

# Diocesan Ecology Link

From the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group (DEG)

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In this issue:

## ***Around the diocese***

Bath Saint Stephen gets £10k environment grant  
Diocesan Environment Group launches website  
Agora initiative – A journey to a new kind of life

## ***Farther Afield***

Plastic bag ban spreads  
Climate change bill – JPIT says lobby MPs

## ***Coming events***

Hope for Planet Earth event comes West  
TENONS programme  
Be-the-change meeting – Frome  
Christian Aid  
Shapwick Environment exhibition  
Hilfield Priory

## ***New books***

Cherish the Earth  
Planetwise

## ***Other news***

Envolve encourages active leap  
Government grants available

## ***Finally***

Confused about nuclear power – join the Archbishop

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*The trouble with climate change news is there is so much happening or being talked about; the Severn barrage, nuclear power, proposed sea defences, getting rid of plastic bags. And what about transition villages? It's all happening on our doorstep. What to put in a newsletter, what to leave out? Top of the list must be the things local churches and groups are doing and as DEL has shown, they are doing some great things. There are also lots of events to suit everyone's taste. All in all, amidst the threat of global warming, its good news. Good News! That's what we are about aren't we? BK*

## **Around the diocese:**

### **Bath Saint Stephen gets £10k environment grant.**

Bath's famous 'Church on the Hill', Saint Stephen has been awarded £10 000 by the Sita Trust for a 12 month GreenPrints Flagship Project. It has also been awarded £400 for two community open days to be run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). GreenPrints is a national project run by the SITA Trust set up by SITA, a national landfill company.

'We will work with volunteers aged 16-25 to transform a piece of overgrown wilderness next to the church into a community wildlife space,' says the Revd Jonathan Lloyd, parish priest of Saint Stephens.

The money will be used to buy tools and safety equipment and to employ a coordinator who will drive the project and recruit and support volunteers.

'Our vision is to create a beautiful community space, with native plants and bird boxes, repair dry stone walls and fences, and open up the space to the local community. The volunteers will get a sense of achievement, and we hope that they can link their new skills to other programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.'

GreenPrint is one of three funding programmes run by SITA Trust ([www.sitatrust.org.uk](http://www.sitatrust.org.uk)). Launched in 1997, the Flagship project provides funding and practical support aimed at making it easier for people aged between 16-25 to start making a difference to their local environment.

The other two programmes are Enhancing Communities - for community improvement projects around landfill sites owned by SITA UK - and Enriching Nature - for biodiversity projects within the vicinity of landfill sites in England.

Through its support of the Trust, SITA UK helps finance community life and wildlife projects across the country. The Trust allocates funding through the Landfill Communities Fund (formerly the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) and since 1997 has distributed almost £60M to hundreds of projects across the UK.

### **Diocesan Environment Group launches website.**

To provide easy access to advice on fighting climate change the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group has launched its own website ([www.bathandwellsenvironmental.org.uk](http://www.bathandwellsenvironmental.org.uk)). The new site is linked to the main diocesan website but can also be accessed independently. It contains a range of information and resources and is built around the Diocesan Environmental Action Plan with its commitment to *Changing lives... for a changing world*.

A key feature of the website is the section entitled "**Our commitment**" which was adopted by the Diocesan Synod on 3 March 2007 as its environmental statement. Supporting this approved statement are pages that unpack what it means, including a "**Vision for the future**" a word-pictures of a possible eco-diocese in the year 2015.

Other pages give background information outlining the scale of the problems we face. These open up some of the theological themes that can help

us all face the problems and they describe the relationship between simplicity and spirituality.

The final section details resources that can help us in doing things differently: study courses and books, other organisations, sources of advice. First and foremost it gives sources of material that can be helpful in worship and prayer. There are also examples of what churches have done - including a description of the *Go Zero* project in Chew Magna - along with 30 tips to get you started.

The material on the new website can be downloaded as pdf files and reproduced, viewed using an Adobe Acrobat Reader (which is also a free download) Where appropriate, pages will be regularly updated. Also available on the website is the group's own Diocesan Ecology Link bi-monthly electronic newsletter which keeps readers up-to-date with local and national environmental news.

### **Agora initiative - 'A Journey to a New Kind of Life'**

Bristol based Agora has been developing a 'different' kind of course for helping the Christian community get into issues concerning climate change and the environment. It is based around personal storytelling as people are encouraged to consider their relationship with the earth and its resources, with money, work, travel and neighbours. Drawing on insights from the scriptures and from Jesus own community, participants are encouraged to take significant steps toward the transformation of their own lifestyles. This six week course is suitable for Lent, can be led without any specialist knowledge and is available to download free from our website. Go to [www.agoraspace.org](http://www.agoraspace.org)

### **Farther Afield**

#### **Plastic bag ban spreads**

Plastic bag have a grim future if national and local press reports are anything to go by. Even Gordon Brown has been attacking them. Nearer to home one success story in Wiltshire has been led by the ex-bishop of Bath and Wells John Bickersteth. Thanks initially to him, from the beginning of January the village of Tisbury, thirteen miles from Salisbury, planned to go plastic bag free. Re-usable cloth bags came on sale everywhere in the village, supplied by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

John Bickersteth told the BBC that 'The breakthrough came when the Co-op said they'd play ball and I think it is catching on, although it won't happen overnight.'

