

The Stewardship of Creation Task Group

CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

With the ongoing challenge of being good stewards of God's creation, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) through its Council for Global Mission, wanted to hear from its members regarding climate change in order to gain a baseline understanding of thinking, perceptions and positions within the denomination. The Task Group leading this research were asked to take into account specific groups within PCI, including ministers, young people, and those impacted by measures taken to mitigate climate change such as farmers.

This report should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a number of important initiatives that PCI has taken to consider ways it can better look after the environment. In 2018, the General Assembly passed a resolution commending the Council for Global Mission's Stewardship of Creation Report on Climate Change. The 2018 report provided a biblical foundation to guide PCI as it approaches issues relating to the care of God's creation. It also set out seven principles of good stewardship of God's creation and stated that *'being a disciple of Jesus means to obey Him in all aspects of discipleship, including prayer, church involvement, evangelism and in care of creation.'* (GA 2018, p308, para 4f). Here is an extract from the 2018 General Assembly Report that relates to this (GA 2018, p287, para 42-45):

*42. The **Stewardship of Creation Panel**, following its interim report to the 2017 General Assembly, has developed a more comprehensive report for the 2018 General Assembly. The Panel, led by Convener, Rev John Hanson, is to be commended for their work.*

43. It is important to acknowledge that while the vast majority of scientists agree on human induced climate change, there is a significant and vocal dissenting voice. However, the Panel encourages all PCI members to be open to being challenged by this issue and to view it as an essential aspect of discipleship.

44. The Panel believes that it is important that the trust, energy and spirit of the paper communicates the need for God's love through the respect and care for God's property and highlighting love for ones neighbour, both near and far. This is especially the case for people who are vulnerable. Those in poverty are most likely to bear the brunt of adverse climate conditions.

45. Caring for God's creation and loving ones neighbours are core discipleship principles which must be reflected in Christian lifestyles. Small and incremental steps in adjusting how one lives including reducing, reusing and recycling, can make a significant difference.

Three years later, following a resolution to the 2021 General Assembly, PCI's Trustees were instructed to divest from companies that derived more than 10% of their turnover from oil and gas extraction – they have since done so. The resolution also called for engagement with companies to encourage investment in different types of renewable energy. In the same year, in the run up to the global climate change conference, COP26 in Glasgow, PCI encouraged its congregations to set aside a Sunday to focus on God's creation and humanity's responsibility to be good stewards of it.

The Task Group would like to thank all those who spent time completing the survey and for the many useful suggestions and comments. Thanks, are also due to those who conducted, and those who participated in, the focus groups and interviews. It is hoped that this report and its recommendations, will help to shape

the next steps around how PCI and its members can best engage with the issue of climate change and creation care.

METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfill its remit, the Task Group thought it important that the research methods used should be both 'wide' and 'deep'. It was agreed that a digital survey would be the most efficient way of listening to the *width* of PCI's members across the island of Ireland, regarding their thinking, perceptions and positions around climate change. Where possible support was provided to those without skills or online access. Given that the term 'climate change' can be understood in different ways, it was clearly defined from the outset to ensure participants were aware what the survey was asking them to consider:

The term "climate change" is used in this questionnaire to refer to human induced changing weather patterns, global temperature rises, and related issues including sea-level rises, species decline and forced migration.

In order to help ensure that the responses were representative of a wide range of people, and to forestall 'self-selection' and 'snowballing', the Task group identified nine congregations in urban, suburban and rural locations. These 'focused' congregations agreed to be particularly intentional in encouraging their members to complete the survey by advertising it at gathered times and midweek programmes, and through their other communication channels.

The survey was live from 20 September to 31 October 2023 and a total of 1,196 responses were submitted. 49% of respondents were female and 50% were male. One submission noted that it was a group response representing the views of 13 ladies in the over 65 age category. The survey received submissions from 209 congregations. The survey was anonymous however the Task Group accepts that responses from ministers, taken together with the identity of their congregation, reduced their anonymity. This was unavoidable as the Task Group were asked to consider the views of ministers as a group. Raw survey data has been held confidentially, accessible only to the members of the Task Group.

I think that's where the survey's been helpful because... it's started a lot of people talking more about stuff, which has been good.

As the survey mostly consisted of 'closed' questions, it was agreed that the research would benefit from additional data collection methods that allowed *deeper* interaction with smaller groups of people. Focus Group discussions were therefore carried out with farmers and young people as both groups had been identified as of particular interest within the remit of the research. Alongside this, a number of semi-structured interviews were carried out with individuals who indicated they would be happy to be involved in this way.

