



# Eco-Congregation Scotland Newsletter

**Issue 20**

**September 2011**

---

**Helping you to care for God's creation**

---

## Editorial

### Eco-Congregation Scotland Network Seminar

Ours is a growing movement that is making a huge impact in communities up and down the country. Time and time again the Board is deeply moved by the stories of real commitment to Creation that it hears from congregations large and small. It's a commitment that is also a witness to what it means to people of faith and is making others in and out of the church sit up and listen.

The Eco-Congregation movement is a grassroots movement and the Board, charged with ensuring the continued effectiveness of our work together know that whatever we do next, it needs to be founded on that grass roots strength.

That's why, as the Board reflected on what next for the movement, it did not do so simply at its own meetings but set up what will be the first of several local network meetings. Seven of our 12 (and soon to be 14) networks met in Stirling earlier this month to discuss the development of Eco-Congregation Scotland. The notes of the meeting can be found here. <http://gh.cm/nhafop>



Discussions at the local networks seminar

Local networks are the powerhouse of our movement. They give peer support, keep things local and make sure what's done is designed for what's needed locally. They are the "glue" of the

movement. Each network functions differently in detail but plays the same role for their area

That meeting looked at how the central resources of Eco-Congregation Scotland can better help networks and how networks, by taking on some of the functions now done centrally, can be better able to grow the movement and maximise its impact.

Each network will have different answers to those kinds of questions but as they explore their answers, so together as a movement we will be better able to be the catalysts for change in communities across the country and help care for creation as is our calling.

*Ewan Aitken, Chair Eco-Congregation Scotland*

## News

### Important News about membership

Since February 2010 Eco-Congregation Scotland has been a registered charity with a formal membership structure. Members nominate the Board members and approve policies at the AGM. The Board are accountable to the AGM and, ultimately to members.

For this to work, the membership should consist of as many eco-congregations as possible. At 15th June we had 52 members out of 277 registered Eco-Congregations.

Ewan Aitken (Chair of Eco-Congregation Scotland) recently wrote to all registered congregations who are not members asking them to join and this has resulted in a number of new applications for membership. If your congregation is not a member please consider joining now. The membership form (PDF file) can be found here:

[www.ecocongregationscotland.org/form](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/form)

The Board will also be opening up associate

## News continued

membership (which already exists, but has never been used) as a way for individuals to support the work.

The Eco-Congregation Scotland Board is considering proposing a membership fee to the AGM in March 2012. Membership fees would be ring fenced to pay for supporting local networks and new congregations coming into our movement. Visible financial support from our members also helps with other funders as it proves that we have grass roots support.

These developments will help us to continue growing Eco-Congregation Scotland and ensure that it is representative of congregations on the ground.

### Eco-Congregations Keep our Beaches Beautiful!

At least three groups of eco-congregations that we know of (are there any more?) have been hard at work over the summer:

**Ardrishaig Church Eco Group** organised a clean up of the Ardrishaig foreshore on May 14<sup>th</sup> – and wonder if they have had the youngest beach clean team ever? Nathan, Jodie, Callum, Anya, Dillon, Logan, Ruaridh and Lucas range in



Young helpers at the Ardrishaig Beach Clean

age from 16 months to 7 years; along with Mums, Dads, Grans and other volunteers, they did a tremendous job – donning high visibility tunics and work gloves, and wielding black bags and litter pickers, they helped clear 11 bags of rubbish, plus an assortment of larger items from the south shore.

Not to be outdone **Helensburgh and Lomond Network** collected over 17 bags of rubbish in about 2 hours on their beach clean in June, mainly small pieces of plastic and paper. It was particularly noticeable that a significant amount of the small plastic pieces were the sticks from

cotton buds! Clearly too many people flush these away rather than disposing in the waste bin. It would be better to buy cotton buds with rolled paper sticks that degrade quickly!



Hard at work on the beach at Helensburgh

**Fairlie Parish Church** are old hands at beach cleaning and have for the last seven years litter picked along the shore line and in the village throughout the year.

### Pilgrimage Routes

Travelling on pilgrimage has been an important element in Scottish life for many years, which has left us with a network of pilgrimage centres, some of international fame. However, there is a need for further development of both pilgrimage and of pilgrim walking routes if they are to meet the needs of today's society.

For all of Scotland's churches the development of pilgrim routes and their associated infrastructure represents an opportunity to play a part in a major community activity, the option of developing a very practical expression of church and faith and an alternative way of meeting a clear national need for spirituality.

