

Diocesan Ecology Link

From the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group (DEG)

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In this issue:

An appeal to the churches

For the diary

Other news from CEL

Premier Christian Radio award

Amber Link introduced

Around the region

Sounds of many waters

More plastics for recycling

Libraries bag offer

Stories from Green Bath News

Farther Afield

Muslim Green Guide

Technology

And finally: For your encouragement

An appeal to churches

At the end of the 7th General Assembly of the European Christian Environment Network held in Italy last month a statement was issued appealing to all churches to take action.

The roots of human destruction of the environment, it said, are to be found not just in actions, but in our most deep-seated attitudes. It is not enough for humans to keep alive by consuming the world around them; they need a *relationship* with the world that is not purely utilitarian and market-based.

'Let us build new networks and enter into new dialogues. Let us build bridges between 'religious' and 'secular', as in our ecumenical network we are already breaking down the barriers between denominations. Let us find common ground with scientists, enriching one another with our different insights into the wonder of creation, and keeping each other from the dangers of anthropocentrism and arrogance. Let us work with politicians and governments, the leaders in this task of reshaping society, bravely offering prophetic criticism and affirmation.'

These words would make a good mission statement for all Christians who have a concern for God's creation. The full statement is attached, or go to www.ecen.org.

For the diary

SATURDAY 22 November 2008

Christian Ecology Link - Annual Members' Meeting and Conference.

TRANSPORT -- A JOURNEY TO A FAIRER FUTURE
Hosted by Milton Keynes Christian Environment Group

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, MILTON KEYNES MK9 2ES
(11.15am to 5pm). Annual Members' Meeting beforehand (10am).

Climate change is high on everyone's agenda: transport is high on the list of offenders. Where do we start attempting to find a solution? STEPHEN POTTER, Professor of Transport at the Open University explores low carbon transport systems and cleaner transport and vehicle technologies.

What role do values play in attempting to encourage people to reduce their travel? MICHAEL NORTHCOTT, theologian and writer on environmental ethics, speaks on our desire for speed versus the rhythm of the Earth.

Is there room for environmental concerns within the church? Why should it matter to you and me? Flyer/booking forms can be downloaded from www.christian-ecology.org.uk/conf2008.htm - or email secretary@christian-ecology.org.uk to request extra printed flyers. For more information contact David Miller on 01908 377376 or email david@millersofmk.co.uk

MON – FRID 10 - 14 November 2008

Living lightly in God's world, at Lee Abbey with Dave Bookless.

There must be more to life than working and consuming! Living lightly means changing our lifestyles and values, putting relationships back at the centre – with God, each other, and the whole creation. Join Dave Bookless of A Rocha and others in discovering how we can live more with less, serving God and saving the planet. For details see www.leeabbey.org.uk

SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER, 11.30am

HINDE STREET METHODIST CHURCH, LONDON W1U 2QJ

Christian Ecology Link is organising a Service of Worship at Hinde Street Methodist Church, 19 Thayer Street, London W1U 2QJ, at 11.30am on Saturday 6th December 2008 to coincide with the Campaign Against Climate Change's national climate march 2008.

The doors of the church will be open from 10am and coffee served from 10.30am. If you can help lead the singing please be at the church by 10.30am.

Mark Dowd, campaigns strategist for Operation Noah, will be the main speaker. Rev Paul Trathen, will lead a time of reflection and prayer.

After the Service we will join the Climate Change March due to leave Grosvenor Square at 1 pm.

www.christian-ecology.org.uk/climate-service-2008.htm

NOVEMBER 22 & 27

HEDGELAYING

Hedgelaying training days for A Rocha Friends in mid Somerset. The cost is £32 per person, including lunch. For more information please email peter.hawkins@arocha.org. The day is being run by Pete Grainger who is an experienced hedgelaying trainer having trained hundreds of people from organisations such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the RSPB, Hestercombe House and several Local Authorities. Pete is the Chair of the Somerset Hedge Group. A Rocha say that by attending this day you will have an understanding of hedge ecology, the tools used to manage a hedge and how to use them!

TENONS' MEETINGS (The Environment Network of North Somerset)

5th November: Speaker Mike Birkin the South West Regional Campaigner for Friends of the Earth.

26th November: AGM.

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

LOOKING AHEAD..... 21 MARCH 2009

Challenged by Change: Conservation Solutions in an Uncertain World, 21 March 2009, Christchurch Baptist, Welwyn Garden City. An A Rocha conference exploring conservation issues from a Christian perspective. Peter Harris will give the welcome address. Other confirmed speakers are Simon Stuart (IUCN) and Mark Adderley (former CEO, National Trust for Scotland). For more information or to book see the flyer from the autumn magazine or email uk@arocha.org.

Other news from Christian Ecology Link.

PREMIER CHRISTIAN RADIO AWARD.

Winners of the Most Green (Environmental) Website Award

On 19th September CEL members Jo Rathbone (Eco-congregation Co-ordinator) and Rev Peter Doodles attended the Premier Christian Media Web and Blog Awards at St Stephen's Walbrook (the Internet Church) in the centre of the City of London. The Eco-congregation website was judged by the panel to be the "Most Green (Environmental) Website" (from the entries they received). Jo says it was a tribute to Joe Baker who put hours and hours into developing the site, funded by Christian Aid.

