institutions with over £1.1 billion in assets under management. **Find out more here**.

2. Local councillors and MPs

Engaging with your representatives is essential if you want them to take seriously the challenge to shape a fairer, more sustainable world. They need to hear from their local constituents and that includes the voices of faith groups. Share your concerns and your hopes with them.

Resources and ideas for action

- Involve your representatives in the issues you are passionate about e.g. plastic recycling, food waste or a Living Wage campaign. Invite them to events or go and talk to them as a group.
- Ask your local council to divest its pension fund from fossil fuel investments. **Look for a campaign group near you**.
- If you haven't met with your MP before, don't be afraid! **Hope for the Future** can help you feel more confident, specifically when talking about climate change.

3. Local justice issues

What are the main concerns around economic injustice and financial exclusion in your

local community? Are you involved in debt advice, responding to food poverty or dealing with housing issues?

Resources and ideas for action

- Check out the [Cash Smart Credit Savvy](#) programme from the Just Finance Foundation.
- Join the [Citizens UK Living Wage campaign](#).
- Learn about [Self-Reliant Groups](#) (SRGs), the [‘Your Local Pantry’](#) network, and food waste redistribution schemes.
- [Green Pastures](#) connects churches and investors to tackle homelessness.

Sharing stories: Knaphill Community Fridge

In the UK, we throw away almost 15 million tonnes of food and drink every year! The Knaphill Community Fridge was launched by Holy Trinity Church with St Saviours in Knaphill & Brookwood, Surrey, as a response to this. Residents are encouraged to leave their surplus food in the fridge for others to take. The fridge volunteers also collect surplus food from local supermarkets to help stock the fridge. In the year since opening, they have saved 22.4 tonnes of food from landfill! The fridge is also meeting real need in the community. As the Covid-19 crisis struck, the fridge project responded by delivering food parcels to the vulnerable. The Knaphill Community Fridge is one of over 80 community fridges in the country and part of a larger network, overseen by charity, Hubbub.

4. Wider world

This is a chance to take a wider view and act alongside our neighbours around the world. We are more connected than we think. The decisions we make with money can be harmful to people we will never meet. What are we doing to stand alongside communities facing poverty and injustice?

Resources and ideas for action

- Get campaigning with Church Action for Tax Justice, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Church Action on Poverty, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund and many others.
- Does your church have a connection with a particular part of the world? How do issues like forced labour, land grabs and climate change affect communities there? How could you speak out with them for justice?
- Support organisations like the [London Mining Network](#) who monitor human rights abuses and stand alongside mining-affected communities around the world.

5. Speaking to businesses

This has been a key part of ECCR’s work over the years. As churches you can influence the behaviour of businesses. You can go right to the ‘top’ through shareholder action or writing to a company, or you could build a relationship with a local business and help them shape the world for the better.

Resources and ideas for action

- Become an [AGM Activist](#) with ShareAction. Ask powerful questions to challenge the bosses of the world’s largest companies on the issues that matter to everyone.
- Almost all of the UK’s major supermarkets have signed the [UK Plastics Pact](#) to reduce plastic waste. Contact supermarkets near your church and find out if they are on track to meet their targets.
- Encourage businesses to implement a climate emergency plan through the network [Business Declares](#).
- Be inspired by [this story](#) of church engagement in the Living Wage Campaign which has seen more and more businesses paying their employees a fairer wage.

