

Diocesan Ecology Link

From the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group (DEG)

Newsletter number 14

August 2008



AS I AWAITED
THE 5:25 I HAD
PLENTY OF TIME
TO REFLECT ON
THE ENERGY SAVED
BY THE CANCELLATION
OF THE 3:55

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Synod approves climate change motion.

The General Synod has powerfully endorsed a call for the Church of England to encourage the government to take strong action to combat climate change and for dioceses and local churches to address the issues.

The motion read; `That this Synod, recognizing that climate change poses both an environmental and human security challenge;

(a) endorse the recommendations as set out in Climate Change and Human Security: Challenging an Environment of Injustice;

(b) call on the Archbishops' Council and all diocesan synods to act on this report and its conclusions with a view to developing an integrated and holistic response to climate change; and

(c) ask the Mission and Public Affairs Council to report back to this Synod by July 2010 on progress made towards developing such a response.'

It was carried by 278 to five with six abstenions.

Around the diocese:

Diocese appoints its first environment adviser

The diocese has appointed its first Diocesan Social Justice and Environment Adviser. David Maggs will start work with the diocese on the 29th September, beginning with a few weeks induction programme being introduced to the work of the Diocese and the Changing Lives initiative within which he will be working. He is currently Church and Society Officer for the Churches' Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (the 'ISR') in Bristol and Environment Officer for the Diocese of Bristol. David will be based at the Old Deanery but working across the diocese with both the Social Responsibility Group and the Environment Group.

Of the appointment DEG chairman Revd David Osborne says: "This is an exciting development. We seriously need someone working fulltime to support the social justice and environmental responsibility aspects of our diocesan life, and it will be good to have David in this role. I am looking forward to working with him'

DEG member bikes down Downing Street

Along with five other climate-concerned clergy, our DEG member Revd Dr Mike Perry cycled down Downing Street last month to deliver 10 000 signatures collected by Tearfund. The group had come from across England to deliver the signatures as part of the Stop Climate Chaos Campaign.

The call is for climate change legislation tough enough to bring benefit the poorest people around the world. Tearfund believes this means a target of 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 including the UK's share of international aviation and shipping industries.

After his cycling effort Mike said `As Christians we need to live in harmony with creation. Climate change is going to profoundly affect our society and we need to be aware of just how major the effect will be on us and people across the world.'

Rural affairs: “What’s in a name?”

That was the question hanging over the head of The Revd Richard Kirlew, Chairman of the Diocesan Rural Affairs Group at the last meeting of the Council for Mission.

He had approached the Council to endorse a name change from the outdated Rural Affairs Group to the more inclusive and encompassing Rural Life Group. The Council agreed the change of name. Richard explained that the Group was becoming far more attuned to matters rural whilst at the same time viewing the whole of the countryside through the lens of *Changing Lives*.

The Revd Robert Widdowson, the Rural Life Adviser added, “In *Changing Lives* we seek to become focussed and relevant to the countryside as a whole”. The Group has lately been involved in campaigning against Post Office closure and more recently is looking at pressing for an increase in affordable rural housing.

The Group members largely have specialisms. Rob Waldron is the Lay Rural Officer for Crewkerne and Ilminster Deanery. There has been a new post created, namely Chaplain to the Sedgemoor Rural Business Centre. The Revd Chris Keys joins us from Lincolnshire to take up this challenging and exciting post. Other members of the Group major on transport, health, farming, community life, environment and education.

Members of the Group are available if required to speak on their work at PCC’s, Synods etc. Please contact the Rural Life Adviser, Robert Widdowson on 01749 841688, or the Chairman of the Group, Richard Kirlew on 10963 350000.

More to life – in Keynsham

During 2008, Churches Together in Keynsham and Saltford has organised a wide ranging and exciting programme for the whole community. Recognising that God plays in every scene of life, '**More to Life 08**' is seeking to discover spiritual signposts amidst the passions of life which engage people's hearts today. **September events will concentrate on the environment** and will include the following:

Monday 1st. 6pm. The life and environmental impact of Portbury Docks.