Fr Peter was runner up in the same category for his amazingly simple and practical DIY environmental ideas blog. [BK:Well worth a visit]

www.diyenvironmentalideas.blogspot.com .

See also <http://www.christianblogawards.com/>

AMBER LINKS INTRODUCED

Isabel Carter has requested publicity for her website. <http://amberlinks.org>. Do have a look at it. She writes:

'Every week brings new stories about the impact of climate change somewhere in the world. God's precious and fragile creation is suffering, and the impact of climate change on poor people, is growing and likely to become worse as sea levels rise, weather patterns become more unpredictable and floods, droughts and cyclones become more severe. As Christians we have a moral duty to lead the way in changing our carbon heavy lifestyles.'

Amber Links is a new faith based website set up to provide a 'doorway' to allow people to find the information they need and to share tips with others. Use it to share your own experiences, recommendations and Christian resources.

Amber Links does not belong to any organisation or promotional group. It is simply a personal response that provides a neutral platform to help share information. It relies on dedicated volunteers to moderate the different sections of the site.

'It's not quite time to screech to a halt, but it's certainly time to slow down with amber lights flashing all round the world. Use Amber Links to share your own experiences'

Around the region

Sounds of Many Waters – flowing onwards.

Clifton Cathedral's year-long series of environmental events 'Sounds of Many Waters' has drawn to close with a special weekend of events at the cathedral to summaries the year and point the way to the future. Over the past year events have included a starling watch, family nature walks, listening to a dawn chorus in Bishop Declan Lang's garden, and a multi-face discussion following the symbolic crossing of the Clifton suspension bridge. And schools have responded with many specific environmental projects.

More plastics for recycling in North Somerset

Margarine tubs, micro-waveable meal trays and yoghurt pots are some of the additional plastic items that can now be recycled in North Somerset. Residents will now be able to recycle even more of their plastic by including plastic types 5 and 6 at any one of nine recycling points across the district. Residents can already recycle the most common types of plastic - types 1 and 2 at the recycling points.

Type 5 plastic, or Polypropylene, is commonly used to make margarine tubs and micro-waveable meal trays.

Type 6 plastic, or Polystyrene, is mainly used to make yoghurt pots, foam hamburger boxes, plastic egg cartons, plastic cutlery and protective packaging for electronic goods.

For type 1 look for both the number 1 or the letters PET(E)

For type 2 look for both the number 2 or the letters HDPE

For type 5 look for both the number 5 or the letters PP

For type 6 look for both the number 6 or the letters PS

Cllr Carl Francis-Pester, North Somerset Council's executive member for environment, said: "This is a further step forward in making recycling as easy as possible for residents of North Somerset."

The plastic recycling banks are at the following locations:

Backwell - Recycling Centre
Clevedon - Millcross
Nailsea - Clevedon Road Car Park
Portishead - Recycling Centre
Portishead - Waitrose
Weston-super-Mare - Recycling Centre
Weston-super-Mare - Tesco
Winscombe - The Woodborough Pub
Yatton – Somerfield.

Plastic without a logo, flower pots, cling film, carrier bags, bin liners, bubble wrap or plastic types 3, 4, 7 should not be recycled.

Libraries - bags for life offer.

North Somerset's libraries have introduced a 'bag for life' for people who visit their local library. The longer handle means you can put them over your shoulder - perfect for carrying a selection of books, DVDs and CDs. The initiative aims to promote library services and encourage environmental awareness and waste reduction. The material bag is made from jute, a sustainable resource, and provides library users with a stylish reusable alternative to plastic carrier bags. The jute bags are available in all North Somerset libraries and cost just £1.99.

Stories from the Green Bath News Digest. (www.greenbath.org)

1) BATH IN TRANSITION;

‘The Transition Towns movement is beginning to grip Bath in an exciting way. First we had Transition Bath and now both Larkhall and now Bathford are to start their own groups as well.

Larkhall Saves the Planet, who have been active a while, are now officially called Transition Larkhall and are drawing up a draft constitution– an important step that will allow them to apply for funding for projects. They have already formed Food and Waste groups, while their Energy Group is looking at the feasibility of a wind farm on Charlcombe Down in conjunction with Transition Bath. Exciting stuff! To receive their e-newsletter, email larkhallsavestheplanet@googlemail.com.

Meanwhile, Bathford have also set off down the Transition road with the Bathford Transition Initiative. They are currently setting up a register of villagers who have too much fruit – and of people who would be willing to help gather it in return for a share of the harvest. If you would like to join in, call Emma Jackson on 858388 and leave your name, address and landline number.

Last but not least, B&NES sustainability manager Jane Wildblood will be speaking at Transition Bath Forum at Widcombe Social Club at 7pm on Tuesday, 14 October. It's a great opportunity to put suggestions to Jane about how the Council can help residents take transition forward.’

[BK: On the subject of the Transition movement, the October issue of Somerset Life carries an informative article on what is happening around the county].

