



DIOCESE OF BATH & WELLS

Changing Lives, Changing Churches for Changing Communities

Diocesan Environment Link

From the Bath & Wells Diocesan Environment Group (DEG)

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Our diocesan secretary gives PCCs green energy advice

In April the Bath and Wells diocesan secretary Nick Denison wrote the following to all PCC treasurers concerning energy supplies.

'Many PCC Treasurers will have seen significant increases over the past year in the cost of their electricity and gas supplies. Some of you may have changed, or are considering changing, your supplier(s) in order to reduce costs. In the current difficult economic climate you will naturally be keen to reduce costs wherever possible. When considering the choice of electricity supplier, PCC treasurers with other PCC colleagues will want to also have regard to the green agenda alongside the issue of cost i.e. should you go for the cheapest, or the greenest?'

'The Diocesan Synod has adopted an environmental policy which, amongst other matters, encourages us all to consider the green agenda. It may be of interest to you to know that the Diocesan Office at the Old Deanery buys its electricity supply from a company that generates electricity from 100% renewable sources. We believe this to be an important matter of principle and we would encourage parishes to consider buying their electricity from companies who generate wholly or substantially from green sources.'

The full text of Nick's letter can be found at:

http://www.bathandwellsenvironmental.org.uk/News_Utilities_Suppliers_010509.htm. It contains advice on ensuring that churches are paying the correct tariffs for their energy supplies. It is likely that some churches are paying the wrong amounts. The Diocese of Chelmsford has done some research on this matter and an independent person in that Diocese has been able to offer advice leading to considerable savings for many churches.

A Rocha regional event coming to Bath (16th May)

As was mentioned in the April DEL, Bath is the venue for one of a series of regional meetings being planned by the Christian environment organisation A Rocha. These carry the strap line *Connecting Locally – A Rocha UK in the regions*. The one intended to cover Wessex is scheduled to take place at Saint Luke's Church Centre, Bath on Saturday 16th May, 10am to 4.30pm. Cost is £7 including light lunch, tea and coffee. Further details can be obtained from Elaine Brown, 64 Queens Avenue, London N3 2NO or e-mail elaine.brown@arocha.org.

Christ Church WSM environment survey encouraging

In March an environment survey was carried out amongst the members of Christ Church Weston super Mare as part of a programme to seek recognition as an eco-congregation church. The questionnaire used in the survey was prepared by the church's eco-group and using advice obtained from Holy Trinity Church, Nailsea which is going through a similar exercise.

The eco-group was greatly encouraged by the high level of response and the positive nature of the answers provided by most questionnaires. Seventy forms were completed and returned, from individuals and household representing 135 people, which is equivalent to just over half of the membership.

The survey revealed that most respondents recycle where possible and take seriously all opportunities for energy saving in the home, for composting and for saving rain water. Concerning global warming, a few people did not accept that it is happening. But essentially there was agreement; 90 per cent believe it is happening and 74 per cent that it is a threat to human lives. Also 90 per cent believe that Christians have a special responsibility for caring for the planet. For more details of this survey please e-mail the editor.

Royal Bath and West is eco-friendly

Visitors to this year's Bath and West Show at the showground near Shepton Mallet (27th - 30th May) might like to know that the Royal Bath and West of England Society is formalising its commitment to the environment by implementing an environmental management system. It is currently working on improvement in the areas of waste reduction and recycling of waste, water management and reduction, electricity management and reduction

Long term the recently announced re-development of the Bath and West Showground will be focused on energy efficiency and generation from renewable resources, leading the way as an environmentally friendly visitor experience

The Society says that through demonstration of green technologies visitors will have the opportunity to learn how to reduce their carbon footprint whether at home, in their businesses and on the farm.

Environmental Management is an area that the Royal Bath and West Society has already made some progress, through a 500kw biomass heating plant, and the Ecozone at the main show. Like many parts of the show Ecozone is a knowledge transfer base showcasing the latest in wind power, biomass, solar technologies, biofuel and green construction techniques. It provides an excellent platform for people to learn how to save energy, money and the environment by offering practical advice and information.

