



Eco-Congregation Scotland Newsletter

Issue 18

February 2011

Helping you to care for God's creation

Editorial

Having recently been appointed I am making a concerted effort to get to know as many of you as possible. To do this I will be visiting as many of our local networks as possible prior to the Annual Gathering in March. I have already met some of you and it has been good to be so warmly welcomed. My immediate impression is that Eco-Congregation Scotland is a thriving movement that makes a real impact on climate change, wider environmental issues and the mission of the church in the world today. Our task now is to extend our reach to more congregations.



With this in mind I am currently working with the directors to develop a new project to assist churches in areas of multiple deprivation become eco-congregations. This requires funding, for which we are pursuing a number of potential sources. We recently secured funding from Christian Aid for work helping them to deliver their climate change objectives in Scotland. This partnership will include training for local networks on the impact of climate change on developing countries. We are also working with SCIAF to develop eco-congregations in Scottish Catholic parishes. These three projects will extend our reach considerably.

However, time is tight. We have till March 2012 to achieve our joint objectives of growing the number of eco-congregations to 400 and becoming financially self supporting. I can report that during our first ten months as a charity the number of registered eco-congregations increased by 12% to 268 so we are already moving towards that goal. However, in order to meet our financial targets we need congregations to get involved by becoming formal members of the charity and by contributing financially. Project funding is relatively easy to get, but to be successful in the long term a charity needs access to general funding that can be put towards the core costs (insurance, office administration, producing newsletters etc).

There is currently no fee to join Eco-Congregation Scotland, but our suggested donation per congregation is currently £100. If 200 congregations did this it would provide £20,000 per year. This level of core income would allow us to sustain and grow the Eco-Congregation movement in Scotland. Another point in favour of supporting us financially is that the more we can raise amongst ourselves the greater confidence funders will have when we ask them to contribute to our work.

I look forward to sharing more of the vision with you at the Annual Gathering in March.

Gordon Hudson, Manager,
Eco-Congregation Scotland

New Year – New Format!

As you can see we have updated the format for the Eco-Congregation Scotland newsletter. We hope you like it and find the content interesting and helpful. With ever increasing amounts of information to share with you we are moving to publishing the newsletter four times a year: in February, May, August and November. In between, look out for our monthly e-bulletin and more local information in the network mailings. We would welcome your comments on and contributions to our communications – so if you have something to share, or something to say, please get in touch.

News

Annual Gathering 2011

Don't miss out on the opportunity to come to the Annual Gathering on 5th March, 10am – 3.30pm in at Bridge of Allan Parish Church Halls. Everyone is welcome and the event is free, although we do ask for a donation to cover the cost of lunches and hall hire etc.

This year is the 10th Anniversary of the launch of Eco-Congregation Scotland and will include our first Annual General Meeting as a charity – and a celebratory cake! We are very pleased to welcome Kathy Galloway, Head of Christian Aid Scotland, to preach at the Celebration Service. The programme for the day will have the theme of 'Our Daily Bread'

and look at issues of sustainable living. As usual, a variety of interesting and challenging workshops will be part of the programme.

Booking for this event closes on 16th February, so make sure you register soon by contacting us at scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk or the address at the end of the newsletter.

*Please note: While everyone is warmly invited to attend, only charity members of Eco-Congregation Scotland are able to vote at the AGM. You can register as member of the charity by filling in the form available on the website at <http://www.ecocongregation.org/scotland/news.html>.

Crossreach

The Eco-Congregation programme is open not only to churches but also to church organisations, such as care homes, education centres and even denominational headquarters. The article below describes the considerable efforts taken to care for the environment in the design and construction of a new Church of Scotland Care Home in Aberdeen.

Rubislaw Park is the flagship care home for CrossReach, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland. The building incorporates geothermal boreholes, a combined heat and power (CHP) plant and solar ventilation as energy efficiency measures, as well as fully integrated services re-



quired for a care home of this size. Electric alternators generate the building's power, eliminating the need to buy electricity from the National Grid, while under floor heating eliminates the need for radiators, reducing the risk of personal injury. Rubislaw Park was the unanimous choice in the category of the 'Care Home Design' at the Scottish Care Awards out of some 300 entries. Congratulations to all concerned!



