

## **Environmental Statement for the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches prepared by Reverend Mark Hutchinson**

At the 2018 Annual Meetings it was requested that the General Assembly (GA) report on their efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the Annual Meetings. Reverend Mark Hutchinson volunteered to begin what will be a sustained process over the three-year booking cycle with the Hilton Birmingham Metropole.

Scope of the Environmental Auditing Process 2019.

- 1) Establish the Hilton's global position on Environmental impact reduction.
- 2) Push Hilton to take initiatives beyond the industry norm re. plastic recycling.
- 3) Ensure there is a physical demonstration of a change of policy that is visible for all attendees.
- 4) Identify current waste and recycling performance against their own stated targets and ask to conduct an environmental audit for the hotel.
- 5) Ask clearly when the Hilton Group will achieve zero carbon.

1) Establish the Hilton's global position on Environmental impact reduction.

In response to these questions Hilton referred us to their international commitments. 'We have signed up to SBTs earlier in 2018. Information available at <https://cr.hilton.com/> which also details our commitments further.' Prior to the 2020 conference Professor Geoff Levermore has agreed to work with me to establish their likely commitment to these targets, as well as the current narrative that they may be insufficient to prevent substantive climate change.

A summary of achievements and targets is downloadable here:

<https://cr.hilton.com/environment/#energy>

In response to a request for international waste and recycling figures they were unauthorised to issue any. We will continue to ask for this information as it is paramount that multinationals apply the highest environmental standards wherever they operate, not simply meet local legal requirements.

2) Push Hilton to take initiatives beyond the industry norm re plastic recycling

The question pursued was this:

In the absence of world commitments, the Unitarian Movement invites you to commit to analysis of plastics use and wastage, both in your service provision and in the performance of your suppliers. It is by exercising our purchasing power that we can commit to quicker environmental improvement, faster than the current legislative framework is demanding. This is speed that is critical to our future relationship with this Earth. Can you evaluate such a commitment please ?

We received the following new commitment:

Regarding plastics, we have convened a multi-stakeholder taskforce to define a multi-year roadmap to further replace all avoidable single-use plastics with environmentally-friendly alternatives, and ultimately reduce our hotels' environmental footprint. Specific training resources to support this effort will be shared with our teams globally, later this year.

3) Ensure there is a physical demonstration of a change of policy that is visible for all attendees.

Following the 2018 event, the GA have negotiated for provision of reusable travel mugs from David Edwards Insurance to ensure no throwaway cups need be used. Additionally, this is a physical demonstration of the necessity of everyone changing habits. We welcome all suggestions from bedrooms, to meals and conference

facilities for how we can invite the Hilton group to take new initiatives for 2020.

Please email [reverendhutch@gmail.com](mailto:reverendhutch@gmail.com) with comments and suggestions.

4) Identify current waste and recycling performance against their own stated targets and ask to conduct an environmental audit for the hotel.

The request to conduct an audit has not been successful, although it is likely next year. Their detailed recycling figures were presented. They have increased recycling as per their corporate targets. However, it would seem that total tonnage for landfill or other disposal options increased even as the relative percentage declined. Thus far this has not been explained but will be pursued in 2020.

5) Ask clearly when the Hilton Group will achieve zero carbon.

The question posed was: When is the group committed to zero carbon emissions by? There has not been a commitment, please see answer 1. We are resolved to ask this question again for 2020.

The local team have now connected us to the Director Energy and Environment at Hilton Worldwide, which will enable us to take the next step in the process.

## **ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE FOR THIS AND FUTURE CONFERENCES**

1 Please ask any member of Hilton Staff how they dispose of the food waste. It is a Hilton responsibility yes, but also that of all of us, including Hilton Staff, to protect our planet.

2 Email any suggestions on this document or the 2020 audit to [reverendhutch@gmail.com](mailto:reverendhutch@gmail.com)

3 Can any congregations who have not sent their energy consumption figures to the Buildings Advisory Group please do so.