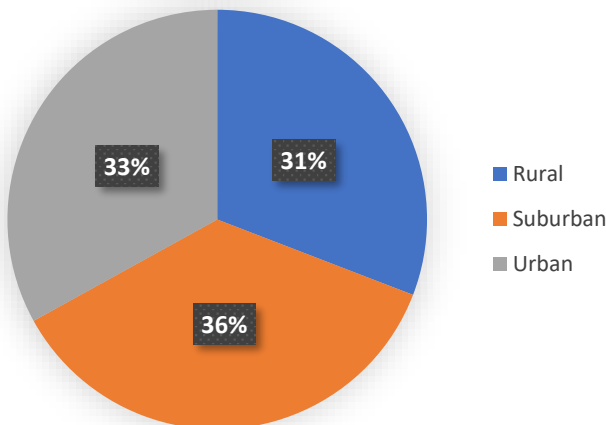
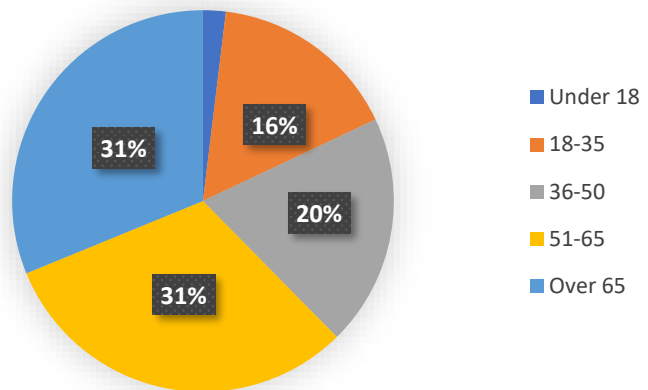
The questions for the digital survey are included in Appendix 1. and those used during the focus groups and semi-structured interviews in Appendix 2.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results are presented below following the order of the questions within the survey. The data was also filtered using demographic data such as age, gender and church role, to identify any significant differences from the data set as a whole. Where differences were identified, they are noted under the relevant question heading.

Select the age group you belong to.

2% of respondents were aged under 18, 16% were 18-35, 20% were 36-50, 31% were 51-65 and 31% were aged over 65

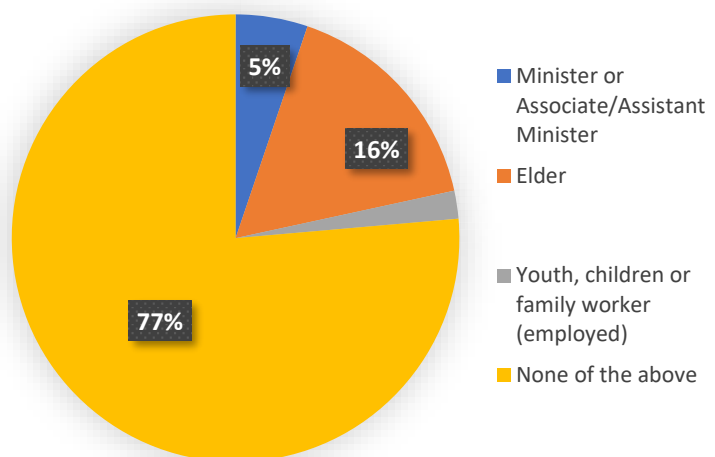


Which of the following options best describes the location of your congregation?

31% of respondents identified the location of their congregation as rural, 36% were suburban and 33% were urban.

Do you hold any of the following leadership positions in your congregation?

76% of respondents indicated that they held no leadership position within their congregation, 5% held the position of a Minister or Associate/ Assistant Minister, 17% were elders and 2% held the position of a youth, children or family worker.



If you are unconcerned, not at all concerned, or unsure about the impact of climate change, what are your main reasons for this?

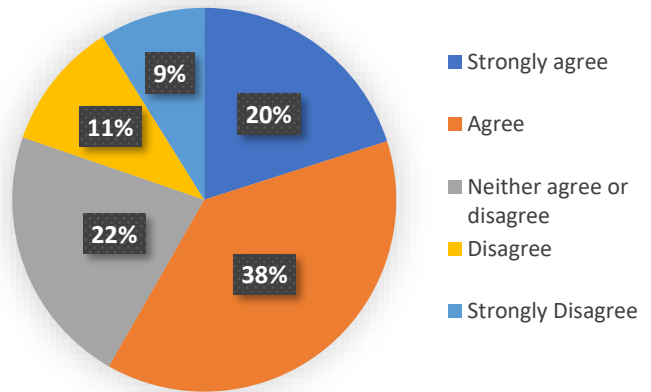
Of those who are unconcerned, not at all concerned or unsure, 35% think impacts of climate change are exaggerated, 25% have other more urgent priorities, and 10% don't know enough.

...it's easy to look at climate change and go, 'Oh, well, until China stops burning coal, there's no point in us, you know, choosing to walk to church'.

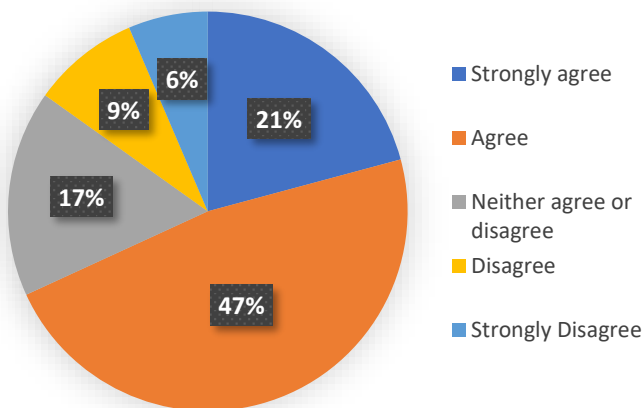
To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

- **Climate change is a threat to my health and lifestyle**

58% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that climate change is a threat to their health and lifestyle, 22% said that they neither agree nor disagree and 20% of respondents said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



...there's been more flooding locally, and more people connected with it here, either members or people who know people who've been affected by flooding...

