



## Ayrshire Eco-Congregation Network

Notes from Meeting  
30<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
Mauchline Parish Church

### 1. Ethical Investment

**Divestment:** The evening began with a brief presentation on the issue of “Should the Church Invest in Fossil Fuel Companies”, which is often known as “Divestment”. This is an issue that is being pursued by a number of denominations and big institutions, nationally and internationally. The Church of Scotland’s Climate Change Officer is currently consulting with congregations and eco-congregation networks on this topic up and down the country, before preparing a report and recommendations for the 2016 General Assembly.

**Why Ethical Investment** (from Good Money Week website:

<http://goodmoneyweek.com/why-it-matters>) The UK and the rest of the world face big problems: extreme weather, social inequality, scarce resources and a rapidly growing population to name a few.

The amount of money that flows towards solving these problems - in the form of investment into projects or more responsible companies - helps ensure they won't get worse and that our quality of life, and that of our children and grandchildren, will be protected.

'Money makes the world go round', so the saying goes. We want the world to go round the *right* way. That's where 'Good Money' comes in.

Good Money:

- Reflects your values
- Enhances quality of life
- Safeguards the environment
- Protects future generations

**Kenneth McPhie from the Association of Christian Financial Advisers**

(<http://www.christianfinancialadvisers.org.uk/>) then gave a talk on Ethical Investment:

Ethical investment really started in 1985 with the launch of unit trust funds with ethical criteria, either positive or negative and they now include funds with a Socially Responsible mandate. Unfortunately the management can work unethically behind closed doors which cannot be obvious in due diligence which would always be carried out viz Volkswagen and emission test jiggery pokery. The Bible states in Deuteronomy 25 v 13- 16 that God detests people who use dishonest scales and measures. The cost to the consumer of greed and mismanagement runs into hundreds of billions.

Ethical investment can help you sleep better and influence management to work better and help those in need. Not all asset classes are covered by ethical funds and they are rarely top performers in their sectors and ethical banks e.g. Triodos Bank (<https://www.triodos.co.uk/en/about-triodos/what-we-do/?gclid=CNbcoPadv8qCFYqRGwoddzQLog>) and Kingdom Bank (<http://www.kingdombank.co.uk/>) are rarely best buys for interest rates. They are generally regarded as more volatile due to the restrictions placed on them but a well-diversified portfolio can help reduce it to an acceptable level.

Kenneth also referred to a document on the Biblical Principles of Financial Planning which is downloadable at:

<http://www.christianfinancialadvisers.org.uk/downloads/documents/ACFA%20Biblical%20Principles%20Financial%20Planning%20-%20Consumer%20Full.pdf>

## **2. Network Programme**

Following a short discussion two dates were identified for meetings next year (dates and topics subject to confirmation):

- 10<sup>th</sup> February**      After Paris – a report on the outcomes of the UN Summit on Climate Change to be held in Paris this December and a discussion on what eco-congregations can do next.
- Speaker (tbc): Dr Sheena Wurthmann (Convenor of Eco-Congregation Scotland Board). Sheena will be taking our Climate Justice Baton, which has been circulating through Scottish churches and their communities since April, to the Paris Summit.
- May / June**      Visit to Landfiill site in Ayr
- Suggested contact: Bill Duncan, South Ayrshire Council – MW to contact
- 28<sup>th</sup> September**      Topic tbc

Please put the dates in your new diaries!

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