

7 – Administration Motion for Debate - regarding the Climate emergency – Amendment

Proposer: Cllr Rabina Khan
Seconder: Cllr Andrew Wood

To be added to the existing text:

The Council Notes:

- Friends of the Earth claims that the environment movement is “still overwhelmingly white and middle-class. It further states that we need a “diverse range of voices to solve global problems and achieve social justice.”
- In January 2020 in Davos, Switzerland, Ugandan climate activist, Vanessa Nakate, posed for a photo with Greta Thunberg and three other white climate campaigners. However, when Vanessa subsequently “struggled to find photos” that included her, she discovered that the Associated Press news agency had cropped her out of the image with Greta and that none of her comments from the press conference were included.
- Theo Cullen-Mouze, an Irish climate activist was appalled that Africa is “deliberately removed from the picture. He said: “Africa has contributed the least [carbon emissions] but will suffer the most from climate breakdown.”
- The Archdeacon of Croydon, the Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallet, is a leading figure within the Church of England on climate change. Her aim is to give a voice to those who are keen to bring about change, but fear the repercussions of doing so. During Extinction Rebellion protests for example, people from BAME backgrounds fear being targeted by the police in a less favourable way than white protesters.
- When Lucy Craig, a 73-year-old white activist was asked whether she thought that being a middle-class, well off white woman helped her within the protest, she said: “Absolutely. Everything is fuelled by white privilege.”

The Council Believes:

- Despite the fact that BAME people have been involved in climate activism for decades, their views and efforts seem to be excluded from debates. International climate lawyer, Farhana Yamin, for example, was a lead proponent of the net zero emissions by 2050 goal in the Paris Agreements. She was tired of the promises made by the carbon emission trading system. “I wanted to think bolder and bigger – no more mucking around with carbon budgets. These gases are toxic. We shouldn’t create trading systems for toxic pollutants.”
- Although people from BAME backgrounds have been invisible in the climate debate and protests, they are disproportionately affected by air pollution, not least because areas of London with the highest levels of pollution are occupied by a large BAME population. Most people will recall the tragic case of Ella Kissi-Debrah, the 9-year-old whose mother believes that her daughter’s fatal asthma attack was linked to illegal levels of pollution.
- In August 2020, Anjali Raman-Middleton set up the pollution advocacy group Choked Up with three other students. Anjali had attended the same primary school as Ella.

The Council Resolves:

- The council proposes a programme called Tower Hamlets Diversity in Climate Change Engagement to deliver effective engagement with all communities, particularly the hard-to-reach communities and people from Black, Asian, Minority and diverse communities, people with access and mobility requirements.
- To engage with organisations such as Climate Reframe, which amplifies diverse voices in the UK Environmental Movement, and Choked Up.
- The programme also works with faith communities to look at how faith and climate change can work together. During Ramadan, for example, families and communities come together to celebrate and help each other. Muslims deliver food packages to the needy and recognise the importance of never wasting food, which in turn benefits the environment.
- That the council actively seeks climate change campaigners from Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority, Diverse and disabled backgrounds to speak at climate change events and become involved in the third sector, thereby empowering other marginalised communities to participate and make a valuable contribution to tackling climate change.