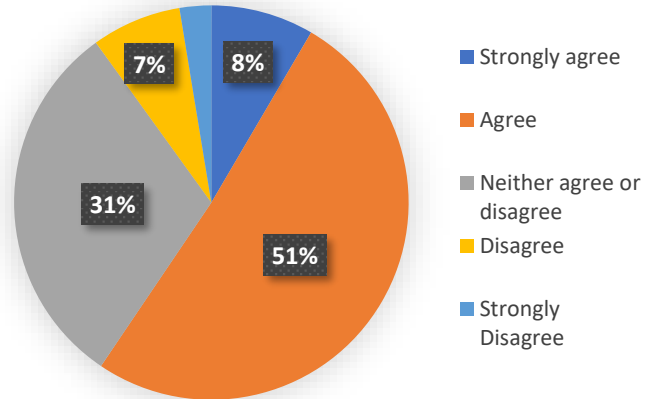


- **My actions contribute to climate change**

68% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that their actions contribute to climate change, 17% said that they neither agree nor disagree and 15% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.

- **I know what actions to take to address climate change**

59% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that they know what actions to take to address climate change, 31% said that they neither agree or disagree, 10% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



Which of the following concerns you most about the impact of climate change?

The most popular choices when asked about what concerns individuals most about the impact of climate change were impacts on future generations (25%), increase in global inequality and poverty (20%) and more extreme weather events (19%).

And probably people have started to realise, as I said before, that it's not just down to, you know, big corporations and big countries to do stuff...

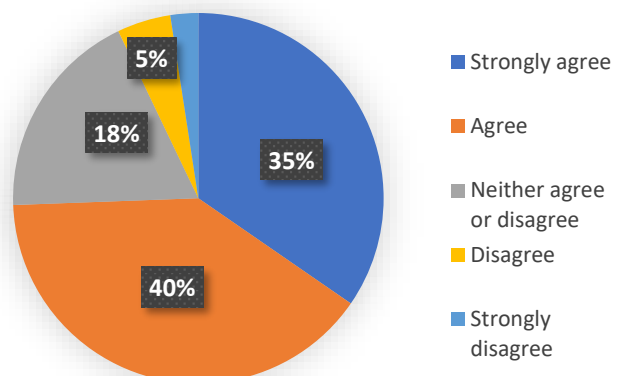
Who do you believe has most responsibility for addressing climate change?

The most popular choices when asked who has the most responsibility for addressing climate change were governments, businesses/ industry, and churches.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

- **My understanding of biblical faith underpins my concern for the environment**

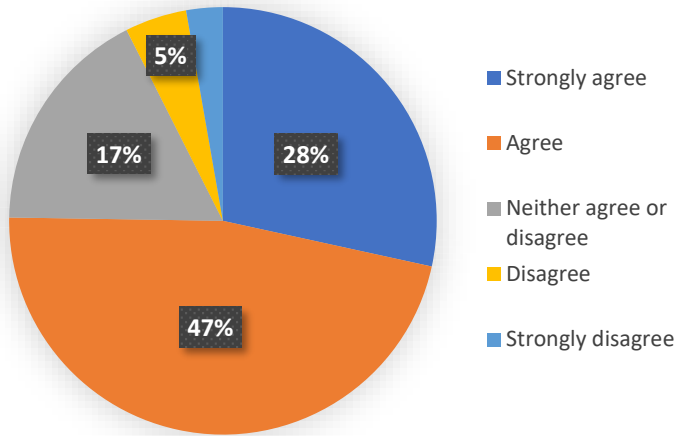
75% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that their understanding of biblical faith underpins their concern for the environment, 18% said that they neither agree or disagree and 7% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



The following demographical differences were noted:

- For those **aged under 35**, 69% said they strongly agree or agree, 22% neither agree or disagree and 9% disagree or strongly disagree.
- For those in **leadership positions**, 83% said they strongly agree or agree, 10% neither agree or disagree and 6% disagree or strongly disagree.

- For **rural respondents**, 70% said they strongly agree or agree, 20% neither agree or disagree and 10% disagree or strongly disagree
- For **farming/agriculture respondents**, 66% said they strongly agree or agree, 23% neither agree or disagree and 12% disagree or strongly disagree

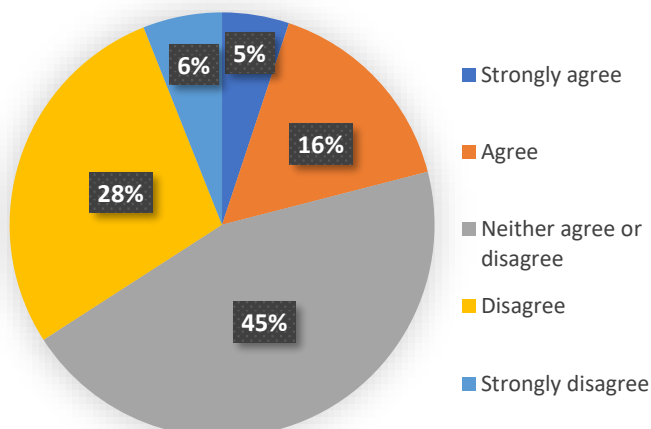
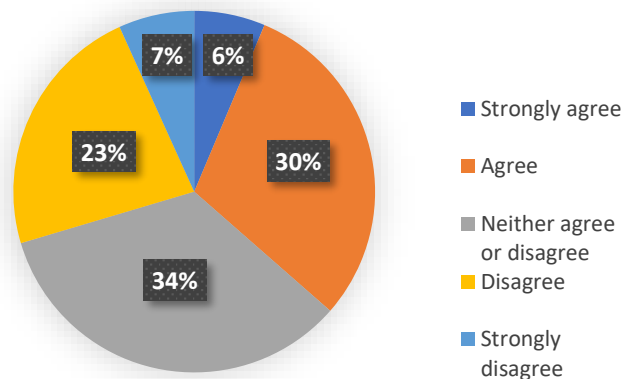