(And don't miss the Church Tent).

If you visit the show make a point of calling in at the Church Tent by the village green. Robert Widdowson tells us the theme this year is Life in all its Fullness.

'We are seeking to express this in our flower arrangements which will portray key periods in our lives. Wesley Owen (Bath) will be providing our bookstall and there will as usual be a Tradecraft Stall. Our 'East Window' will be created by the children of Binegar CE Primary School and will be well worth a visit, I think.'

What a month April was.

When we changed the newsletter frequency from bi-monthly to monthly I said I would halve the number of pages just to make less reading. Sorry. It hasn't happened yet. There is so much going on. And this past month it got worse. The whole world seems to have gone into overdrive with environmental news.

EPA findings. Perhaps the best news, on the basis of better-late-than-never, was a major proposed finding by The US Environment Protection Agency that green house gases contribute to air pollution that may endanger public health and welfare. The proposed findings, which come in response to a supreme court ruling back in 2007 calling for a scientific review, state that:

“In both magnitude and probability, climate change is an enormous problem. The greenhouse gases that are responsible for it endanger public health and welfare within the meaning of the Clean Air Act.”

The EPA says the science clearly shows that concentrations of these gases are at unprecedented levels as a result of human emissions, and these high levels are very likely the cause of the increase in average temperatures and other changes in our climate.

Oxfam predict more suffering. Probably the worst environmental news in April was in the form of a report from Oxfam. Not only did this state that each year on average 250 million people are affected by natural disasters, 98 per cent of them climate related. It went on to state that new research for the report projects that by 2015 this number could grow by more than 50 percent to an average of over 375 million people affected by climate related disasters each year.

Eleven new nuclear sites announced. On the 15th April the Government published a list of eleven sites that could be potential hosts to new nuclear power stations in the UK. Members of the public were then given just one month to comment on the proposed sites before the nuclear planning consultation later this year.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change published its list after vetting all applications ‘to ensure they were credible, that the sites could be operational by 2025 and that the nominator had raised public awareness of their intention to nominate’.

Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Department of energy and climate change said: “This is another important step towards a new generation of nuclear power stations. Nuclear power is part of the low carbon future for Britain. It also has the potential to offer thousands of jobs to the UK and multi-million pound opportunities to British businesses”.

Each of the 11 proposed nuclear power stations - one of which is Hinkley Point - to be built on sites from West Cumbria to the Kent coast, will cost nearly £4.5 billion and have a capacity of up to 1,600 megawatts of electricity, enough to supply two million homes for up to 60 years.

Coal fired power stations get go ahead. Most controversially, the Government also gave the go-ahead for a new generation of coal-fired power plants, if they can prove reduced emissions using carbon capture technology. Up to four new plants could be built, fitted with technology to trap and store CO₂ emissions underground. The as-yet unproven technology would only initially apply to 25% of the stations' output.

Severn tidal power update And then right at the end of April came an update from the Severn Tidal Power Unit concerning the five tidal energy proposals (three barrages and two lagoons) for the Severn Estuary which had been short-listed in January. Then the public were given three months to comment. The 820 comments received will be now be considered, with a Government response in early summer.

It is clear that no early decision is going to be made. This can be deduced from at least two further factors. One is that a second public consultation is expected to be held in 2010 before a decision is made ‘on whether we want to support a Severn

tidal scheme' Secondly, the Government also announced in April that a £500 000 fund is being made available to help entrepreneurs and small businesses to 'develop schemes incorporating embryonic technology which will be considered along side the short listed schemes.' That seems likely to muddy the waters rather.

And if that wasn't enough, thanks to the April Budget my 10 year old car is now worth £2000 more as scrap than on the road.

30th April – Two last minute news items

1) 10 Downing Street responds to waste water petition.