Funding from Scottish Government

We gratefully acknowledge the grant from Scottish Government which has made the employment of our new manager possible. The grant will help us to continue to grow the movement, deliver action on environmental issues, particularly climate change, and ensure that the new charity is placed on a sound financial and business footing.

What a waste!

Across Scotland, £1 billion of food is needlessly thrown away by households each year*. As well as financial implications, this damages the environment – producing, packaging, and transporting the food. And contrary to popular belief, the food won't just rot down in landfill to make compost – it creates methane, which is a powerful climate change gas.

The other misconception is that supermarkets and restaurants create the most food waste. In actual fact, across the UK, households create more food waste than supermarkets, hotels and the hospitality sector put together.

The good news is that reducing food waste is easy for householders to do. Zero Waste Scotland's "Love Food Hate Waste" campaign highlights four areas where we can all reduce food waste; Plan-

ning/Preparation, Storing Food, Recipes (using up leftovers) and Portioning. By making small changes, the average Scottish household could be saving up to £430 a year, a lot of time (wandering around the supermarket deciding what to cook, or forgetting to buy things and having to pop back to the shops again) and helping the environment.

For more advice see; www.wasteawarelovefood.org.uk. There are also volunteers who can give talks to groups about how to reduce food waste. Details can be found at; <http://gardening.wasteawarescotland.org.uk/compostMaster.asp>.

* Source; The Food We Waste in Scotland, WRAP 2009
Jon Molyneux, Zero Waste Scotland

2010 Tied For Warmest Year on Record

According to scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the United States, 2010 tied with 2005 as the warmest year of the global surface temperature record, beginning in 1880. This was the 34th consecutive year with global temperatures above the 20th century average. http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110112_globalstats.html

Working with Eco Schools

Many of you will be aware that your local school is an Eco School and many schools (over a thousand in Scotland) now proudly fly a Green Flag in their playground to celebrate their environmental achievements. A number of Eco-Congregations have found collaboration with their local Eco Schools extremely fruitful.

For a number of years Eric Summers, Rector of Kirriemuir's Webster's High School, and Malcolm Rooney, Minister of the Glens and Kirriemuir Old, have shared a concern about Climate Change and the long term outlook for the quality of life that today's school generation will face in their adult years.

Climate Change and awareness of, and stewardship of, creation has featured regularly in school assemblies and services. Eric and Malcolm arranged a day conference for Senior School representatives of the eight Angus Secondary Schools in October last year. The conference engaged sixty senior pupils in Angus in a discussion about Climate Change and its potential consequences, identified steps that might be taken to mitigate the effects of Climate Change and encouraged Angus Secondary Schools to place knowing about, caring about and acting on Climate Change as a priority. This might involve:

- setting a target date for every Angus Secondary School to acquire the Eco School Green Flag
- establishing an Angus-wide climate group comprising representatives from all schools (and local communities) to oversee progress
- pressing Angus Council to establish certain operating procedures for all schools, eg, switching off computers by 5pm; local control of heating; switching off lights when rooms are empty;

monitoring paper consumption; web conferencing meetings; etc

The conference which was endorsed by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and funded by the schools themselves, Angus Council Education Department, the Presbytery of Angus and the Rotary Clubs of Arbroath, Forfar and Kirriemuir.

Key note speaker Heather Reid, former BBC Weather presenter, spoke about how Climate Change has become a very topical issue attracting both good and bad press. Referring to the science, she said that it is clear that the temperature of the planet is increasing and that an overwhelming majority of scientists believe that increased CO₂ emissions is a key cause of this heating. Heather acknowledged that the planet had warmed and cooled many times before but advised the youngsters that the current warming was out with the historical pattern. She identified plant and animal extinction, drought, food shortages, flooding and population migration as issues that the pupils will have to face in their lifetime.