- **Making environmentally sustainable life choices is part of my Christian life**

75% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that making environmentally sustainable life choices is part of their Christian life, 17% said they neither agree or disagree and 8% said they disagree or strongly disagree,

- **Creation care is regularly taught in my church**

36% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that creation care is regularly taught in their church, 34% said that they neither agree or disagree and 30% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



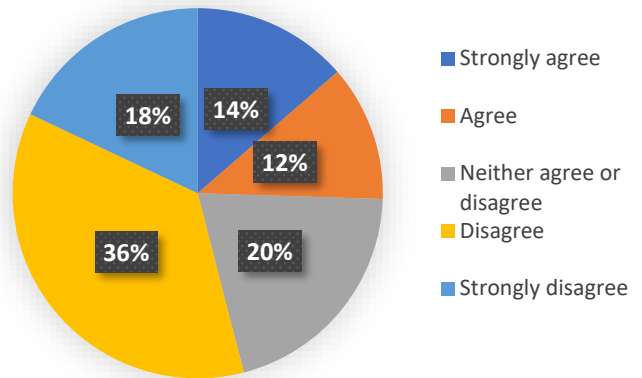
- **My church family is doing enough to address climate change**

21% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that their church family is doing enough to address climate change, 45% said that they neither agree or disagree and 34% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.

Probably in our church there was a bit of an attitude of, you know, really, 'Us changing something isn't really going to make a difference, so let's just not bother'

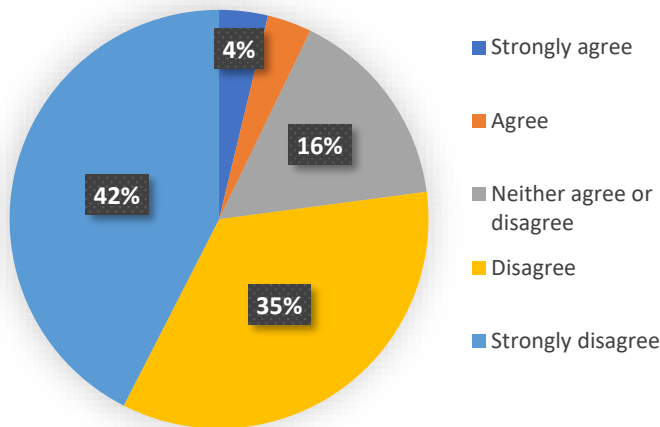
- **A focus on climate change within the church is a distraction from evangelism**

26% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that a focus on climate change within the church is a distraction from evangelism, 20% said they neither agree or disagree and 54% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



- **There is no point taking action on climate change because the earth will be destroyed in the final judgement**

7% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree that there is no point taking action on climate change because the earth will be destroyed in the final judgement, 16% said they neither agree or disagree, and 77% said that they disagree or strongly disagree.



Does your church encourage you to:

The most frequently reported actions that the church encourages members to take are: living out our faith in ways that care for the environment (21%), reducing waste at church (21%) and understanding a Biblical basis for creation care (20%).

What holds you back, as an individual, from doing more to address climate change?

People reported that the main things that hold individuals back from doing more to address climate change are: not knowing what action to take (28%), the financial cost of making changes (27%), and a lack of time (15%).

What holds your congregation back from doing more to address climate change?

People reported that the main things that hold congregations back from doing more to address climate change are: not knowing what action to take (17%), lack of concern among the congregation (16%), and lack of awareness among the congregation (14%).

Do you, or anyone in your household, work in a field that is likely to be strongly impacted by climate change?

24% reported that they, or someone in their household, work in a field that is likely to be strongly impacted by climate change. These included: farming/agriculture 14%, construction, 4%, energy 3%, and travel 2%.

But there's a lot of attitudes in the construction industry... that are wrong... 'Sure this won't make a difference in my lifetime, so let's just work away'.

Help to shatter the illusion that farmers are opposed to fixing climate

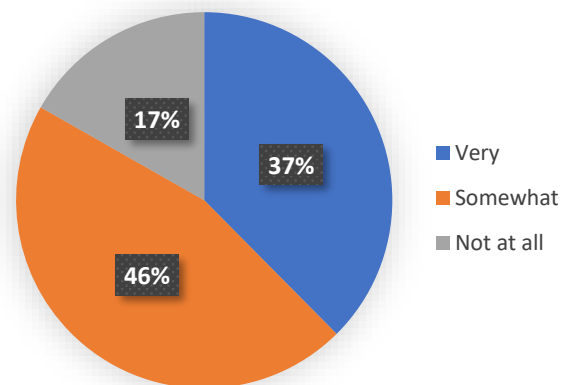
If you are likely to be impacted by measures to address climate change:

• How concerned are you about this?

Of those working in a field that is likely to be strongly impacted by climate change, 38% of respondents said they were very concerned, 46% were somewhat concerned and 17% were not at all concerned.