10 Downing Street responded as follows to those who took part in the churches waste water petition.

'You signed a petition asking the Prime Minister to "instruct water companies to return to charging churches as charities rather than as business premises."

The essentials of the petition were that:

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to instruct water companies to return to charging churches as charities rather than as business premises.Changes in water charging structures in a number of regions mean that churches are charged on the same scale as businesses, leading to large (for example, 1300%) increases in annual water bills."

The Prime Minister's Office's response to the petition can be found elsewhere on this site or you can view it at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page19160>

2) South West Regional Development Agency welcomes Government marine energy study.

The announcement of a Government study to look at the potential for wave, tidal-stream and tidal range technologies around the English and Welsh coastline has been welcomed by the South West RDA (Regional Development Agency).

'The study was announced today (30th April) by Lord Hunt who was speaking at the British Wind Energy Agency (BWEA), tidal and wave conference in Bath, which is being sponsored by the South West RDA. It is the first time such a study has taken place'.

Claire Gibson, Director of Sustainable Resources at the South West RDA, which is leading the region towards a low-carbon economy, said: "South West England has an excellent marine energy resource that could contribute significantly towards meeting our future energy and climate change goals so we welcome today's announcement. We are beginning to see a world-class marine energy industry develop in the region, supported by the SWRDA's investment in projects such as Wave Hub and PRIMaRE."

John Ray Initiative (JRI) reports on its Just Living conference in latest newsletter 20

'The G20 leaders have put together in one statement some old goals - for economic growth - and some new ones: concern for the poor, sustainability, and the climate. Some economists profess they are compatible, and many hope they are. In JRI, we have continued to try to work through the Bible's wisdom, in particular, to ask whether there does not need to be deeper change and repentance, from all of us, to achieve economic justice, sustainability and climate repair. Our April newsletter, based mainly on the recent Redcliffe Conference, helps us to look at the more radical turn-around needed. It also has news of climate change in Nepal. Our governments need us to be well-informed as we try to influence them. http://www.jri.org.uk/newsletter/JRI_20_news.pdf'

Operation Noah's new Church Action Starter Pack!

This new pack is intended for churches that are interested in climate change issues but not sure where to start. It aims to show what faith has to say about climate change and how churches can take action in community. There's something to suit all sectors of the church community; congregation, clergy, sunday school and youth groups.

The resources included are:

TO LEARN: Between the Flood and the Rainbow: a workbook with steps on climate change and faith reflections. A copy of God is Green DVD. Theological teachings for the clergy. An introduction to Operation Noah's ARK campaign.

TO TAKE ACTION: Origami ARK petition to send to Gordon Brown demanding that he makes our climate safe for all ARK building competition. Instructions on how to organise your own event. Join up forms.

Order the Church Action Starter Pack for £20 by emailing Operation Noah at campaigns@operationnoah.org. Read the introduction letter and see press coverage at this weblink.

<http://www.operationnoah.org/blog/admin/weve-launched-our-church-action-starter-pack>

Some coming events (with thanks to Christian Ecology Link)

8-10 May Oxford: Green Shoots - North Oxford tackles climate change: a weekend of fun, celebration, and information organized by St Margaret's Church and the local community.

8 May Oxford 1.30-3.30pm Eco-exhibition at Phil and Jim School.

8.00pm Film: Power of Community : facing the oil crisis in Cuba. At St Margaret's Church, St Margaret's Rd OXFORD OX2 6RJ.

9 May Oxford: 10.00am Procession: starts at Leckford Place School, Leckford Place 11.00am-2.00pm Events all round the area and in St Margaret's Church

7.30pm Dinner with local speakers Chris Goodall and Nick Jelley, St Margaret's Institute Polstead Rd OXFORD - Tickets £10: please book:

greenshoots@rocketmail.com.