Calling for behavioural change she drew attention to Scotland's potential role as a provider of renewable energy utilising our natural resources of wind, wave and water power. There are huge opportunities for employment in renewable energy and related sciences in the decades ahead but communities will need to be willing to accept the infrastructure changes required.

Erica Caldwell of the Royal Society of Edinburgh spoke of its ongoing inquiry into attitudes around facing up to Climate Change. The inquiry is examining responses to and barriers to action re Climate

Change. Making the point that the full impact of a warming planet will be met by the pupils still at school at the moment, Mrs Caldwell highlighted local projects ranging from a move away from disposable nappies, to bio fuel heating and micro wind turbines.

In a question and answer session Heather and Erica were joined by Adrian Shaw, Church of Scotland Climate Change Officer, and addressed topics like creating eco friendly schools and homes, reducing carbon footprints, driving more slowly and recognising that Climate Change is the major threat to the world in the 21st Century. All panelists agreed that young people had greatest influence over adults and those present were encouraged to be concerned and speak out about that concern.

Pupils from the participating schools then spoke about some of their own Eco School projects and officials from Angus Council addressed recycling and land fill. Ben Brock from the University of Dundee spoke about the impact of rising sea levels and Tony McElroy from Tesco explained his company's efforts to raise public awareness of the carbon footprint of goods on supermarket shelves. The day ended with each school drawing up an action plan to raise local awareness of Climate Change.

Could your church work on a joint project with a local Eco School? Schools often welcome contact with Eco Congregations and one of the criteria for a green flag award requires schools to work with other community organisations. To find out where your nearest Eco School is look at

<http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/page.asp?pg=73>

Malcolm Rooney

Award Winning Churches

Award applications keep coming in and it is heartening to see all the activity represented by the hard work of our award winning congregations. In recent months three second awards have been made. Special congratulations to those congregations – often the hardest part is just to keep going! If you are thinking of applying for an award, please ensure you are using an up to date application form (downloadable from <http://www.ecocongregation.org/scotland/award.html>). The new version of the form has a spreadsheet to help you calculate the carbon footprint of the church buildings – which is now a requirement for all award applications.

First Awards

Ferryhill Parish Church, Aberdeen has a great team approach to their creation care work and spreading the word throughout the congregation and within the community. They have excellent environmental activities for their young people at the Sunday Club and Summer Clubs. The refurbishment of the buildings has included many measures to improve energy efficiency and the recently introduced 'Fairtrade' activities are proving very successful.



St Paul's & St George's Church Edinburgh have worked hard to improve energy efficiency, including loft insulation. This makes the building more user friendly for groups, including the rapidly expanding Parent and Toddler Group. They have imaginative fair trade initiatives that keep people involved and active and have engaged with the World Development Movement's Global Connect programme.

Drumoak & Durris Church has made up excellent Powerpoint presentations to promote understanding of the links between Christian faith and environmental action and to help engage the

whole congregation and different groups within it. They have clearly recorded energy consumption in the church buildings and taken action to reduce their carbon footprint. The congregation has strong links with local community and promotes a caring for creation message through the newsletter and events such as the 'Food, Fashion and the Future' event, which involved and inspired many.

Torry St Fittick's Church Aberdeen The good sense of community within the church supports the eco-congregation work and significant effort has been made to include caring for creation themes in the service content. They have drawn up plans for refurbishment of the church, which include energy saving measures and progress has been made in fund raising for this project. They use their involvement with the community and the Hall letting policy to communicate their creation care aims and are committed to Fair Trade and recycling projects. The church's support of the Malawi Container project (in partnership with other churches, the police and army) allowed many items such as sewing machines, gardening tools and bicycles to be reused. Importantly everyone is kept informed and involved through good publicity in the church magazine, on the notice-board and website.

