

Diocesan Ecology Link

From the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group (DEG)

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As I put the finishing touches to this newsletter (Saturday 15th December) events in Bali are taking a turn for the better. Hopefully by the time you read this they will have overtaken the plea sent by the churches to the European leaders at the beginning of the month. Even so the letter, (signatories include Rowan Williams), does make encouraging if challenging reading. I have summarised it on page 3 and include it in full as an attachment.

Around the diocese:

Church Times Green Awards encourages others.

News that two Somerset churches were awarded Church Times Green Awards last month has prompted others in the diocese to tell us of progress they are making or of plans in hand. The two award-winning churches were Holy Trinity, Cleve which gained first prize as Green Church of the Year as well as

achieving the Best of the Best Award, and Saint Barnabas's, Queen Camel for its allotment constructed in land set aside for its graveyard.

Church Times editor, Paul Handley says:

'The object of the awards was to celebrate the action churches had already taken to preserve the environment. In the face of countless reports about the severity of the problem, what people responded to was not exhortation but example. Even the runners up could take encouragement from the fact that their stories had been told in the Church Times and were thereby giving a lead to others.'

The first to contact us following our own reporting of the awards was Robin Bawtree, Churchwarden at Saint John's, Milborne Port. As leader of the green group within the church Robin says they are hoping to 'get an Eco-group off the ground in Milborne Port and to make it a community group rather than just a church group.

'So far we have done several things, one of which is to update the church lighting which has not been done for 25 years or so. We have replaced our old lights with modern metal halide lamps which are 75 watts compared to the 200 or 300 watt lamps we had before.'

They have also managed to cut down the number of lamps in several areas replacing two old ones with one new one. And they are looking into the possibility of changing to a renewable energy electricity supplier.

'In Church House, which is our hall adjacent to the church, we have replaced the ageing central heating system with a modern gas system and so as conserve the extra heat we have just completed work on lowering the ceiling.'

If you have a story of how your church is helping with the climate change challenge, no matter how small it might seem, we would like to hear it. To further enthuse, we are planning to prepare more detailed case studies outlining the work of the two award winning Somerset churches.

Farther afield.

Shrinking the Footprint Campaign: What's next? - Cutting the Carbon.

The national Shrinking the Footprint Group has launched a series of practical steps under the banner "Cutting the Carbon", in association with the Energy Saving Trust (EST), Ecclesiastical and the Churches Purchasing Scheme, and Good Energy. The aim is offer practical guidance and support, in particular help in building on the "Measuring our Footprint" exercise of 2006, which encouraged churches to record and audit energy usage.

There are three main new resources which can be found on the Shrinking the Footprint website (www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org)

1. **Energy Efficiency Information** – This provides links to simple information supplied by the EST; on auditing home energy use, guidance on improving energy efficiency, and how to choose and where to buy energy efficient products.
2. **Low energy light bulbs** - the Ecclesiastical's Churches Purchasing Scheme (CPS) now offers a range of good quality low energy light bulbs at a discounted rate (www.cponline.co.uk) and intends to expand its range of Green products and services. In addition to buying light bulbs from them, users are encouraged to let CPS know what else it can do for them.

3. **Green energy** - Good Energy is currently reckoned the UK's only 100% renewable energy supply company and has achieved the highest ethical ratings from independent assessors such as the National Consumer Council. Switching to a green supplier (after taking energy efficiency steps) is one of the most effective and efficient ways of shrinking one's carbon footprint.

Good Energy has offered to set up affiliation schemes for interested dioceses which would result in a donation to a diocese for every user switching supply to it. It would be for dioceses to decide what to do with the income generated though it is hoped that it could be used to fund diocesan and parochial measures to address climate change.

Churches' call to world leaders in Bali.

As world leaders gathered in Bali for the UN Climate Change Conference at the beginning of the month, church leaders in the UK and Europe issued a joint call that was strong in its wording, and for believers encouraging in content. The relevant text is attached but in summary it called on those meeting to 'redouble your efforts to secure the necessary framework agreement.'