And it is happening in Somerset villages too. Just two we know of where the pressure is on to ban the plastic bag are Uphill on the edge of Weston super Mare, and Winscombe. There may only be four shops in Uphill but according to the local papers everyone sounds enthusiastic. Again canvas bags are the answer. They got their inspiration from what is already happening in Winscombe which has a zero waste group working in consultation with The Environment Network of North Somerset (TENONS).

#### **Climate change bill – JPIT says lobby MPs**

This bill is currently being looked at by the House of Lords and is expected to reach the Commons in the next few weeks. The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) which represents Baptists, Methodists and United Reformed Churches and the Quakers is urging people to write to their MPs asking them to consider supporting amendments to the bill. To this ends the JPIT has produced a

special briefing outline its concerns about the Bill and containing suggestions on what to say to your MP. A copy is attached.

### **Coming events**

#### **Hope for Planet Earth comes West.**

The national tour of this multi-media presentation exploring effects of climate change comes to the West Country in March. Among the region's venues are Saint Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, Bristol (Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March); Saint Augustine of Canterbury School, Taunton (Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March); and Ansford School, Castle Cary (Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March). Hope for the Planet takes a look at the science behind climate change from a Christian perspective and its impact on people and the planet. It features experts from Tearfund, A Rocha, John Ray Initiative, The Faraday Institute and Share Jesus International. Tickets are available on 0845 0944414 or at [www.hopefortheplanet.co.uk](http://www.hopefortheplanet.co.uk)

#### **TENONS (The Environmental Network of North Somerset) March-May 2008 programme. [www.tenons.org.uk](http://www.tenons.org.uk)**

Venue: The Victoria Methodist Hall, Station Road, Weston-super-Mare  
7.30 p.m.

**12th March:** Narish Giangrande of Transition Totnes: The Transition Town Vision 'Why should I bother about ecology'.

Narish is a Focaliser of the town's Energy Group and one of the founders of the Transition Town Totnes project, He has been involved in designing, running and evolving events and groups that have been at the heart of the successful Transition Town Totnes initiative. He has lived and worked in an eco community.

**9th April:** John Carrott: Bees and Honey:

John has had a lifetime interest in bees and for 30 years was a member of the Avon Beekeepers Association of which he has held various posts including President. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

**7th May:** Vinah Bell: Management of Walborough Nature Reserve.

This reserve is on the south side of Uphill village. It has salt marsh and limestone grassland with rare plants and insects. The limestone grassland is an SSSI with an exceptionally rich flora including a number of nationally rare species. These include Somerset hair-grass and honewort. Also there are green-winged and early purple orchid, autumn lady's tresses and abundant cowslips.

#### **Hilfield Priory - Living in a Fragile World: 22-24 February 2008**

*An adult spiritual exploration of conservation and citizenship using the methods of Godly Play by kind permission of the Author Peter Privett and the BRF.*

This weekend event at Hilfield Priory, just over the border in Dorset, is being led by by Chris Pritchard (schools advisor from the Winchester Diocese.) Here is an invitation to reflect on the fragility of the earth; to become more aware of the complexity of our interdependent lives and to consider how we might relate to each other in a more sustainable and relational way. Over the weekend the

story of our planet will move from the wider planetary view, to the land, to the community to the self. We will have the opportunity to recapture the interconnectedness of all things through the methods of Godly Play, a three dimensional way of story telling. (see below for contact details).

### **Be-the-change meeting – Frome**

Called *Change the Dream Symposium* this day event is a combination of workshops, presentations and information sharing. The aim is to connect environmental issues to social justice and to look at how understanding this connection ‘*makes us powerful to do something about climate change.*’ Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2008, East Woodlands Village Hall, near Frome, 10am to 5pm. There is a cost. More details 01373 455563.

### **Christian Aid – regional representative Elizabeth Perry tells us:**

‘On Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup> a Christian Aid partner from Bangladesh will be speaking at a meeting in Bridgwater. His name is Mohammed Shaffiudin and one of the things he can talk about is how climate change is affecting his country. The meeting will be from 2.30pm to 4pm, at St Mary’s Bridgwater.’

### **Shapwick environment exhibition.**

*Towards a sustainable Shapwick* is organising a Green Fair – how to save money and help save the environment. The event will feature exhibits with experts from businesses and organisations available to give advice ranging from renewable energy to ethical shopping and wildlife. It takes place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 10.30 to 3.30 at the Edington and Shapwick School Sports Hall (just off the A39 between Bridgwater and Street. For more information e-mail [mbshapwick@aol.com](mailto:mbshapwick@aol.com).