Second Awards

St Matthew's Church Perth have maintained and developed a very active Eco Congregation programme in the church for a number of years through the dedicated commitment and leadership of their Green Team. They regularly have very thoughtful and creative services on the theme and keep the message going out to the congregation through advice articles in the church

magazine and by using the notice board. As part of the refurbishment of the sanctuary they are planning to reduce their carbon footprint and recent work on the church garden has both improved biodiversity and made it more attractive. From the outset they have given very active support to the local Eco-Congregation network group.

St John's Church Edinburgh have developed The Earth Be Glad project, successfully applying for Climate Challenge funding and which now involves a growing number of the congregation and is of national importance see www.earthbeglad.org.uk.

The gardening group that have made very good progress in managing the grounds of the Church for biodiversity and they have developed of worship materials, including the special liturgy for Creation Time see <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/295/>



St Matthew's Garden – before... and after!

Photos:
Morag Green



Stirling Methodist Church As a basis for their work they make clear links between our Christian faith and environmental concerns. Their work with Fair Trade is wide ranging and includes helping Stirling achieve Fair Trade City status, as well as promoting Fair Trade stalls in other churches. They have recorded a reduction in their carbon footprint since installing new heaters, a time clock and insulation and are linking this with attempts to sign up everyone in the congregation to committing to carbon cutting. They have established a wildlife garden on a difficult site and persistently lobbied their local authority to get a brown bin to recycle their cardboard and garden waste!

Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen is very committed to bio-diversity projects and has promoted an innovative "Adopt a Border" project - which encourages both a sense of ownership of and practical action in the church grounds. The planting of a hedgerow to include indigenous plants is also planned. They have engaged many of the congregation, including the Congregational Board, in discussions to achieve a more environmentally friendly purchasing policy and installed an automated lighting system and a new zoned heating system to improve energy efficiency.

News from the Networks

We now have 12 active networks working across the country to support the work of eco-congregations locally. If there is a network in your area and you haven't been to a meeting yet, why not look at the network programme for your area (<http://www.ecocongregation.org/scotland/networks.html>) and see if there is something that might help you with your creation care work. Everyone is welcome and simply coming along to share information, opportunities and challenges has been helpful to many congregations. If there isn't a network in your area, we are always looking for opportunities to establish new ones and so if you think there is potential in your area, please get in touch!

Aberdeen/ Aberdeenshire met in October with a speaker from Aberdeen City Council's Waste Aware Team and heard about what happens to the different materials collected for recycling. These vary from glass that is made into road surfacing, filtration units for swimming pools and golf bunker sand to plastic bottles which are used to make fleeces, plastic boxes and compost bins. With the national target of 40% of all waste being recycled but only 26.8% being achieved in 2009, people were urged to continue and increase their recycling efforts.

Dumfries and Galloway have had two meetings focused on reducing carbon emissions. The first talked about "Saving your 5% CO₂" and discussed how churches and congregations could and should monitor and reduce their use of energy. At the November meeting several network members shared their expertise and experi-



ence by giving a series of short talks on renewable energy production, including solar power, air source heat pumps and micro hydro.

Photos: Micro Hydro Intake and Turbine, Matthew Aitken



Edinburgh The Edinburgh network met in October in Carlops, discussing food waste and recycling. At its January meeting, hosted by St Martin's of Tours Church, the network focussed on energy use in tenement flats. The coming meetings will look at Greener Ways of Transport and Church Gardening.

Fife Following an initial meeting in May last year a small group came together and worked hard to launch the network at an Eco Fair event in September, hosted by Cupar Old Parish Church. The event was open to the whole community as well as local churches and featured stalls from a range of local environmental organisations. In addition, Grace Morris from Hope Park Church in St Andrews led a workshop at the Church of Scotland's School Chaplains' conference to help make the link between the work of chaplains, Eco Schools and Eco-Congregation Scotland. Grace is a former head teacher of Dunino Primary, one of the first schools in Scotland to achieve a permanent (4th) Green Flag. Further meetings have now been planned for 2011 – for details look at the network page on the website: <http://www.ecocongregation.org/scotland/fife.html>.

