

Chaddesley cares about Planet Earth

I wonder how many of you will have read about the conference on Climate Change that took place in Copenhagen last month? Or will remember the messages that came out? I hope you do recall them as they were stark and frightening. Why? Because virtually every eminent speaker, including our own Lord Stern who wrote a much admired report on climate change a few years ago, was saying that they had had to revise their predictions upwards – i.e. adversely; things were far worse than they had been forecasting just a couple of years ago.

How can this be? Well, I suppose that much more study is being undertaken each year and so we are learning a lot more about what is happening and have hard fact to back up our conclusions. But I cannot help wondering if they are still wrong and are still underestimating the damage that is being wrought by climate change?

Two key points have come out at the time of writing – at least, key to me.

- The first is that the previous estimates have been considerably understated and that change is taking place far more quickly than thought.
- The second is that a reversal of climate change is a long drawn out process, and that we have already brought some undesirable change upon ourselves that we cannot now avoid, and that make take centuries – yes, centuries – to reverse.

Implications for us, right now? The main one, surely, must be that we all, each and everyone of us, must do our bit towards slowing the march to doom and disaster – that we won't have to see; it will be visited on our children and grandchildren. I have been monitoring the amount of carbon I produce from leaving, or not leaving, my computer running while I am out of the house or just doing something else. Since just before Christmas I have saved 6.8 kg of carbon units – i.e. I have polluted by that much less. Doesn't seem a lot does it? But – if we all did the same thing, day in day out, the reduction in carbon emissions would be enormous. And it is such a simple thing to do. I press a button and my computer "dies" immediately until I return (5 minutes or 2 hours later) and press another button and it wakes up exactly where it left off. But the "dead" period has been without screen or hard disc being active, and I do not have to go through the tedious start up process again.

It is simple to do, takes little effort and could produce savings (and ultimately a reduction on the electricity bill too!) We need to do the little things like that, like turning off unnecessary lights, like not running the tap while we clean teeth, and so on, as they will amount to massive savings if everyone participates, quite apart from their potential for cash savings.

I worry about the world I shall be leaving behind – I hope you do too!

Martin Kenrick

For the Working Group set up by the Parish Council