2) CASH FOR GREEN UNI PROJECTS

Two green projects at the University of Bath have landed funding from the Government's Technology Strategy Board. Its Department of Mechanical Engineering have been awarded £510,000 for its fuel efficiency project the Low Carbon Vehicle Innovation Platform. Meanwhile, the Centre for Innovative Construction has been awarded £257,000 to develop the 'BaleHaus' project, which uses straw bale wall panels to build load-bearing walls for houses...

3) ICE SEMINARS AT UNIVERSITY

The next seminar staged by Bath University's International Centre for the Environment (ICE) is on "What role for water footprints in reducing risk to business, government, communities and the environment". It is presented by Dr David Tickner, freshwater campaigner at WWF-UK, and takes place on Tuesday 28 October at the University of Bath, 8 West 3.22 from 4.30 pm to 5.45 pm. Keep an eye on the greenbath.org's events pages for all future ICE seminars. They run twice monthly and have so

far covered such diverse topics as Psychology and Personal Carbon Trading, Clean Energy Materials, and Hydrogen Storage. ICE is an across disciplinary centre within the University that works with other centres in the UK and worldwide to promote environmental research and education.

4) GREEN MONEY FOR CITY FARM AND CULVERHAY

Bath City Farm have been awarded £30,000 from the EDF Green Fund for a renewable energy system, insulation and lighting controls along with a special educational suite for monitoring their energy performance and carbon reduction. The Farm is now awaiting a decision from the Big Lottery on funding to match the offer made by EDF.

Meanwhile, Culverhay School have also been awarded a grant from EDF for £13,000 as match funding for a 6kW wind turbine and educational monitoring suite and are pursuing match funding from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

Farther Afield

MUSLIM REDUCE THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINTS - GREEN GUIDE FOR MUSLIMS

A green guide to help Muslim households reduce climate change has been published jointly by Lifemakers UK and the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), with Muslim Hands, the Nottingham based charity meeting production costs. The booklet explains the impact of climate change using Islamic references and also explains why Muslims must do their bit for the environment.

The Green Guide is unique in that it is a simple, practical handbook that looks at different aspects of the Muslim household and suggests changes that can have a big impact on climate change. These include decisions about domestic food, water, laundry, heating, electricity, transport and recycling. At the end of the 20 page booklet is also a 'How green is my family' checklist that gives households something positive to aim towards.

For more information about the Green Guide please contact Raja on 07956 983 609 or Shaid on 0787 969 4540 or e-mail IFEES at info@ifees.org.uk or visit the website at www.ifees.org.uk

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) is an Islamic Environmental NGO, based in Birmingham with projects all over world, working for betterment of all, in our only home, planet Earth.

Technology

Reduce oil and gas heating costs.

The following item appeared in the July newsletter of the Association of Church Accounts and Treasurers.

‘Last September, a large Baptist Church in Nottingham agreed to be part of a pilot project to evaluate magnetic ionisation devices manufactured by Ecoflow Plc and supplied by Roseudgeon Enterprises in Lincolnshire. The units were fitted to pipes adjacent to the main boiler. They worked on the basis of applying a strong magnetic field to the flowing supply of fuel (gas in this case) enabling more fuel to be

converted into convertible energy. No alteration was required to the system: the units were simply strapped on to the gas pipes.

The number of units required depends upon overall size of the heating system. In this case, 12 units were fixed at a total installation cost of £840. However, only 50% of that was paid at the start with a money-back guarantee should savings not be forthcoming after the test period. Readings from the previous year(s) were needed as well as weekly readings from the point of installation.

The fluctuating use of the building, the vagaries of the weather can make accurate comparisons problematic, but the conclusion was that savings of at least 15% could be clearly demonstrated. The church happily paid the final 50% six months after installation.'

[BK: I can find no reference to this development on the Ecoflow website. Does any reader know more about this?]

And finally –for your encouragement

BUILDING A BOTTLE GREENHOUSE – as reported in Autumn 2008 newsletter of TENONS (The Environment Network of North Somerset).

'Uphill Primary School is trying to go green! We have set up an Environment Club, which hosted a TENONS evening showing the film "Message in the Waves" back in June. We have recently achieved our Bronze Eco Schools Award and are now working towards our Silver Eco Schools Award. As part of our action plan to achieve our Silver Award we are going to build a plastic bottle greenhouse, this will be of use to our after school clubs - Environment Club, Nature Club and Gardening Club. It will also compliment our new outdoor classroom, which was built by the Royal Liver in May this year. The outdoor classroom includes a wildlife pond, marshland and vegetable patches, which the children and staff enjoy. We are asking the children to save their 2 litre plastic bottles, remove the labels and clean them and then bring them to school during the school's Environmental Sciences Week. We need 1,500 approximately, but we are confident, if each child brings in 3, that we will have enough to create our greenhouse. We aren't the first school in North Somerset to create a plastic bottle greenhouse, we know that St Andrews Junior School, Congresbury have created their own, so look out for local vegetables grown in local schools using old plastic bottles!'

Helen Burge, Uphill E-Team, Uphill Village Society

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 by e-mail to brianckellock@brianckellock.plus.com.

With thanks to Gordon Waddington again for the cartoon.