The following demographical differences were noted:

- For **under 35's**, 45% are very concerned, 41% somewhat concerned and 14% not at all concerned.
- For **farming/agriculture respondents**, 38% are very concerned, 48% somewhat concerned and 14% not at all concerned.

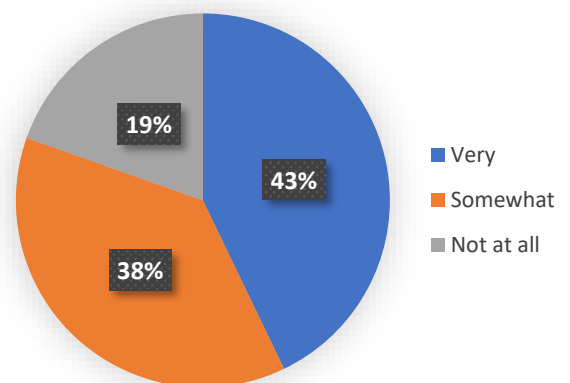


• How supportive are you of these measures?

Of those working in a field that is likely to be strongly impacted by climate change, 81% of respondents said that very or somewhat supportive, and 19% said that they were not at all supportive of measures to address climate change.

The following demographical differences were noted:

- For **under 35's**, 68% are very or somewhat and 32% are not at all supportive.
- For **farming/agriculture respondents**, 83% are very or somewhat supportive and 18% are not at all supportive.



We need the church to support farmers to do what they wish, which is to care for the world.

Are people morally happy with what they are paying for goods – the real cost of the exploitation of land and goods?

SUGGESTIONS & COMMENTS SUMMARY

A large number of respondents (263) put forward suggestions for action at individual, congregational, presbytery and denominational levels. These ranged from reducing, recycling, repurposing or reusing resources to engaging with government. Various ideas for energy use, conservation and generation were put forward, as well as suggestions for reducing polluting road and air travel. Ways of using church-owned buildings and land in more eco-friendly and sustainable ways were put forward.

Respondents proposed changes to shopping habits such as buying more second-hand, eco-friendly and Fairtrade products; demanding the use of less plastic packaging; and exchanging rather than buying goods (school uniforms, for example). Some advocated eating local, seasonal and homegrown food and, more controversially, less meat. Individuals also recommended negotiating discounts on bulk purchases of both food and energy. Further suggestions included avoiding investment in fossil fuels, and using eco-friendly office supplies and internet servers. Encouraging litter picking was a recurring theme.

A number of respondents pointed to how awareness of, and involvement in, creation care might be increased at congregational and presbytery levels: by offering training to leaders, signposting resources, appointing a “congregational champion” or “PCI resource person”, or perhaps through the formation of “eco-groups”. The formation of an “expert advisory body” was also suggested.

Suggestions were made of potentially useful resources including printed and online sources of information and helpful organisations. Respondents articulated a desire for biblical teaching relating to creation care, for help in navigating the science involved, and for sign-posting to practical action. It was suggested that information around creation care should be integrated into existing means of communication rather than ‘siloed’ within separate, additional resources.

Comments ranged from those which were appreciative of the survey and encouraged denomination-wide action, to those which questioned the balance and usefulness of the survey. While many comments expressed deep concern about anthropogenic climate change, none could be said to be alarmist. Scepticism focused primarily on theological and scientific objections: climate action was seen by some as a dangerous distraction from saving souls; others pointed to the complexity involved and questioned the scientific consensus on the causal link between climate change and human activity. A mistrust of ‘mainstream’ media was sometimes expressed and there was a reliance on online sources of information. It was striking that those who dismissed anthropogenic climate change as a conspiracy often underlined their commitment to creation care and protecting the environment. The tone of comments, although sometimes reflecting a degree of frustration, was gracious and respectful throughout.

INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS

A number of survey respondents who have family members working in fields likely to be impacted by climate change or by measures to address climate change indicated their willingness to be contacted by email. A Focus Group made up of farmers was brought together and semi-structured telephone interviews were held with individuals involved in the construction industry. Two Focus Groups were also conducted with young people. Notes from the Focus Groups are tabulated in Appendices 3, 4 & 5.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All research is limited by the resources of the research team and the Task Group recognises that its work could have been extended wider and deeper through more interviews and focus groups with different demographics. The Task Group, however, is satisfied that it has heard from a sample, that is sufficiently representative of the overall membership, and in so doing has fulfilled its remit to gain a baseline understanding of thinking, perceptions and positions around climate change within PCI.

Reflecting on the responses from the survey, interview comments and focus group discussions, it is possible draw the following conclusions about the thinking, perceptions and positions around climate change within PCI:

The majority are concerned about climate change. Slightly less concern was noted amongst those aged under 35 years old.

Most, including those who are sceptical about human-induced climate change, accept the need to care for God's creation and are making lifestyle choices that reflect this. A strong majority understand creation care to be an important part of their Christian discipleship.

A significant minority state that creation care is regularly taught in their church but fewer believe that their church family is doing enough to address climate change.

A minority believe that a focus on climate change within the church is a distraction from evangelism.

There are significant numbers within PCI who have not yet formed an opinion about climate change and the degree of human responsibility for it.

Further engagement with those aged under 35 may be helpful to better understand lower levels of concern about climate change among this age group and to help refine PCI's response for this group.

It is clear from these findings, and in particular from the numerous suggestions and comments received, that there is a need for sound biblical teaching relating to God's creation and human responsibility for its care. There is also a strong demand for well-grounded information that will generate awareness of, and involvement in, creation care at both individual and congregational levels. PCI could equip people in this regard by helping them to access, recognise and navigate scientific research that is peer-reviewed and trustworthy.