Sunday 7th. 9.30am. Sustainable Economies – Fact or Fantasy. Professor Alan Emery.

Thursday 11th. 7.30pm. The environment – a reason for despair or hope. Mary Colwell, senior producer at the BBC natural history unit.

Saturday 20th. 7pm. Another kind of silence. A production of the play based on Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring'.

Sunday 21st. Environment Sunday.

Monday 22nd. 7:30 pm. Planning & Transport issues in Keynsham: planning and transport in Keynsham in the light of environmental issues.

Thursday 25th. Climate Change: Professor Sam Berry Former Professor of Genetics from the University of London.

Friday 26th. 6:00 pm. Autumn clear-up Burnett churchyard.

Also throughout the month, schools will be creating their own environmental 'Promise Trees' and speakers will be engaging with students.

For more information (including venues) see www.moretolife08.org.uk

Farther Afield

Church Leaders call to make 'Time for God's Creation'

Church leaders have called upon Christians throughout England to use the period from 1st September until 4th October as an opportunity to put the environment at the heart of their worship. It is visualised that the 'Time For God's Creation' initiative, to be held annually, would put creation at the centre of worship and reflection on the chosen day.

It follows a resolution made at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in 2007, attended by representatives of Europe's Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches, that the period "be dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change."

Commending the initiative, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams said:

"Every Sunday in the creed, Christians confess their faith in God who created the world we inhabit. It's his gift. As stewards of that gift, each of us has a responsibility, both to God and to the generations to come, to ensure that this remains a sustainable world. Placing environmental concerns at the heart of our Christian worship for this fixed time each year, demonstrates our shared commitment to that end."

A special celebration service with the Bishop of London will be held at Saint Paul's Cathedral on 14 September. For more details go to DEG news at www.bathandwellenvironmental.org.uk

Resources for the above event are available from Eco-congregation

Jo Rathbone writes to tell us that resources for use with Time for Creation events are available from Eco-congregation.

'I thought you might be interested to know that Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have produced a comprehensive online resource for churches to celebrate Creation Time (1 Sept - 4 October) 2008.

There is a series of sermon outlines based on both the lectionary readings for this period, and also a series based on the Lord's Prayer, written by Revd Dave Bookless from A Rocha UK.

In addition there is vast collection of liturgical resources, grouped under various headings (including as call to worship, praise, confession, collects, intercessions, blessings etc). There are drama suggestions, complete service outlines on environmental themes, suggestions for work with children and young people, all age worship, and much more.'

[Attached to this newsletter is a flyer detailing what is available.]

Harvest Festival back on the menu

'The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it...'

The seventh British Food Fortnight runs from 20 September ~ 5 October 2008 and is intended to coincide with Harvest Festival, the traditional time for celebrating our food. The aim is to make the public – and in particular young people – aware of the diverse and delicious food that Britain produces and to increase awareness of the health benefits and pleasures of eating quality, fresh, seasonal and regional produce.

Historically the church has played a key role in reinforcing the connection between food production, farming and the land through Rogation and Harvest Festival. Harvest Festival is second to Christmas as the most popular time for 'going to church'. This gives a good opportunity to use Harvest Festival to make a connection between local people and the food that is grown or produced locally or regionally.

There is a growing interest in food production and cooking. Fair trade is very important in Developing world countries and many congregations have pledged to use only fairly traded tea, coffee and chocolate. Harvest Festival gives a great opportunity to build on this by highlighting the additional value of using seasonal British and local produce wherever possible. Food prices are rising across the world for complex reasons. In the UK not every farmer has seen an increase in the amount paid for food supplied to supermarkets and others. Many remain asking for a fair price for a fair product. This year encourage your congregation to think seriously about buying local, regional or British food regularly throughout the year.

For ideas and resources for worship and celebration at harvest festival go to: www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications_and_resources/rural_worship_resources/index.html.