### **Also at Hilfield Priory – Midsummer Fair.**

Hilfield Priory is holding its Midsummer Fair on 21st June, a Midsummer Fair with stalls, entertainment and displays (11am-4pm). This should be an excellent opportunity to see something of the work the Franciscan order it is doing through its Hilfield Project. This involves caring for its nineteen acres within a conservation programme that includes long-term planning to increase the biodiversity of the site. Find out more on 01300 341741 or at [hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk) [www.hilfieldproject.co.uk](http://www.hilfieldproject.co.uk)

### ***New Books:***

*Cherishing the Earth - How to Care for God's Creation*, £8.99  
[www.hodsons.org/cherishingtheearth/synopsis.htm](http://www.hodsons.org/cherishingtheearth/synopsis.htm) .

The authors Martin and Margot Hodson take the reader on a journey of hope, drawing on stories of people who have found positive ways of responding to what is happening to the Earth. They show how understanding God’s concern for his whole creation can inspire us towards a more biblical life style.

Dr Martin J Hodson is now Visiting Researcher in Environmental Biology, Oxford Brookes University, UK, having been on the staff since 1989. Revd Margot R Hodson is Chaplain of Jesus College, Oxford, UK, has a first degree in

geography and teaches environmental ethics at Oxford Brookes University. They are both members of Sage, the Oxford Christian Environmental Group.

### *Planetwise*

Dave Bookless's book, 'Planetwise' will be published by mid February (available from A Rocha UK for £7.99). Dave will be doing a number of interviews in support of the launch. The Environment resources pack – also branded Planetwise – is currently being replicated to be available at the same time. The pack has been designed to help individuals, groups and churches better understand what the bible says about God's world and develop practical ways to care for people and the planet.

The pack contains service materials, a 6-week bible study course, Powerpoint presentations, videos, recordings of talks and much more. Available from A Rocha UK for £10 – or a 'bargain offer' - £16 for the pack plus book. A Rocha is also running half day workshops to help users apply the resource pack. The nearest of these is at Trinity Theological College, on Saturday April 26th Bristol; from 9.30 – 1pm. Cost: £3; tea, coffee etc included. To reserve a place email to [margaret.young@arocha.org](mailto:margaret.young@arocha.org).

### **Other news**

#### **Engolve encourages active leap.**

The education team of Engolve is calling on schools in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) to use 29 February to do something extra for the environment. Its newsletter states; 'Register and let us know how your school is leaping forward to a more sustainable future and we'll enter you into the Green Leap prize draw to win some great environmentally friendly products. For information e-mail: [jane.talbot@engolve.org.uk](mailto:jane.talbot@engolve.org.uk) or [jacqui.grainger@engolve.org.uk](mailto:jacqui.grainger@engolve.org.uk) or telephone 01225 787910. Engolve Partnerships for Sustainability (Engolve) supports wiser ways of living that lead to more healthy and sustainable businesses, schools and communities.

#### **Government grants available to charitable bodies.**

Details of Phase 2 of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) managed by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform are now available on the BERR website. <http://www.lowcarbonbuildingsphase2.org.uk>.

Click on 'operational status' on the homepage to see how much of the £50M has been spent/allocated. Grants for the installation of micro-generation technologies are available to public sector buildings (including schools, hospitals, housing associations and local authorities) and charitable bodies.

Applications are being accepted now. It is currently anticipated that funds will be committed through to mid-2009, but this will depend on the actual rate of applications. Once applications are approved, claimants will be given details of the latest date grants can be claimed.

Phase 2 grants are available for community use buildings wanting to install one of the following:

- Section D1 - solar photovoltaic
- Section D2 - solar thermal
- Section D3 - wind turbines

Section D4 - ground source heat pumps  
Section D5 - automated wood pellet stoves  
Section D6 - wood fuelled boilers

We are told that most applicant's are getting about 50% of their costs covered by this grant if they are successful.

### **Finally**

***If you are undecided about nuclear energy you are not alone. Here is what the Archbishop of Canterbury said earlier this month in an interview with the Press Association:***

Asked for his view on the former chief scientific adviser Sir David King, who has said nuclear energy is essential to reduce Britain's carbon emissions, Dr Williams said:

"I suspect that like others who are environmentally concerned, I have a very divided mind on this, the technicalities of the safety of nuclear power still puzzle and alarm me rather. I think there is a bigger question behind it. If going over to nuclear power is just a way of maintaining the same levels of energy consumption only somehow more cheaply, I wonder if we are not deluding ourselves that there is a free lunch somewhere in all this and we are just avoiding the challenge of a deeply problematic lifestyle. I need to study this question more deeply than I have."

*With thanks to David Shreeve - Environmental Adviser, Archbishops Council – for drawing our attention to this item.*

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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](mailto:brianckellock@brianckellock.plus.com).  
**Next newsletter: mid April.***