Glasgow have had a speaker about agricultural developments over the years and heard that now, as always, nothing is wasted and much re-

cycled. Their November meeting was postponed due to the snowy weather.

Helensburgh and Lomond continue to meet to plan their next Eco Day in the summer. They are also encouraging other churches in the area, including helping out with running eco services.

Highland and Moray This network had been dormant for some time but a workshop held in October at Ness Bank Church, Inverness gave the opportunity both to promote the programme and revive the network. With such long distances involved in this area, it was thought better, at least initially, to keep in touch by email and perhaps plan for just one meeting a year.

The **Perth and Kinross** network recently invited Richard Higginbottom to a meeting to talk about TullochNet and the Perth Lade Project. This is an excellent example of how an environmental project can be used to connect and reach out to the local community. Read all about it in the report below from Rona Archibald of North Church, Perth:

TullochNet is a fresh expression of church in the Tulloch area of Perth. Richard explained the history of TullochNet and its role in establishing a Christian presence in Tulloch, an area which has little church presence. The group has been gradually building relationships with the community over the past few years. TullochNet has worked with local community groups and the primary school to establish a low-key Christian presence, but there was a need to get more involved in general community activity. The importance of the Town Lade to the community was identified, and involvement in a project to improve the Lade presented an opportunity to work with the people of Tulloch. In the past Tulloch housed Pullars of Perth dye works, but the area is now residential. The historic Perth Town Lade flows from the River Almond at Huntingtower through Tulloch and round the centre of Perth to meet the River Tay. The lade once provided power and water to industry and housing in the areas through which it flowed but it has deteriorated over the years, particularly as the weir is in disrepair, and the flow of water is very low. TullochNet established the Lade Project and, during 2010, an orchard has been planted and a biodiversity meadow established, an

oral history project has produced a leaflet and DVD, an eco-exhibition and celebration of the Lade have taken place and various walks and lectures have been organised. There are plans to establish a community garden/ allotment and play area. It is hoped that a Lade Trust will be established to take this project forward. TullochNet is now planning to have a permanent presence in Tulloch in the shopping area. By building good relationships in this way the group is hoping to earn the right to present the gospel.

Since then the network has met to exchange news and views and are planning some open meetings, later in the year aimed at raising awareness of environmental opportunities, ways of saving energy/cutting costs etc.

South Lanarkshire are planning a Green Fair for the summer, in co-operation with the David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre. The aim of the day is to provide a fun and informative (eco) day out for local congregations with activities and information for all ages and an opportunity to explore the centre and maybe even enjoy a picnic in the grounds.

Stirling network visited St Ninian's Old Parish Church and were very impressed with the energy efficiency work carried out by the congregation. Following a successful application to the Government's Climate Challenge Fund and Community Energy Scotland, they have installed air source heat pumps and low energy lighting in their halls as well as improving the insulation.



Display about the refurbishment work at St Ninian's Old
Photo: Alison Adam

West Lothian and Falkirk met at St Peter's Episcopal Church in Linlithgow and welcomed Wallacestone Methodist Church as new members. They saw the results of work in St Peter's garden to make it more wildlife friendly and heard about work in other churches.

Resources

Driven into the Wilderness : A journey for Lent This new resource is a Green Faith Prayer and Study Series made up of weekly study guides designed for congregations or small groups and daily prayer for groups or individuals. It was written for and by the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney, and is available for everyone to download at <http://www.aberdeen.anglican.org/>. Everyone is welcome to participate in the worship events which frame the series:

A **Gathering** event to launch the resource will take place on Sunday 6 March 2011, 4.00pm at St Mary's, Carden Place, Aberdeen. The Guest Preacher will be Prof John Eldridge, British sociologist known for his writings on Industrial Society. For further information contact Rev Lisa Eunson: lisa.eunson@gmail.com.

Sending Out on Sunday 8 May, 4pm, St Ninian's, Mar Lodge with worship and fellowship to renew our commitment to care of God's creation.

