

*Bridget Wilkins, Watford Meeting and Berkhamsted Meeting, one of the participants, writes:*

What a positive event! I had anticipated that a Gathering on sustainability and climate change might be really depressing. Previous Quaker and Transition Town events had dragged me down with doom and gloom, but unexpectedly this one left me feeling really excited and ready to go.

Friends had got ideas of things they could do, and some they had already done. There were smiles on faces and a fair amount of laughter.

With over 100 Friends there were offerings of support and acceptance and we were given a sense of belonging. We need to be a community to achieve sustainability, and we have the potential to develop this in a strong way.

The emphasis on storytelling mattered, from the grandchild who, after a visit to an aquarium, came home saying she was going to be a veggie to another grandchild who, on the phone to a Friend at the Gathering, had asked her 'how is the planet?'

We discovered there are lots of things that we can do; and in listed buildings. Yes we can put in thermostats to control the heat and only use it when necessary, and yes we can put in secondary glazing to stop drafts and heat loss from windows to mention only two.

There were many friends there who were really active; from arriving at the gathering by bike or electric car to using an air source heat pump to generate energy; I hadn't heard of this one, but will certainly investigate further.

Paris didn't save the planet but it gave us the opportunity to do it, and we started to find out how. This particularly emphasised the special Quaker way, starting from the spiritual nature of our commitment to sustainability.

I am really glad I had the opportunity to attend this Gathering and look forward to taking many of the issues raised back to my Area and pursuing them with the support of the three other Friends from my Area who also attended the Gathering. I think other Friends might well do the same. I certainly hope so.