

**Positive solutions: Go Woolly this Winter!**  
**The effects of global climate change upon humanity.**

*“They work in shirt sleeves, the heating pumping a consistent regular temperature around the office as the winds whip up the sea outside.*

*For a brief moment they come face to face with the reality of winter as they step from the office, huddled in heavy coats before returning to homes and families to remove their coats, turn up their central heating, and continue their day, in shirt sleeves.*

*On the same day, in the same world, the typhoon hits the shores of Indonesia with a ferocity that has rarely been seen, trees are torn from the ground, houses destroyed. The people are left in shirt sleeves. Unaware that their lives are inexorably linked to those who are also in shirt sleeves in the winter, they wonder at the climate change that has destroyed their homes... “*

In August the shops go through that smooth transition of summer sales to winter woollens. It seems that the change of season is no longer dictated by the change of weather but by vast multi nationals that rush us through our lives. I'm sure there will come a time when we don't have to bother with spring and summer, but we'll meet next Christmas re-branded before the January sales are over.

I don't know about you, but I look at some of the designer winter wear and wonder, who wears them? All these interesting sweaters, scarves, tweed skirts and heavy jackets; where do people wear them when their homes and office are kept to a steady summer temperature, of 75F / 24 C degrees?

“Go woolly this winter” is not a new marketing strategy by local woollen producers, but a positive response to Global Climate Change. In these articles over the last few months I have looked at some of the predicted effects of Global Climate change upon humanity, especially the impact upon the poor and vulnerable in our world. The impact of sea levels rising upon half of humanity who live within the coastal plains, the impact of increased flash floods, landslides, typhoons and hurricanes, the increase of disease, drought and famine. Surely the disasters of this year must awaken us to the reality of the event? It's too easy to stay focused upon the doom and gloom scenario, but it helps no one. The aim of the One World Centre is to raise awareness of issues of global poverty, inequality and injustice, and *to encourage a response.*

You might well ask “what reasonable response can we, each and everyone of us make in the face of this global scenario? In the face of leading nations across the world ignoring the very winds that hound their shores, what significance can our small acts of thoughtfulness make?” Great movements that have changed the history of mankind did not start with those sort of thoughts!

Each individual can change the injustice of this world, by first changing how they themselves live. “Go woolly this winter” is a combined challenge from IOM Friends of the Earth working in conjunction with the One World Centre. A spokesperson from the FOE said “The United Nations states that the effects of global climate change can be reduced, and climate change *can* be halted if *everyone* cut their personal energy consumption by one quarter, that means each and everyone of us, whether we are an MHK or a man in the street, and officer worker or... a banker or a bus driver!”

The new campaign to “Go Woolly this Winter “ is aimed at encouraging people to take the first step in reducing their energy consumption by turning down their central heating, and putting on a sweater. It's that easy!

Turning down your central heating will reduce cost, reduce consumption, and help reduce global climate change. Obviously those who are immobile, ill or elderly need to have a warmer environment, but it would be good to hear from all those people committed *not* to be seen in their shirt sleeves this winter, who will wear their woollies with pride! If you make a commitment to *turn down* their central heating to average 65F /18.5C this winter you not only save money but your small action, your response, is helping people struggling for survival in other parts of the world.

So often we think we can only help people in the developing world by giving more and more money. So often that is crisis management. Sometimes a wound doesn't get better by just replacing the sticky plaster; we have to look at the reason for the wound. The increasing droughts we see in Niger and Sudan, the heightened flooding in Bangladesh, and New Orleans can take millions and millions of pounds worth of sticky plasters, but the problem will not go away until we tackle the root. We actually have to start tackling global climate change by tackling the very way we live, a response that is a lot less easy than giving a donation.