The vision of the Scottish Churches Rural Group, a group within Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), is to develop this activity through a Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum. At the Royal Highland Show in June, Church Leaders signed a Declaration of Intent in support of Pilgrimage Routes. It is now planned to establish the new Forum to co-ordinate and promote the necessary practical work on the ground. If your Church is interested in getting involved or you would like further information, please contact Nick Cooke at [nick@clearserv.co.uk](mailto:nick@clearserv.co.uk)

### Climate Leaders and Laggards

A growing number of top companies are leading

## News continued

the way for a low carbon economy by calling for stronger European climate targets. Stop Climate Chaos is helping to build this coalition of the willing, and they have already persuaded companies like Ikea, Sainsbury's and Nestle to support a low carbon economy in Europe.

More than 100 businesses, which together account for over 3.8 million employees, now support a stronger EU carbon emissions reduction target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020. 74 of these have signed on to a joint declaration see:

<http://ww.stopclimatechaos.org/30pc/action>

As well as the numerous economic and social benefits of cutting greenhouse gas emissions within Europe, these companies believe that moving to a 30% emissions reduction target will spur innovation and investment, creating millions of new jobs in a low carbon economy.

However, there are some laggards and Stop Climate Chaos is currently running a campaign to persuade a number of car companies, including VW, BMW, Peugeot, Ford and GM to commit to leadership on this critical issue. See

<http://ww.stopclimatechaos.org/30pc/action>

### European Week for Waste Reduction – Take the lead!

This year sees the third European Week for Waste Reduction taking place between the 19th to the 27th of November. The aim of the week is to raise awareness of ways to minimise our waste and encourage change in everyday behaviour in order to reduce the amount of waste produced across Europe.



Zero Waste Scotland are the official organisers of the week in Scotland and are now encouraging a wide range of groups to take part by organising an action in their local area.

St Mary's Episcopal Primary School in Dunblane were the worthy winners of last year's European award, which they won for their 'Food waste reduction challenge' campaign. See for information about the award

Visit the Zero Waste Scotland website for more information, free supporting materials or to register your event (deadline 4th November): [www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/ewwr2011](http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/ewwr2011)

## Award Winning Churches

If you are thinking of applying for an award, please ensure you are using an up to date application form (downloadable from <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/award/>). 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

**Hyndland Parish Church** only registered at the beginning of this year but they were already caring for creation and have achieved a lot. Prayers often focus on thanksgiving for creation and intercession for those affected by natural disasters, especially those arising from our misuse of resources. A new more energy efficient boiler was installed in the church last year. There are now plans to further upgrade insulation. They recycle a range of materials, use Fair Trade products and publish "green tips" in their magazine, as well as working with a local Eco School.

**Biggar Parish Church** have extensively involved their young people through projects on waste and fundraising for the Rain Forest Foundation, Christian Aid and other third world charities. They have made good use of the Energy Saving Trust's free support and are now implementing some of their report's recommendations. They plan an extension to their hall using eco-build principles and have a regular "green page" in the church newsletter.

**New Machar** Eco-congregation work is led by an enthusiastic team (known as the "Grace for Nature" Group) within the church who encourage a wide range of activities and have engendered much support within the congregation. Practically, the congregation has been very involved in the development of the community garden at Ingram's Neuk and has comprehensive information about eco-congregation on the Church web pages. See <http://www.newmacharchurch.net/html/ecocongregation.html>

**Gorgie Parish Church** has a wide range of caring for creation activities, which are promoted to the whole church community through an informative newsletter column. They have had special services on the theme and organise a walking bus that collects children for their Sunday Club - even the minister is now cycling around the community instead of driving! They have achieved Fair Trade status and worked with university students to clean up and plant bulbs



## Award Winning Churches continued

etc in the green-space opposite the church (in partnership with Gorgie City Farm).



Work at Gorgie to clean up a local green space

**Cranhill Parish Church** included a prayer Tent with a Prayer Tree at their Gala Day and cut Summer Labyrinth in the grass to encourage prayer and reflection in the outdoors. They run a nearly new shop and have established a close relationship with Cranhill Community Project, which has enabled the church to achieve a great deal in the community, including a very successful Community Garden project. A "Green Pledge" (a code of conduct respecting the environment) is displayed at the entrance to the building and is signed by all staff. In the manse loft and cavity wall insulation was installed, as well as double glazing throughout all the church buildings.