Prosperity Without Growth by Tim Jackson, (Earthscan 2009). This book asks the question, is more economic growth the solution? Will it deliver prosperity and well-being for a global population projected to reach nine billion? No one denies that development is essential for poorer nations. But in the advanced economies there is mounting evidence that ever-increasing consumption adds little to human happiness and may even impede it. More urgently, it is now clear that the ecosystems that sustain our economies are collapsing under the impacts of rising consumption. Unless we can radically lower the environmental impact of economic activity – and there is no evidence to suggest that we can – we will have to devise a path to prosperity that does not rely on continued growth. Economic heresy? Or an opportunity to improve the sources of well-being, creativity and lasting prosperity that lie outside the realm of the market? Tim Jackson provides a vision of how human society can flourish – within the ecological limits of a finite planet.

Carbon Fast 2011: From 9 March to 23 April 2011 Tearfund provides simple daily actions to tackle climate change this Lent. You can make this your church's response to climate injustice this Lent, help lighten our global neighbours' loads and care for God's creation with a carbon detox. Visit www.tearfund.org/carbonfast to find out more and sign up for daily emails to take you through the Fast. Or order a printed actions flyer at <http://resources.tearfund.org>.



Landshare (www.landshare.net) brings together people who have a passion for home-grown food, connecting those who have land to share with those who need land for cultivating food. It's for people who:

Want to grow veg but don't have anywhere to do it

Have a spare bit of land they're prepared to share

Can help in some way – from sharing knowledge and lending tools to helping out on the plot itself

Support the idea of freeing up more land for growing

Are already growing and want to join in the community

A Heart for Creation - Worship resources and reflections on the environment by Chris Polhill (2010; www.ionabooks.com/2044-9781905010677-A-Heart-for-Creation.html).

Every day we learn more about the environment and our interaction with it. The science and details are complex and wonderful – but what is clear is that our relationship with the environment is out of balance and that human behaviour must change. We need to learn to live gently and more in harmony with God's creation. But how do we change? Religious traditions and mystics have used prayer and meditation to bring about change for centuries. This book talks about prayer as the powerhouse that inspires us and keeps us from burning out, prayer that helps us to transform our mindsets and to act from a more rooted place.

National Spring Clean There is now a new website for Scotland's biggest clean up campaign. Now Keep Scotland Beautiful needs YOU to help spread the news about National Spring Clean. They are inviting churches to support the campaign, either by organising your own event or by spreading the word to your contacts.

Over 83,000 enthusiastic litter pickers united to give Scotland a timely spring clean in 2010 but it is hoped even more people will join in this coming spring. Group organisers can sign up online; all the information you need about the campaign is at www.keepscotlandtidy.org/springclean.

Please note that due to popular demand the campaign dates for 2011 have been extended from one month to two: Monday 14 March – Monday 16 May. Any centrally registered litter picks taking place on or between those dates will count towards the national campaign.

Prayer

A prayer for 2011

Creator Spirit, we thank you for the reassurance that spring will follow winter, that life will follow death and that one day the dark earth will be transformed into greenness. As we experience the earth's gradual turning towards the light, may we share that sense of hope with those who need it at this time. We thank you for recent progress made in tackling climate change, both nationally and internationally; give us determination to continue our campaigning in 2011 so that one day people of all nations will enjoy a more stable climate. Amen.

Eco-Congregation Ireland

Other sources of prayers and information:

Christian Ecology Link prayer guide: <http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/resources.htm#pg>

Climate Stewards prayer blog: <http://climatestewards.wordpress.com>.

Quote

"The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Keep in touch!

For environmental and financial reasons the main circulation of the newsletter is by email. Please ensure you keep us informed of any changes to your email address. We welcome new recipients of the newsletter. If it has been forwarded to you, email scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk to receive future issues.



Register your church

Registering on the Eco-Congregation programme is easy and free. It gives your church access to free resources, the chance to be part of a local network, and to work towards an Eco-Congregation Award. It's easy to register. Contact us for a form or visit www.ecocongregation.org/scotland.

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