

Notes on Meeting of Mid-Argyll Network of Eco-Congregations

29.4.2013

Present:

Jean Hodgson
David Carruthers
Mary Stirling
Corinne Mills
Cliff Acklam
Brien Dickey
Adrian Shaw

Congregation:

Ardrishaig

Kilmartin, Glassary and Ford

Nether-Lorn
Eco Congregations Scotland

Louise Glen-Lee - Argyll & Bute Council

Apologies:

Anne Watson
Barbara Gritten
James McLellan
Janet Jardine
Charles Tigh

Ardrishaig

Kilmartin, Glassary and Ford

Welcomes:

Jean Hodgson, chairing the meeting, welcomed everyone, especially Adrian Shaw from Eco-Congregations Scotland, and Louise Glen-Lee from Argyll and Bute Council.

- Jean read through the notes from the last meeting and these were agreed by everyone who had been present.
- Matters arising from the notes -
 - Cliff updated the meeting on improvements at the Manse and other items
 - loft insulation now done
 - wood burning stove installed
 - a beaver walk led by Jim Malcolm is planned for the autumn
 - a bird walk is planned when David Jardine is available to lead it
- Walks organized by the Ardrishaig congregation are now notified to Corinne Mills
- Corinne has now purchased the book recommended at the last meeting, '365 Ways to Make A Difference, (M.A.D.) and hopes to use information from it on the service sheets.

Mid-Argyll - a Fair Trade Area?

Jean introduced Louise Glen-Lee and the group discussed with her what is already being done in our churches and how the Local Authority might support them.

- Activities already being done by our churches include: distributing Fair Trade catalogues towards Christmas time, (with many items not available in supermarkets); using Fair Trade coffee, tea and biscuits and using Fair Trade ingredients when cooking.

- Louise told the meeting that the Local Authority can support this by buying in bulk making sure that churches get the best price for tea, coffee etc.
- There was discussion over encouraging the planting of neglected areas of ground to cultivate vegetables, fruit or wild flowers, possibly the establishment of community orchards. Louise told the meeting that the Local Authority would be willing to allow areas belonging to them to be cultivated.
- David Carruthers asked if there was any chance that the Local Authority could provide labour to turn over the ground for the first time. Louise said there was a possibility that people in the Community Payback Scheme could do this.

Overview of Fair Trade Issues

- There is a need to balance the distance of travel of Fair Trade goods and to use those nearest to you. (Adrian talked about a 'Food Print' game he has).
- Range of Fair Trade goods is extending all the time, Tesco now have as many Fair Trade goods as the Co-op.
- Adrian pointed out that it is important that the Fair Trade movement is 'grass roots'.
- Louise felt it is important to keep Fair Trade to the forefront. David suggested that Argyll and Bute should add, 'A Fair Trade Authority' to their letterhead. Evidently Scotland is recognized as a Fair Trade country, due to having the requisite number of Fair Trade Authorities within it.
- Louise said that Argyll and Bute need to improve their record. They will be introducing 'mingled waste' soon which actually saves money for the authority, and gives employment for people with a disability.
- Oban is a Fair Trade town and the person to contact there is Pauline Cameron.

Future Action

- Carry out a baseline assessment of all cafés etc. about whether they use Fair Trade tea/coffee. The feeling of the meeting was that the High School might be interested in carrying this out in the new academic year.
- Someone to go along to the Local Authority Fair Trade strategy meeting.

The Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering

The focus was on food. Groups should be challenging supermarkets, the international food business is enormous. In a discussion group Jean had shared with the group the many activities organized by Ardrishaig Church and how it is good to share food and drink as a part of them.

Any Other Business

- Mary explained about the 'IF' campaign to try to get the G8 countries to donate more foreign aid towards solving the majority world's food problems.
- The virtues and running costs of air source heat pumps were discussed as there is an interest in the possibility of installing one at Glassary manse, and in one of the halls in Ardrishaig.
- Adrian informed the meeting that Rev. Trevor Jameson is being made available from the URC as chaplain for up to five years.

A provisional date for the next meeting was set on Monday 7th October.