### Second Awards

**Dalbeattie Parish Church** have been undertaking some ground breaking work on measuring and managing their carbon footprint. The Board and Session took part in some "blue sky" thinking on possible carbon management with the Crichton Carbon Centre. The results included lowering the ceiling in Church, switching away from the Church to the Hall for winter worship, automatic sensor lights in public areas of the hall suite, car pooling to worship to reduce carbon footprint and reduced lighting in buildings. They are now looking at the installation of destratification pumps later in the year to circulate warm air more efficiently. This will be taken with the requirement to earth the 1930s installed electric lighting which is also due for replacement with lighting that is more efficient.

In addition, the Minister and an elder were trained as Carbon Smart Champions on a two day intensive course for business, voluntary and local authority agencies. Under the auspices of

## News from the Networks

the Dalbeattie Initiative they have also supported community projects such as the Dalbeattie Carbon Centre and the development of local allotments.

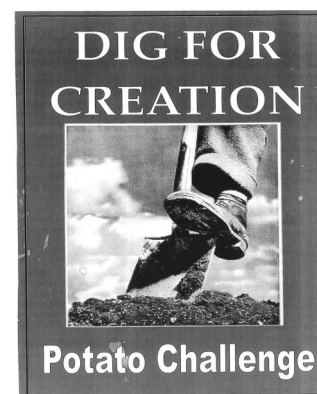
In Lent 2011 Members of the congregation along with members from the Catholic and Episcopal Congregations took part in an ecumenical bible study group which used the material produced "Driven into the Wilderness" see: [http://www.aberdeen.anglican.org/index.php/resources/publications\\_directory/](http://www.aberdeen.anglican.org/index.php/resources/publications_directory/)

**Skene Parish and Trinity Westhill** has an eco group which functions well bringing other individuals and groups in. It has pioneered an innovative scheme to recycle first aid kits from maritime life boats, which has the potential to be replicated in other areas. The church has access to all the first aid kits from Aberdeen but other ports may be able to make links with similar churches. See <http://www.skeneparish.com/eco-congregation-group.html>



Cosalt Offshore receiving the first aid kits

They have also set up a "Dig for Creation" potato project. This is used both practically and educationally to involve the congregation with the planting and explain the project's merits of growing your own to the local community.



Poster for grow your own

## News from the Networks continued

### NEW Networks!

We are delighted to announce that two new networks will be launched this autumn:

**Angus** on Tuesday 25th October, 7.30pm the new network for this area will be launched at a meeting in the Old and Abbey Church in Arbroath. The meeting is open to all congregations / parishes in the area. Whether the church is already an eco-congregation, or just starting to think about it. Come along to help build the network and find out what other churches are doing to care for creation. This meeting is open to all denominations but also follows up on two successful eco-congregation workshops that were delivered at the Church of Scotland's Angus Presbytery's "Big Day Out" on 17th September.

**North Ayrshire** gets under way with an Eco Fair event in Saltcoats New Trinity Church on Saturday 22nd October from 10am - 1pm. There will be a whole host of stalls at the Eco Fair to inspire and involve both local churches and the community. North Ayrshire Council will be bringing their 'Waste Awareness' group, with Fairlie Organic Growers giving gardening advice and the Energy Agency helping out on reducing fuel costs and carbon emissions and Fairlie Parish Church are bringing a Fairtrade stall and refreshments.

**Roadshows available for all networks!** We now have quite a few networks that have booked up for a Climate Change Roadshow. We are running this event jointly with Christian Aid and it is being offered to all networks throughout 2012. The Roadshow is an evening of presentations and workshops about climate change, its effects on the developing world and how churches can respond to this at a local level through campaigning and practical action. This is a great opportunity for networks to invite other local churches who may not have considered these issues or been involved with Eco-Congregation before. Book one for your area now! Network co-ordinators will have details of how to arrange a workshop for your area.

### Existing networks

**Aberdeen / Aberdeenshire** meets again on 5th October, 7.30 - 9pm at Trinity Church, Westhill to review congregation's experiences with Eco-Congregation awards and developments. Everyone is welcome for an open time of sharing and discussion.

**Dumfries and Galloway** also has a meeting on

5th October, 7.30pm at St George's in Dumfries. the main topic of the meeting will be "Energy Conservation & Renewables for the Home" and the speaker will be Quentin Palmer of the Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre. With winter not too far away and fuel bills ever increasing, it is timely to consider this topic. Is there information and advice we can pass on to your congregation and community about how to save money and carbon?

**Edinburgh** has a meeting on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30 - 9pm at St John's Church, Princes Street. The focus will be on networking, with an opportunity to share stories and learn from each other's eco-congregation work. For those just starting out as an eco-congregation and wanting to know what has worked for other congregations / parishes or if you have been working away for some time and are looking for new ideas, this will be an opportunity to gain from the experience of others. There will also be a short discussion re the future organisation of the network, including deciding the frequency of meetings and the programme until Dec 2012 with dates, venues / hosts and topics (visits, speakers etc).