'Drawing on our trust in God, creator of heaven and earth, and on a living faith in Christ, we as leaders of churches in Europe call upon our governments and the European Commission to strengthen their commitment to address the challenges of climate change.'

The letter came from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Sweden and the chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and was addressed to the President of the Council of the European Union, the Secretary General of the UN and the heads of government in Germany, Sweden and the UK.

Coming events:

'Breaking the Silence': a new play about pioneer environmentalist Rachel Carson.

Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* - published in 1962 and still in print through Penguin - is essential reading for anyone interested in the adverse impact of man on the world. She wrote passionately about the natural world and was the first person to alert us to the dangers of pesticides in our environment and to reveal the vested interests involved.

A new play called 'Breaking the Silence' about Rachel Carson, author of 'Silent Spring' in 1962 is on tour in the UK this year and next and is due to come west in February and March. This year (2007) is the centenary year of Rachel Carson's birth. She was a scientist, writer and ecologist who single-handedly challenged the US government and agro-chemical industry.

The new play is stated not to be a history lesson, nor is it about fear and despair. It is a love story and we are all part of the story. It invites us to experience the natural world as Rachel did, and to meet this remarkable woman as she reveals stories she never told when she was alive and hear how they reverberate today. Performances in the west; 28th February at Marlborough Town Hall; 29th February at Crediton Arts Centre, East Street, Crediton, 7th March at Ruskin Mill, Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire.

For more specific information visit the website www.rachelcarson.co.uk.

Call for papers: ecumenical conference, Greece June 2008.

We have received via Jo Rathbone of Eco-congregation details of an international and ecumenical event that will occur in Crete, Greece in June 2008. The Institute of Theology and Ecology of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, the Canadian Forum on Religion and Ecology and the European Forum for the Study of Religion and the Environment will host this important conference on Eco-theology and Ecological Ethics.

The priority is to engage theological work on contemporary ecological concerns and papers are currently being invited. The topics to be considered are:

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL RISK
BIODIVERSITY AND LAND DEGRADATION
WATER, OCEANS AND ENERGY
INSIGHTS FROM COSMOLOGY AND EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCES

The venue can be seen at www.oac.gr together with details of the event and the call for papers download (**deadline 31st December**). For further information about the programme contact Heather Eaton program chair at heaton@ustpaul.ca.

Looking for a Lent course?

The Methodist climate change study pack for 2008 is now available.

The new Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) study pack promotes positive alternatives to high carbon emissions, including renewable energy and recycling. This Pack has been written for Lent 2008 but can be used for any group of study sessions and looks very useful. There are six easy-to-use sessions including:

- challenging Bible studies and discussion questions
- stories from MRDF partners
- practical ways to respond.

Order or download from www.mrdf.org.uk or contact 020 7467 5132.

Two environment newsletters launched:

1. OPERATION NOAH.

Operation Noah is now producing a monthly newsletter. The first newsletter (1st Nov) can be read at www.operationnoah.org.

Its contents include:

- 1) URGENT - Take action! Lobby your MP about the government's Climate Change Bill which has just been put before Parliament. There will never be a better opportunity for us all to press for decisive political leadership on climate change.
- 2) Letter to Operation Noah supporters from Campaign Director, Ann Pettifor, including:

- o Update on the campaign
- o Operation Noah's focus
- o Campaign actions

3) Subscription information

It is also worth noting that the news section of the Operation Noah website is updated daily (sometimes even twice or three times per day, as articles are published) with new articles from the major media sources being added regularly under *climate change news*.

2. Update: the Hilfield Project Newsletter.

The aim of the Hilfield Project at the Hilfield Franciscan Friary on the edge of the Dorset Downs is to care for its nineteen acres within a conservation programme which includes long-term planning to increase the bio-diversity of the site: managing the woodlands, laying hedges in the traditional manner, grazing the grassland to encourage the wildflowers and developing an organic vegetable garden for the Friary kitchen and the sale of produce.

It hopes also to encourage local and traditional crafts in its Workshops and is setting up an educational programme which is available to schools, colleges, churches and other groups and which will enable people both 'to get their hands into the soil' and to reflect on their relationship with the environment.