This report therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Council ensure that promotion and awareness-raising of creation care across PCI is integrated into its communication strategy.
2. That a creation care conference that offers input regarding the theological basis of creation care, and relevant scientific material, be delivered for PCI during 2025. Efforts should be made to ensure this is accessible to as many people as possible within PCI and in particular, those aged under 35 years old.
3. That physical and/or online resources for PCI be developed offering information on creation care along with signposting to existing resources.
4. That the Council engage with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness to collaborate on the following communication and resourcing for congregations:

- a. The inclusion of creation care as an aspect of discipleship within future resourcing where appropriate.
 - b. That congregational resourcing and promotion for Creation Care Sunday is reviewed and refreshed annually.
5. That the Council engage with the Council for Public Affairs and offer assistance in its role of advocating in the public square on matters related to climate change and creation care.
6. That the Council engage with the Council for Training in Ministry to offer support in developing theological training in creation care for ministers.
7. That consideration be given to creating a dedicated role for someone to promote and coordinate matters related to creation care for the denomination.

RESOLUTION

That the General Assembly receive with appreciation the Stewardship of Creation Task Group Report, note carefully its conclusions and encourage the Council to implement its recommendations.

APPENDIX 1: Survey Questions

1. Select the age group you belong to.

Under 18	18-35	36-50
51-65	Over 65	

2. Please describe your sex. *

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
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3. Please name the Presbyterian congregation you belong to?

4. Which of the following options best describes the location of your congregation?

Urban	Suburban	Rural
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5. Do you hold any of the following leadership positions in your congregation?

Minister or Associate/Assistant
Minister Elder
Youth, children or family worker
(employed) None of the above

Climate Change Survey Questions

Please note that the term “climate change” is used in this questionnaire to refer to human induced changing weather patterns, global temperature rises, and related issues including sea-level rises, species decline and forced migration.

6. Which two words from the following options best describe your attitude towards climate change?

Frustrated	Hopeful
Anxious	In two minds
Encouraged	Confused
Hopeless	Determined
Empowered	

7. How concerned are you about the impact of climate change?

Very concerned	Unsure	Not at all concerned
Concerned	Unconcerned	

8. Due to your concerns about climate change, have you made changes in any of the following areas?

Shopping e.g. buying more locally produced goods, less fast fashion
Waste e.g. reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, repurpose
Food e.g. eating less meat, choosing organic, growing your own
Travel e.g. walking more, using public transport, taking fewer flights, electric vehicles
Energy e.g. solar, turning down heating
Finance e.g. investments, pensions

- Giving e.g. donations to environmental causes or crises
- Lobbying for change e.g. signing petitions, writing to politicians
- None of the above

9. If you are unconcerned, not at all concerned, or unsure about the impact of climate change, what are your main reasons for this:

- I don't know enough about climate change
- I think there are other more urgent priorities
- I don't think climate change will impact me for a long time to come
- I think the impacts of climate change are exaggerated
- I don't think that this issue is relevant to my Christian faith
- Other

10. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Climate change is a threat to my health and lifestyle					
My actions contribute to climate change					
I know what actions to take to address climate change					

11. Which of the following concerns you most about the impact of climate change?

- Increase in global inequality and poverty
- Impacts on future generations
- People being displaced from their homes
- More extreme weather events
- Rising sea levels
- Growth in economic instability
- Decreasing air, water and soil quality
- None of the above
- Other

12. Who do you believe has most responsibility for addressing climate change?

Please rank the following

- Environmental organisations e.g., World Wildlife Fund
- Churches
- Governments
- Individuals
- International organisations e.g., United Nations
- Businesses/industry

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Strongly agree **Agree** **Neither agree or disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly disagree**

My understanding of biblical faith underpins my concern for the environment

Making environmentally sustainable life choices is part of my Christian life

Creation care is regularly taught in my church

My church family is doing enough to address climate change

A focus on climate change within the church is a distraction from evangelism

There is no point taking action on climate change because the earth will be destroyed in the final judgement

14. Does your church encourage you to:

- Understand a Biblical basis for creation care
- Live out your faith in ways that care for the environment
- Pray about climate change
- Reduce waste at church
- Walk/cycle/ use public transport to get to church
- Sign petitions/ lobby the government to make changes
- None of the above

15. What holds you back, as an individual, from doing more to address climate change?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lack of awareness | Lack of concern |
| Not knowing what action to take | Financial cost of making changes |
| Lack of time | Other |

16. What holds your congregation back from doing more to address climate change?

- Lack of awareness among the congregation
- Lack of concern among the congregation
- Lack of awareness among the church leaders
- Lack of concern among the church leaders
- Lack of Biblical teaching on climate issues
- Financial cost of making changes
- Lack of time
- Not knowing what action to take
- Other

17. Do you, or anyone in your household, work in a field that is likely to be strongly impacted by climate change?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Construction | Energy |
| Travel industry | Farming/agriculture |
| No | Other |

18. If you are likely to be impacted by measures to address climate change:

Very Somewhat Not at all

How concerned are you about this?

How supportive are you of these measures?

19. Do you have any comments or suggestions (including any resources/support that might help you or your congregation to address climate change)?

20. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

21. This survey is anonymous but if you are over 18 and willing to share more of your views on these issues, please provide your contact email address below.

APPENDIX 2: Focus Group and Interview Questions

Farmers' Focus Group

Q1 - How are you being impacted by “biodiversity loss / climate change” and the measures to address it? Are there any opportunities arising from this?

Q2 - How does your Christian faith shape the way you see and respond to the impact of “biodiversity loss / climate change”?

Q3 - How could the Presbyterian Church and your local congregation help you in responding to “biodiversity loss / climate change”?

Young People's Focus Groups

Q1 - What impact if any, is biodiversity loss/climate change having on you and your community?

Q2 - What measures do you think could be taken to address climate change/biodiversity loss?

Q3 - How do you see the wider church helping you in your response to biodiversity loss/climate change?

Construction Industry Semi-structured Interviews

Q1 - How is/are the construction industry in Ireland being impacted by “climate change” and measures to address it? Are there any opportunities arising from this?

Q2 - How does your Christian faith shape the way you see and respond to the impact of “climate change”?

Q3 - How, if at all, could the Presbyterian Church and your local congregation help you in responding to “climate change”?

APPENDIX 3: Summary of Farmer’s Focus Group

Q1 - How are <u>you</u> being impacted by “biodiversity loss / climate change” and the measures to address it? Are there any opportunities arising from this?	
Concerns	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financially – increasing costs, e.g., meal, fertilizers Removing Ash trees is costly Weather – hotter summers, followed by risk of flooding Concerns about legacy – the next generation, what are we leaving behind? What we see locally is part of global eco-system – people are moving from countries where they cannot live to our shores. The social ills that the church seeks to address have at its climate change as the cause. Church should be focusing on this Farmers require support to provide biodiversity, carbon payments and adaptation adaption subsidies <p><i>“Subsidies needed to support the farmer to look after wild life - work with nature not fight it”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The climate change crisis presents farmers with the opportunity to come into a leadership role Farmers are stewards of the land; they feel strongly that they have a duty of care to the land Farmers have been involved in adaptation for years – it’s an evolution not a revolution, things within farming will take time to change. Farmers could be more of a positive force for good - could step into a leadership role - be stewards of the land - own the duty of care Raising awareness of seasonality of food and a sense of place and value for locally produced food. Flipping the food market so that air miles are taxed so foods from overseas are more expensive than locally produced food. Taxing air miles <p><i>“We should be talking about ‘sustainability’ not biodiversity / climate change”</i> <i>“We need to sustain the farms, look after the land and be more community orientated”</i> <i>Have more advertising to buy local (cutting down air miles and exploitation of land and people in developing countries)</i></p>
Q2 - How does your Christian faith shape the way you see and respond to the impact of “biodiversity loss / climate change”?	
Frustration	Inspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration at the lack of action from the church in climate change. The church needs to be at the forefront of climate change. Remaining relevant and inspiring young people by creating a positive legacy of impact. We need the church to support farmers to do what they wish, which is to care for the world Need to see those other issues e.g., poverty, immigration, addiction, etc. are made worse by climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are stewards of God’s Creation Gleaning – giving a percentage (10%) of land back to the earth. Use of bible and prayer for guidance on what to do - the bible provides guidance that we should care for the land. <p><i>“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:9-10)</i></p>

- Identifying root cause of the issue as greed - this should be framed as a ethical and biblical issue –
- “Church attendance is down and average age up.
It needs to inspire the younger generation.”*
- “We are created to care, it is intrinsic to care, do the right thing, pray, look after the environment.”*
- “We need ‘commitment’ all round”*
- “We need to regain nature’s connection to God. Church needs to look at this moral issue - greed”*

Q3 - How could the Presbyterian Church and your local congregation help you in responding to “biodiversity loss / climate change”?

Suggestions	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church could produce educational resources on creation care • The church needs to have courage and be brave - and face the issue in public • “Churches need to have courage, be bolder, more forceful.” • Church could be a lobbying force • Educate from the pulpit on moral and ethical choices of planetary care • Education needed to overcome divisions e.g., Farmers v climate activists, farmers v public opinion • Help to shatter the illusion that farmers are opposed to fixing climate change. • Do we not all want the same thing? • Tax on air miles egg. lamb, grapes (as in New Zealand) learn to eat seasonally • Mental health problem - churches opportunity to support those farmers • The church needs to communicate better with the people <p><i>“Are people ‘morally’ happy with what they are paying for goods - ie. the real cost of the exploitation of people and land?”</i></p> <p><i>“How does the housewife shop? - looking at air miles, countries of origin, recyclable materials etc.” - education needed</i></p> <p><i>“Educate from the pulpit on moral and ethical choices of planetary care”</i></p> <p><i>“Help to shatter the illusion that farmers are opposed to fixing climate change”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches hands are tied - speaking out may be seen as political • Churches reach in local communities • Churches authority

APPENDIX 4: Summary of Young People's Focus (Group A)

This reflects the thoughts, feelings and suggestions of a group of Presbyterian young people.