British Food Fortnight: 20 September ~ 5 October 2008
www.britishfoodfortnight.co.uk

New from CEL – The ECOCELL

Is your church in need of awareness raising on the implications of Climate Change, Peak Oil and environmental issues? Help is at hand. CEL have devised 'ecocell', a resource for use with small groups to raise awareness of the urgency of the need for action, both spiritual and practical, and ways that it can be put into practice. It is in the form of a flexible course on a single CD at an all-in cost of £5 including postage. It can be purchased from Pete Redwood, 41 West Bank, Scarborough, YO12 4DX. Cheques payable to Christian Ecology Link please. Further details on the back page of the current issue of Green Christian See www.christian-ecology.org.uk/ecocell.htm.

Christian Stewardship Sustainable Development publication

The first issue of this promising new quarterly bulletin for the church was published in April. This and the second (July) issue are now available for download from www.earthresources.org.uk. The aim is for each issue to include news of current issues in waste, energy, water and the carbon agenda, informed

analysis and insight, and opportunities for the church to promote sustainable development.

For the diary:

30th August - Environment Festival in Weston super Mare

Tenons (The environment network of North Somerset) is organising, with Weston Civic Society, an environmental Festival to celebrate local foods and crafts. The event will take place on Saturday 30th August at Weston's Old Town Quarry in South Road, Weston super Mare, beginning at 12 noon.

It will give groups and organisations around the county the opportunity to meet and network with each other and talk to the public about green issues. The day will be one of fun and competitions for the whole family, including a scarecrow challenge. The local RSPB group plans to set up its telescopes to enable views of the quarry's resident peregrine falcons.

TENONS secretary Rose Hughes tells us: 'We had about 600 through the gate last year when we organised a Festival for the Arts and hope, given a good day, this will be exceeded.' www.tenons.org.uk.

4th October - Minehead eco-day

On 4th October 2008 Christians Together in Minehead are organising an 'Eco Day' in the town. The morning will centre on 'Christian concern for the environment' and the afternoon on 'Perspectives on the local situation'. There will be talks, presentations, drama by young people, interactive activities etc. The morning will be led by our own chairman Revd David Osborne and the afternoon by Lorna Scott of Forum 21. It is hoped to feature environmental initiatives in displays around the venue, Minehead Methodist Church.

September to December - Hilfield Project Weekends

19-21 September - 'God Bless Africa'

A weekend exploring the issue of peace and justice in Africa with Br John SSF -

7-9 November - 'And God saw that it was very good'

A weekend of engaging with the scriptures and seeing what they teach us about the environment and our relationship with God's creation. The weekend will be led by Br Samuel, the Minister Provincial of SSF.

5-7 December - 'Living simply in a global society'

This weekend is led by Jonathan Herbert, Warden of the Pilsdon Community in West Dorset, celebrating it's Jubilee this year. He will tackle some of the issues that all of us face as we try to live peacefully, gently and simply in an increasingly busy and competitive world.

These residential weekends run from Friday Evening to Sunday Afternoon
To book phone 01300 341741 or visit our website www.hilfieldproject.co.uk
(Part of the Anglican Friary of St Francis Hilfield, West Dorset)

Around the region

Ten options for tidal power

As part of its Severn tidal power feasibility study the Government has published a list of ten possible projects that could provide clean, green energy from the tide in the estuary. Five of these involve a barrage using crossing points; the longest from Minehead to Aberthaw and the shortest a barrage at Beachley near the original Severn bridge crossing. The other five options involve the use of fences, lagoons, reefs and a lake.

The publication of the proposals has been welcomed by Friends of the Earth which says it is 'delighted that the Government is looking at a range of options for generating clean green energy from the Severn estuary. There are some exciting tidal projects on the table which could produce as much as 10 per cent of the UK's renewable energy 2020 target in a more cost effective way than the Severn Barrage - and without damaging the environment or threatening access to the port at Bristol.'