**Fife** meets on October 24th at 7.30pm in Hope Park and Martyrs Church in St Andrews with a topic of "Involving young people".

**Glasgow** met on 29th August when participating congregations had the opportunity to compare case histories, sharing spiritual, practical and community projects that had worked for them. Detailed notes were taken and these have been passed on to be used on the resource pages of the Eco-Congregation Scotland website. The next meeting will be in November at Langside Parish Church, date to be confirmed

**Helensburgh and Lomond** held its second annual awareness raising coffee morning on Saturday 11 June. The event is intended to showcase what they have been doing locally and also to link groups with a common interest. The network was supported by three local Eco schools - Hermitage Primary, Cardross Primary



Information at the Eco Coffee morning

## News from the Networks continued

and Lomond Junior School; Helensburgh Transition Towns; Helensburgh Bee Keepers and the GRAB trust. Helensburgh Toyota provided information on the Toyota Hybrid cars and the Green processes it employs and individual church members promoted and staffed a Fairtrade stall and Eco-cleaning products stall. About 100 visitors were presented with a variety of displays and eco-games. Coffee was served along with a home baking stall which raised £220 for Eco-Congregation Scotland.

The Network's supporters followed up this event on the Sunday afternoon with a beach clean (see News item on p 2 and met again on 2nd September to see the amazing work at Luss Parish Church. See <http://tinyurl.com/3go5pxu>



The Glebe Project at Luss

**Highland and Moray** are hosting a Climate Change Roadshow on Saturday 12th November at Ness Bank Church, Inverness. All churches / parishes are invited, whether or not you have had any involvement with Eco-Congregation Scotland before.

**Orkney** is hoping to have a big eco-congregation event in the Spring, probably including a climate Change Roadshow. Westray Kirk powers on with it's renewable energy programme, with the Manse now 100% self sufficient in energy with a wind turbine, which also supplies the energy for the ground source heat pump.

**Perth** met on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm at St John's Kirk, St. John Street, Perth PH1 5SH to look at the big redevelopment project that has just been completed in the church with a tour to see the improvements that have been made and an opportunity to ask questions about how the project was undertaken. In the same week, on Friday 23rd September, their Climate Change Roadshow will take place in St Leonard's-in-the-Fields.

**South Lanarkshire** held a successful "Green Day Out" on 4th June in co-operation with the David Livingstone Centre at Blantyre. The

weather could have been better but good publicity was achieved with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant coming to open proceedings. Ten different organisations had stalls giving information about environmental action.

They meet again on Tuesday 4th October at St John's Church in Hamilton when there will be a review of the Green Day Out event and an opportunity to share stories and learn from each other's eco-congregation work.



Opening the Green Day Out event



The Fair trade stall

**Stirling** network travelled to Aberfoyle to see the renovation project at St Mary's Episcopal Church. The project cost £310,000 with funding from insurance, Heritage Lottery, a VAT refund, an Episcopal Church grant and fundraising from the congregation and local community. Many items had been renovated, including new felt under existing tiles adding to energy efficiency for the building. They are now considering air source heat pumps to replace electric heating. The next meeting is on 22nd November, 7.30pm in Stirling Methodist Church.

**West Lothian and Falkirk** met on 13th September to talk about involving young people in their work. A great DVD, made by a local Eco School's about their work on renovating a local pond, was shown. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the meeting was poorly attended. However, if any local congregation would like to borrow the DVD we now have a copy in the ECS library, available on free loan to inspire (and amuse!) you and your congregation. Contact [margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk).



## Resources

### Green Spirituality

This new paperback book includes prayers and meditations dealing with environmental concerns. It has been written by The Reverend Canon Robin Morrison, Bishops Advisor for Church and Society and is produced on behalf of the Church of Wales group CHASE - Church Action on Sustaining the Environment. £4.00 ISBN: 978-0-85326-058-5

### Stop Climate Change Video

As part of their work to encourage other countries to commit to similarly ambitious climate laws, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland has put together a short video which explains a bit about the Act and the role that civil society (including many of you on this mailing list!) had in shaping this.



You can watch the video on Youtube via this link: [www.stopclimatechaos.org/scottish-act-film](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/scottish-act-film).