Q1 - What impact if any, is biodiversity loss/climate change having on you and your community?	
Concerns	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular weather patterns kill animals • Burning fuels is bad • "Certain countries are cutting back in burning fuels others are not - this skews the playing field for trade and economy." • Is there a nuclear option? • Extreme weather conditions curb social activities & sports • Water pollution restricts sports and swimming and kills wildlife • Generally, C.C./ B.L. does not have a lot of impact on us (group) • "Some young people get upset when the situation is presented to them, especially in primary schools" • Flooding is also an issue - ref to a flat in Portstewart - wall eroded (a change in the young person's lifetime) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It is good that Planetary Care is taught in Primary school now - it wasn't when we were there."
Q2 - What measures do you think could be taken to address climate change/biodiversity loss?	
Frustrations/Needs	Inspiration/Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more funding for people directly affected by climate change & pollution - i.e., in developing countries - small islands need help • Funding from the 'causers' - manufacturers, wholesalers, oil companies, big businesses, Amazon, Google etc. • More laws to force the 'causers' to pay. • More spreading of awareness generally - more connections explained to make people understand • Use more alternatives to plastic • Alternatives should be cheaper/same price as incentives • Many people can't afford to pay for the 'alternatives' so won't use them • Some schools don't have recycling • Doing something takes away anxiety - we feel better - recognition for achieving something is also good • Church could help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut down on single use plastics - use sustainable alternatives • Use electronic gadgets until they are permanently broken, not just until there is a new model out. • Recycle everything you can -have more recycling bins on the streets • Clear the bins more regularly • Fly & drive less - use public transport more • I-phones should be made to last - not as they are now • Clothes should be made to last - avoid 'fast fashion' • Have more events, challenges & schemes to get people doing things together - school awards, pupil awards, church awards • Money incentives for recycling in schools • Get the children involved practically in recycling & energy saving • Developing good habits by practice now, will be better for the future • Take stuff to the recycling centre - get vouchers - incentives for offices to recycle

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If something doesn't work, don't be afraid to try again • Make teaching planetary care more engaging - doing something, rather than talking or watching a video. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle to work/church - doing it in groups/schemes is better - you are not alone
Q3 - How do you see the wider church helping you in your response to biodiversity loss/climate change?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Limitations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Suggestions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who to approach - and who needs to be on-board or give permission? Youth leader, SS teacher, minister • Getting the whole congregation involved? (Ban disposable cups in church, litter picks, cycle to church challenge - congregational or denominational) • Getting the whole church (PCI) involved • Young people need support (permission) to do certain things • Adults need to be involved too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray - especially in churches targeted prayer night - a specific meeting, could be part of a prayer week • Church is a good platform to spread awareness • Do different programmes - people don't know how to start • Church could be cross generational - we only reach peers in school • Events that allow chat and ideas • Eco-tips announced during service - inserted in weekly bulletin • More preaching on creation care

APPENDIX 5: Summary of Young People's Focus (Group B)

This reflects the thoughts, feelings and suggestions of a group of Presbyterian young people over the course of two meetings.

Q1 - What impact if any, is biodiversity loss/climate change having on you and your community?	
Concerns	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a negative psychological effect - an uncomfortableness • Young people are more focused on social lives and career • Sad about the lack of green spaces in Belfast. • Cutting journeys, recycling, saving energy are just more things to think about • Flooding in local river - meant someone died. • Loss of wildlife • Even more rain than normal • More houses going up in the town means less fields and greenery • Some young people said they didn't see any impact but as soon as others put ideas across, they agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the value of the green spaces around e.g., gardens & parks • Living in the city could be depressing • It is good that the council do provide roadside and other wildflower areas • Schools doing 'bug hotels' to lessen the impact • Our council has a good recycling system
Q2 - What measures do you think could be taken to address climate change/biodiversity loss?	
Frustration	Inspiration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of recycling should be better explained to the public (young people) • Remember that many people are visual learners • People need to know the connection to poverty, war & immigration • Expose the dumping of western rubbish in developing countries • People are stubborn and don't want to change - education needed • Young people don't want to think about carbon footprint • Not having a lasting legacy - negative effect • Actions need recognition • Be more positive about the language that we use. It seems to be all doom and gloom and negative which makes us feel that we can't do anything about it even if we tried. • Have harsher consequences for people who don't recycle properly or at all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to think about flying & travel as a whole. • Some biodiversity education is done in schools - but it needs to be part of school curriculum from very early age and made more practical ('journeying with' rather than 'talking at') i.e., involve pupils in school in recycling, planting & monitoring energy • Increase green spaces in built up areas such as Belfast.
Q3 - How do you see the wider church helping you in your response to biodiversity loss/climate change?	
Limitations	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Only</i> a few small natural bug hotels around the church property - that's good • Youth worker might be a good contact to initiate something • Hope for congregational support on a wildlife project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flowers could be planted • All the colour is on the inside more could be on the outside • More preaching on what the bible says about caring for the earth • More Sunday school lessons about the land and water

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling through council is expensive for congregation • Lack of encouragement for young people • More <i>'with your help we will do'</i> and less <i>'you could do this'</i> or worse <i>'you should be doing.'</i> • <i>"Have we sacrificed what's right for convenience"</i> • <i>"Churches are so 'mission' focused when financially the funds could be spent 'better'"</i> • Have recycling bins in church and ensure they are used properly. Instruction on that must come from the minister or elders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection some of what the bible says to practical care • Aim to re-create the Garden of Eden • Do more 'SPARK' activities or similar youth challenges (this has a good psychological effect) • Are there opportunities to share green spaces? • Use Eco-congregation Ireland materials • It costs churches a lot of money to recycle properly and have collections. Wider church could approach government for help with these costs for local congregations. • A sermon series about how to help environment and why we should look after it.
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