



## West Lothian and Falkirk Eco-Congregation Network

*7.30pm, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013,  
St Ninian's Craigmalen Church, Linlithgow*

**Present:** Moira and Tom Jack – St Andrew's, Bo'ness  
Jean McSween - Falkirk Old and St Modan's  
Sarah Young and Jesper Petersen – Torphichen  
Fiona Duke - St Michael's Parish, Linlithgow  
Patricia Chapman, Richard Houston, Alan Scott - St Ninian's, Craigmalen  
Corinne and Andrew Anderson – St Peter's, Linlithgow  
Trevor Jamison and Margaret Warnock – Eco-Congregation Scotland

### Apologies:

1. The meeting opened with a beautiful reflective slide show with words and music, presented by the Green Team at St Ninian's Craigmalen, followed by a prayer.
2. Our hosts were congratulated on recently receiving the Eco-Congregation Award, which was presented to them by Marjorie McGhie (one of their assessors and a network member) on Sunday.
3. **Councillor Tom Conn from West Lothian Council** then gave a presentation about his role within the Council, which includes responsibility for:
  - 3 Country Parks: Beecraigs, Polkemmet and Almondell. Beecraigs has over 1 million visitors a year but has recently suffered a lot of wind damage to their woodlands.
  - Roads and pavement maintenance
  - Open spaces and cemeteries
  - Credit Union network
  - Waste management (which includes recycling) and a requirement to work towards Zero Waste in Scotland (ZWS) - see <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/what-does-zero-waste-mean>

This year there is a focus on developing the Council's Open Space Strategy

### Waste Management:

- 195 staff with a £15 million operating budget – are seeking public co-operation to reduce costs
- The law requires a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill
- The Council is rolling out a full waste collection with food waste collection now being introduced in limited areas.
- This needs co-operation from everyone (at the moment 5 tonnes of food waste are produced weekly in the area.
- Reducing waste benefits everyone (eg research shows that second "free" item of the BOGOF offers often ends up in the bin!) – less food waste means less odour from the tip (Linlithgow Bridge residents often complain about this). Also £5 million a year spent on sending waste to landfill when at least 50% of contents of grey bins could have been recycled. Has a financial as well as environmental cost. Money saved could be used elsewhere in council budgets

- Landfill: £680,000 surplus accrued from Landfill Tax Fund being used for local environmental projects. Organisations (including churches) can apply to Land Trust (<http://www.landtrust.org.uk/>) for funding. Initial application is a simple A4 sheet. Projects can include funding for energy efficiency measures such as insulation / new boilers / wiring etc.
- Linlithgow Community Development Trust is a recipient of these funds – being used for development of 18 acre site next to leisure centre. (see <http://trust-linlithgow.org.uk/>)
- Government is aiming for Zero Waste by 2021. Landfill tax will therefore disappear by then. Fund is changing (to be regionalised) so organisations need to get applications in soon.
- Council has applied to ZWS for £3.5 million funding to roll out green bin collection for compostable material.
- Introducing “Recycling on the Go” bins at key points in town (eg around Linlithgow High School) to enable segregation of recyclables at source – more cost effective.
- Glass collection – not easy or economic from kerbside and are therefore building up a network of neighbourhood recycling points en route to shops, schools, health centres etc.
- Recyclables currently processed as follows:
  - Glass to Alloa
  - Food waste – planned to produce biogas from waste to use for electricity generation
  - Newspaper – recycled by the industry
  - Metal goes to China
  - Construction industry increasingly using recycled material

**There was a request from the network for further information as to which materials can (and cannot!) go into recycling bins. It was suggested that information could be put into the Gazette. Information is already on calendar of uplift dates that Council provides.**

Other projects

- Linlithgow Loch management plan (with Historic Scotland, Scottish Water and SEPA) includes measures to combat algal bloom
- Air quality monitoring in High Street shows need to reduce the number of cars in High Street.

#### 4. **West Lothian Food Bank**

Patricia Chapman read out a summary of their activities prepared by Marshall Green of WLFB:

It is now nearly 6 months since WLFB opened and in that time they have given a 3 day supply of food to 812 men, women and children in crisis. This was 6.3 tonnes of an amazing 8.13 tonnes collected from the people of West Lothian. Last month alone 1.91 tonnes was given out and collected 1.72 tonnes

On our national news almost daily there is mention of the growing numbers of people attending a fast growing number of foodbanks. There is a real problem with hidden hunger, and for many people on low income they are only one paycheque, bill, delayed wage packet or benefit from a crisis and having to make difficult choices between paying rent or utilities or eating.

It is for these people that the Trussell Trust, a Christian charity has now set up over 250 food banks throughout the UK.

How does it work?

1. Food is collected from the community.
2. It is sorted in to boxes containing a 3 day supply for a family or individual.  
How do WLFB decide who is in need? They don't. The strength of the system is that care professionals and charity workers are given vouchers, with strict guidelines, for distribution to the needy person or family.  
Vouchers are given out by: health visitors, social workers, church pastoral workers, doctors surgeries, schools, carers, care centres, probation services. These are the people who meet those in crisis and can make some sort of assessment of need. They are a key part of the community and its response. Nothing is ever given without a voucher
3. This voucher is then taken to the foodbank where people are met with a friendly welcome, a cup of tea, and whilst their food is bagged up there are people who talk to them about their problems and help signpost them to additional help.  
This could be:-
  - Advocacy
  - Debt Counseling
  - Health issues
  - Housing Support
  - Legal Advice
  - Learning Advice

At the moment WLFB are giving out food faster than they are receiving it.

If you feel you can help then details are all on line at  
[www.westlothian.foodbank.org.uk/](http://www.westlothian.foodbank.org.uk/)

#### 5. News from Eco-Congregation Scotland

- The Annual Gathering took place in April with a theme of "Food". A resource sheet is attached with these notes. Rosemary Hoskins (Falkirk Old and St Modan's) was nominated as a Board member for ECS at the AGM.
- Trevor Jamison, the new Environmental Chaplain for ECS was introduced at the Gathering. Trevor will be getting out and about to networks and congregations over the next few months across the country. He is contactable at [trevor@ecocongregationscotland.org](mailto:trevor@ecocongregationscotland.org).
- The Local Networks Seminar will be on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Venue and programme to be confirmed but everyone is welcome.
- The mentoring scheme to help congregations grow and develop their creation care work is gradually being introduced and is available to all eco-congregations.

#### 6. Programme: meetings for the remainder of the year

**September** – visit to Avondale Landfill site.

Action - Jo Hirst from Torphichen has contacts to arrange this. Details to be confirmed and circulated as soon as possible.

**October / November – Networking: sharing ideas, inspiration and challenges**

Action – Margaret will contact Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh again to see how they are getting on as an eco-congregation and ask if they might be able to host this meeting.

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