### Energy Saving Trust website

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/> Don't forget to keep an eye on this very informative website. Currently, it has information about the Renewable Heat Premium, grants and offers for home improvements, recommended products, insulation and heating, generating your own energy and much more. It also has interesting videos such as "Living with an electric car"

**The Carbon Bathtub** - Looking for a graphic to help explain the effects of climate change? The National Geographic web site provides an interesting way of illustrating at this issue: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/big-idea/05/carbon-bath>

**Journey of the Universe** tells for the first time the 14 billion year epic story of cosmic, Earth, and human emergence. Set in a day on the Greek island of Samos, the film weaves together scientific discoveries in astronomy, geology, biology, and ecology with humanistic insights from the world's cultures. With exquisite imagery, provocative metaphors, and an enlivening musical score, the film invites us to embrace a profound new participatory role in the flourishing of the Earth community. Visit: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org>

### CSV Action Earth Grants 2011

These are easy access to grants of up to £500 available until 31 October 2011. If you are planning an environmental activity using volunteers or you think you can come up with a good project that improves biodiversity in your area, then you could be eligible for a CSV Action Earth grant. The aim is to empower people to take action in their community and this campaign offers three easy-to-access grants ranging from £50 to £500 to cover , materials tools and expenses, and can make a big difference to an event. The CSV Action Earth campaign is supported once again by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

Last year over 10,000 CSV Action Earth volunteers were involved in projects such as improving wildlife habitats by clearing and planting, turning derelict wasteland into bee-friendly wildflower meadows, creating ponds and footpaths, tagging sharks, building and installing bat and bird boxes, improving woodland and a whole range of other environmental tasks. Already this year there are almost 100 active projects, and it is hoped to almost double this number. Grants will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so please register quickly. Projects can apply NOW. You can apply on-line, download forms or get more information including details of current projects at [www.actionearth.org.uk](http://www.actionearth.org.uk). If you wish to discuss project ideas or any issues relating to the campaign, please contact Robert Henderson on 0131 222 9083 or by e-mail on [rhenderson@csv.org.uk](mailto:rhenderson@csv.org.uk).

**Global Day of Prayer and Action** Tearfund is working with some of it's partners and like-minded organisations across the world to organise a global day of prayer and action on climate change on Sunday 6th November called "Hope for Creation". They are expecting thousands of Christians around the world to join in by praying and speaking up for justice for our global neighbours and for action to protect God's creation.

The hope is that this day will unite the global church in praying and acting for progress at the UN climate talks in Durban this December and for action in our own countries to respond to the issue.

To find out more and to sign up to pray on this day - visit [www.hopeforcreation.org](http://www.hopeforcreation.org)

## Prayer

O God, as the reality of what we have done to the earth and seas, which provide us with our daily bread, dawns on us, grant us the grace to do what is necessary to co-operate with your redeeming care of the cosmos. Give us the generosity and the courage to do without those things that destroy earth, air, water and all that sustains us. Bless us anew, that we may bless the earth with healing care, God – Creator, Word and Holy Spirit. Amen.

*This is one of a number of prayers that Eco-Congregation Ireland chairperson, Catherine Brennan SSL, wrote for the Creation Time resources. For further prayers see <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/553/>*

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>

## Contributions welcome!

If you would like to send in a news item, review of a resource you have found useful, prayer, quote or any other item, we would welcome your contribution to the newsletter.

## Use of PDF Files

We have made a decision to stop issuing documents to the public in Microsoft Word format. The reasons for this are that not everyone has a copy of Word and it costs money; Microsoft changed the Word format itself recently adding to the confusion and Word is not available for all types of computer (or indeed mobile devices). All new documents will be in PDF format. This can be read using a number of free reading programmes. Many computers already have a pdf reader installed and some web browsers will open the files automatically. If you have any problems do a Google search for "Adobe pdf reader" and this will take you to the main free one. We will be moving all the downloadable files on our web site to this format over the next few months.

## 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, to receive future issues email [scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ecocongregation.org.uk).

### 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.ecocongregationscotland.org](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org).



### To enquire about the programme and request an introduction pack contact:

**Gordon Hudson**

Email: [manager@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:manager@ecocongregation.org.uk)

Phone: 0131 240 2274

Eco-Congregation Scotland

121 George Street

Edinburgh EH2 4YN

### For advice and support contact:

**Margaret Warnock**

Email: [margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk](mailto:margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk)

Phone: 01877 330182

Eco-Congregation Scotland

121 George Street

Edinburgh EH2 4YN

**Website:** [www.ecocongregationscotland.org](http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org)

**Eco-Congregation Scotland is a Scottish Charity, No SC041287**

Eco-Congregation Scotland is supported financially by the Scottish Government, SCIAF, Christian Aid, the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church. It is endorsed by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS).

