

## For Moseley Society Newsletter

### How can we contribute to tackling the Climate Crisis?

As COP26 approaches and the frequency of extreme weather events appears to be increasing, the importance of tackling climate change must return to centre stage. For Birmingham, the City Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' in June 2019 and set out a commitment to become a net zero carbon (i.e. where carbon emissions, principally carbon dioxide, are balanced by emissions taken out of the atmosphere, *aka* carbon neutral) city by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter. This was even more ambitious than the UK Government's commitment, enshrined in law, to make the UK carbon neutral by 2050. Both targets are seen by most experts to be very challenging, given the relative lack of progress achieved to date.

In Birmingham, attempting to achieve the target set will have enormous implications for homeowners, given that residential buildings are estimated to account for 34% of City wide emissions. In the *Route to Zero Action Plan*, published by BCC in December 2020, the Council recognises that the retrofit (in terms of emission-reducing materials and systems) of private sector homes will be essential to achieving net zero carbon, but there is currently a major lack of funding to assist homeowners in carrying out this task. Conservative estimates put the cost of retrofitting an existing house at £40k and it could be as high as £60k, although it is rarely made clear what this would actually involve. So this begs the question – what can we do as individuals and as a community to try and address this challenge and help preserve the planet as we know it for our grandchildren and future generations? A starting point may be to set up or join a community group which focusses directly on zero carbon initiatives and how they can be funded and provides a source of information, advice and support – a local hub to share experiences and best practice. While most of the existing local community groups are concerned with some of the environmental issues which may contribute to small reductions in emissions, none focus on the major changes required in housing and transport to achieve net zero.

There are existing groups which could be joined – such as *Balsall Heath Is Our Planet (BHIOP)* [www.balsallheathisourplanet.wordpress.com](http://www.balsallheathisourplanet.wordpress.com) and regional organisations that are valuable sources of information and support – such as *BioRegional's One Planet Living* [www.bioregional.com/about-us](http://www.bioregional.com/about-us) and *Community Energy Birmingham* [www.communityenergybirmingham.coop](http://www.communityenergybirmingham.coop) and of course our local eco-house [www.zerocarbonhousebirmingham.org.uk](http://www.zerocarbonhousebirmingham.org.uk), which demonstrates how an old house can be converted to a zero carbon home, but perhaps a Moseley-based group would provide an effective local hub, while engaging with these other regional organisations.

If you have any views on any of these approaches, please provide feedback through the Society or directly to [trevorhocking2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trevorhocking2@yahoo.co.uk). Whichever way we, as individuals or a community, move this forward, the most important message today is that we have to accelerate action to combat the Climate Crisis NOW!