10 May Oxford: 10.30am Eco-service in St Margaret's. Speaker Paul Valentin, International Director, Christian Aid.

12.00 Picnic and walk. Meet at church with your picnic.

16 May London - A day of inspiration and challenge - Operation Noah's AGM, - St Mary's, Putney Bridge, London - Guest speaker: Tasmin Omond - How did Tamsin's faith influence her decision to break onto the roof of Parliament in protest to Heathrow's third runway? - What about her latest venture? - convincing the Daily Mail readers that they really must act to save the planet.

* Morning session (11am- 1pm): the official Annual General Meeting with worship.

* Afternoon session (1.45-3.30): inspirational talks from Tamsin Omond, Michael Northcott and Mark Dowd, with action and worship around the ARK campaign.

Lunch: bring your own or use the on-site café, drinks available.

Location: St Marys, Putney Bridge, Putney, London, SW15 1SN - RSVP: campaigns@operationnoah.org, 020 7324 4760 <http://bit.ly/16ktzs>

23 May Hilfield Priory Dorset What's the point of nettles - led by Richard Thornbury 2.30pm. Meet in Friary Car park. Booking Necessary phone 01300 341741.

www.hilfieldproject.co.uk/whatson.htm

17 May World Rogation Sunday - 5th Sunday after Easter -

Good worship resources: www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/pdf/RogationSunday21.05.06.pdf

5 June World Environment Day <http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/>

7 JUNE. ENVIRONMENT SUNDAY -- HAVE YOU PLANNED ANYTHING?

Environment Sunday –

The Sunday nearest 5th June (World Environment Day) is an excellent opportunity to arrange a green event or a nature walk with your church - perhaps invite a local naturalist to lead the walk.. But you will need to start planning it now so that you can get it into your church magazine. See some of the activities in

Oxford: <http://www.sageoxford.org.uk/envsun.htm>

Other events:

Mendip Partnership for Energy Conference (8th May)

(Sharing learning about energy efficiency in the public sector)

This one-day conference will share the findings from this public sector energy efficiency project. The Partnership is working to reduce energy consumption in a variety of public buildings and developing links with community action on climate change. The conference will share the findings of a joint energy auditing project and explore the role of the Local Strategic Partnership in tackling climate change locally.

Speakers will include; Claire Chambers and Stephen Andrews from The Centre For Sustainable Energy Jacqi Hodgson, who will share the lessons from Transition Totnes' work on Energy Descent Planning. There is no charge for this event.

The Conference will be held between 10am and 4.30pm on 8th May in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. For more details or to book a place, please phone Jo Milling or Pam Newsham at Mendip District Council on 01749 648999 or email Pam.Newsham@mendip.gov.uk

The Conference is supported by the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget, Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Mendip District Council and Mendip Environment CIC.

HP Lecture: The Severn Barrage and Other Options Hydro-environmental Modelling Studies. Tuesday 5th May at 5pm.

Professor Roger A. Falconer FEng School of Engineering, Cardiff University to be held at CABOT Auditorium, Hewlett Packard Labs, Building 3, Long Down Avenue, Stoke Gifford, BRISTOL BS34 8QZ

This lecture is hosted by HP Labs, Bristol. Members of the public are very welcome to attend but all attendees are asked to **register their attendance** with the Administrator, Julie Lanfear, beforehand. T: 0117 3128550 E: julie.lanfear@hp.com

Green Fair and Scythe Festival at Thorney Lakes, Nr Muchelney. Sunday 14th June 10am to 6.30pm

Workshops, activities, displays, stalls, good food and drink and entertainment to: raise environmental awareness through fun activities, promote sustainable projects, revive rural skills and engage the local community in green issues

To book a stall (**no later than 15 May**) or for further information call Louise Finnis (01308 425 018) or email: finnisl@yahoo.co.uk

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 by e-mail to brianckellock@brianckellock.plus.com. Or you can add your name to the subscriber list through our website www.bathandwellsenvironmental.org.uk Back issues and much other useful information can also be accessed through the site.

Again with my thanks to Gordon Waddington for the cartoon.