In May Frontier Economics published a detailed analysis of a Severn Barrage. In its executive summary it states that the results of the analysis suggest that (we quote):

- under a range of plausible scenarios, a large barrage on the Severn is expensive compared to alternative ways of generating renewable electricity;
- and there appears to be sufficient capacity to use other technologies to meet Government targets for renewable generation.

"These conclusions are subject to the detailed issues discussed in the main report (e.g. importance of minimising overall system cost). However, the extent of the analysis, the in-built conservatism in the estimates used and range of sensitivity analysis undertaken suggests that considerable new evidence would be needed to make a large barrage in the Severn estuary an attractive option for meeting Government's overall objectives."

Incinerator locations made public

Campaigners have launched a map (www.ukwin.org.uk/map) showing the location of new rubbish-burning incinerators planned for more than 100 sites across the UK. Included is a West of England Partnership proposal to build a 160 000 tonnes a year facility at Avonmouth, chosen it is stated because of existing facilities there.

Councils involved in building such plant claim they need to build incinerators in order to meet UK and EU targets to keep waste out of landfill, but campaigners believe there are greener and cheaper ways of meeting waste targets. Among those in opposition to the Avonmouth plans is Bristol Against Mass Burning Incinerators (BAMBI) www.bambi-network.org.uk.

Letter from Oxfam Southwest- Sisters on the planet

"Hello

I am part of the Oxfam South West team in Bristol and I thought you might be interested to know about a new resource we have developed as part of our climate change campaign. **'Sisters on the Planet'** focuses on the impact that climate change is having on people, particularly women, in developing countries and the changes they are making to face up to this new future. **Climate change affects us all; but it is already having a disproportionate effect on people in developing countries, and it's hitting women hardest.**

'Sisters on the Planet' is an action resource based on the stories of four women - one from Bangladesh, one from Uganda, one from Brazil and one from the UK - and their fight

against climate change. Through a film on DVD and written materials, the stories they tell are of inspiration, hope and the power of people to bring about change. We all need to face up to climate change in the same way as these Sisters on the Planet and we hope these films will educate and inspire many people to join the growing movement of women and men to help cut carbon dioxide emissions and to fight climate poverty. We are all part of the solution, which offers an empowering situation and one where we can build a better future.

To get you involved with this campaign we can provide you with lots of resources: booklets, badges, information, campaigning ideas, copies of the Sisters DVD to show to your group, show at work, show to your family to use this inspiration to **change our own lives**; we even have a photo exhibition for display at larger events. The films are also available to watch online at: www.oxfam.org.uk/sisters. It is up to all of us to pick up what the Sisters have started and really make a difference.

If you would like any more information about Sisters on the Planet or Oxfam's climate change campaigning and would be interested in receiving resources to hold your own screening or event, please give me a call on **0117 916 6472**.

Julia Willan, Campaigns Assistant, Oxfam Southwest.

And finally -Will climate change become a grievous crisis?

The topic of grief and climate change was outlined by recently-ordained Lydia Avery at our last DEG meeting. She reported onto research she had undertaken into:

'The ways the semi-rural parish church is equipped to be a place and community of hope and healing when grief is experienced as part of a growing sense of ecological crisis.'

She began her research by asking three questions. What would be the church's response be when:

- 1 the crisis really begins to bite and people experience grief for the world that once was;
- 2 there can no longer be commonly held certainties about the balance and behaviour of nature cease to be reliable;
- 3 and it becomes impossible for future generations to experience the wonder of creation in the same way as us?

'I believed that the local church would have a meaningful part to play as a place of hope and healing in the face of the ecological crisis, but wanted to ask where this potential lay.'

Her conclusions were that the Christian narrative, the church building and [church] community can offer hope and healing and that an open welcoming church that is outward looking will have much to offer both spiritually and practically.

'However, the study suggested that there may be some problems with image, both personal and corporate, and perceptions may make people hesitate to seek support and answers to big questions in the face of the ecological crisis.'

Lydia says that her findings suggest further research would be worthwhile.

The editor of DEL 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 via the website.

With thanks to Gordon Waddington for the cartoon.