Brian Lethbridge, editor of the project's new newsletter writes: 'The intention of Update is to keep interested people informed of what is going on as the Project grows and develops. Also it is being made available to introduce others to the opportunities and resources which exist and are becoming available at Hilfield. Update will be produced twice a year, in November and May.'

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, or to receive an electronic version contact Brian Lethbridge on 01392 660226 or at brianlethbridge@blueyonder.co.uk or Sarah Hargreaves, the Project Development Officer, at hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk or on 01300 341741.'

Concerning light bulbs, subscriber Lydia Avery tells us.

'I've discovered that the electricity company EDF has a scheme to provide eco light bulbs to people in receipt of benefits. It is open to supplying churches with light bulbs for people and suggests that (because of the sensitive nature of the offer) it would be acceptable for churches to advertise that they have the light bulbs in parish magazines and then for people to contact a designated person for the bulbs. This has I know been used as a great way of offering pastoral care in a practical way especially where older people are concerned.'

And lifted from the latest A Rocha newsletter - an illuminating idea!

'The Chiltern Gateway launched 'Lewknor's Low-energy Lightbulb Library' on the damp, dark evening of 27th November, at St. Margaret's, the centre for the project. Around 12 local people came to celebrate with a glass of wine and hear a short presentation, followed by discussion of other environmental and

community building initiatives we could undertake together. We decided that the next event will be the screening of an environmental film in the church, in January, where we will make some resolutions to start churchyard conservation, and perhaps organise a 'recycling surgery'."

The low energy light bulb library kit contains 17 different light bulbs plus information and FAQs (frequently asked questions), which can be borrowed for stalls, events, or meetings, to demonstrate the range and variety of low energy lightbulbs on the market today. More info on what a Light bulb Library is at: www.climatex.org/articles/Tools/low-energy-light-bulb-libraries/.

Interested in waste management?

Revd Jon Hale details his sabbatical research in a new report.

I am a parish clergyman in the Diocese of Chichester, having been in holy orders and continuous service in full-time parish ministry for 19 years. I have a professional background in waste management and planning. Over the last ten weeks I have been on sabbatical and pursuing research into:

Opportunities for the church to promote sustainable waste management in England.

The report of my research is now published on www.earthresources.org.uk. On the Home Page click on the 4th box down on the left hand side: [Churches promoting waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting.](#)

The report is significant because it is both practical and theological.

It combines 'what happens and how things are done' with 'what we believe about God and how this affects what we do'.

There is currently a culture-change in progress – from landfilling our waste to sustainable waste management. The motivation for this culture-change is partly spiritual. The planet's resources should be used with care and with an eye to the future, and with a concern for global social justice

The church is well-equipped spiritually, and well-placed geographically (having a 'branch' in every community), to promote sustainable waste management.

Some particular opportunities for the church are for:

1. On-site green waste composting by churches
2. Churches recycling unwanted household items by passing them to a hostel for the homeless.

The Government's new waste strategy for England shows that many of the key waste materials that have the greatest scope for re-use and recycling are already collected for recycling by churches.

This means that the church should build on its existing strengths.

Some particular opportunities for the church working with the voluntary / community waste sector are:

- A local church could initiate a community food waste recycling scheme.
- There are clothes recycling schemes that the church could work in partnership with.

Particular opportunities for the church working with local government are for the church to:

- Take up identified opportunities for the voluntary / community waste sector in local authority waste strategies.
- Establish churches in an area as partners with the waste authorities to promote sustainable waste management

Particular opportunities for the church working with the waste management industry are for the church to:

- Contact local waste management companies so that it can learn about the practicalities of waste management.
- make available land for the necessary development of new waste management facilities, so that the church shows its commitment to Sustainable Development in a tangible.'

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The editor is always interested in hearing about environmental events and projects from around the diocese, in particular work being done in individual churches and deaneries. And we always welcome new subscribers (free). Send information and requests by e-mail to brianckellock@brianckellock.plus.com.