



Eco-Congregation Scotland Local Networks Seminar

Saturday 26th September 2015



This Seminar is organised annually to create an opportunity for networking between the networks, to provide them with ideas for action and for them to give feedback to ECS. This year there were more people attending than in previous years (28) but from fewer networks, with 14 of our 20 networks represented on the day (for a full list of participants, please see Appendix 1). Highland, Moray and Orkney networks are generally unable to attend due to the distances involved in travelling to a meeting in the Central Belt. To compensate Regional Gatherings have been organised in some of these areas.

An evaluation of the Seminar is available in Appendix 2.

1. Welcome and Opening Worship

Eco-Congregation Environmental Chaplain, Trevor Jamison led a time of prayer and reflection on scripture, emphasising a theme of journeying, with the journey towards the Paris Climate Change Conference particularly in mind.

The prayers used came from the material offered for Creation Time 2015, *Joining the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* (available at <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/creation-time/>).

For the Bible reflection Trevor invited participants to think about the previous twelve months with Eco-Congregation Scotland, to remember any mentions of the COP21 meeting in Paris in December, and to consider what 2016 might look like. Keeping these things in mind, the story of God telling Abram to set out on a challenging journey (Genesis 12: 1-9) was read. Participants then shared the ideas and feelings that came to them whilst they listened.

2. After Paris – What Happens Next?

Whatever the world's leaders decide in Paris this December, what role do eco-congregations have over the next ten years? How do we connect with our congregations, parishes and communities? What actions should we prioritise and what resources do we need?

John Ferguson, Ecoldeam Ltd

This presentation gave an overview of some key environmental issues ie :

- Climate change
- Resources
- Air quality
- Energy
- Water
- Food

We were reminded why these issues are important and that the fundamentals of survival and a dignified life are unchanged since the beginning of time. In the face of these challenges, how do we start to make a difference? Communities (however defined) are ultimately what matter and a good place to start. The role of

churches should be to support, encourage, lead by example and innovate where possible. Practical simple things can make a big difference.

The full presentation is available to download at:

<http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/lomond/presentation-from-john-ferguson-of-ecoideam-ltd-now-available-to-download/>

Participants were divided into four groups each, in turn, looking at building a framework for action in churches on:

1. Community Renewables (including Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty)
2. Waste: reduce, reuse, recycle
3. Local Food Production and Food Poverty
4. Conserving the Local Environment

The summary below shows a selection of the key actions that were identified from the workshops where eco-congregations and /or networks could make a difference.

These ideas have been selected to:

- Fill gaps in / update existing ECS resources eco-congregation
- Signpost congregations to other sources and campaigns to avoid repeating what is already provided by other organisations

Action Idea	Implementation
1.1 COMMUNITY RENEWABLES	<p>Downloadable information leaflet* (pdf with live links) for engaging congregational participation and encouraging behaviour change. Leaflets can be printed by the church and handed out to their congregation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Signpost to existing information / sources of help and advice in developing community based renewables energy schemes.- List possible partners for local community energy schemes.- Identify exemplar projects and contacts. <p>Ensure format easily updated – information / grants etc are constantly changing.</p>
1.2 ENERGY AUDIT SYSTEM appropriate to Churches and associated buildings investigate what standards are compliant with appropriate national / international standard eg either ISO 50002:2014 or BS EN 16247-1:2012 /	<p>Web Based Resource*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Signposting to auditor specialists who can undertake an audit eg? CofS Better Heating scheme or EST- Explanatory guidance on what an audit does and the benefits of energy efficiency with case studies.- Signpost to available grants for energy efficiency measures post an audit process- Raise awareness of water use as an energy efficiency issue.

1.3 CAR SHARING	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight the benefits of car sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping elderly / less able • getting to know your neighbour / fellowship • sharing resources • reducing transport emissions - Explain how to set up a lift share scheme - Use exemplars, sharing best practice in churches.
1.4 FUEL POVERTY	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness in churches of what fuel poverty is - Disseminate information about who helps with fuel poverty – Citizens Advice, ?Turn2Us - Provide guidance on how churches can assist people in fuel poverty - Encourage churches to provide financial help / fundraising. - Give information about how to help people get appropriate energy efficiency advice to reduce energy demand/costs. - Use food banks to identify and engage with people in fuel poverty. - Use exemplars, sharing best practice in churches.
2. WASTE: PRODUCT REUSE	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be a reminder of sources of information for what can be recycled and where (ZWS etc) - Identify social and environmental benefits of reuse. - Identify goods suitable for reuse i.e. furniture, white goods, carpets, spectacles, tools, books etc. - Identify organisations that facilitate reuse locally, nationally, internationally e.g. Tools for Self Reliance - Provide guidance from existing church based projects on setting up a Charity Shop or re-use scheme. - Use exemplars, sharing best practice in churches.
3. LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD POVERTY	
3.1 PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using church grounds / land for growing food - Linking with existing local initiatives: co-ops, allotments, schools, community gardens and orchards - Promoting the idea that gardening is fun - Running foraging walks <p>Use exemplars, sharing best practice in churches.</p>
3.2 REDUCE FOOD WASTE	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* to encourage behaviour change in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing home grown food surpluses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising seed exchanges - Using shared learning with older folk (wartime experience) - Purchasing of food, food storage and cooking tips to reduce food waste.
3.3 SUPPORT FOOD BANKS	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* to give guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to set up or support a local food bank. - Promoting local food banks to potential users. Use food bank exemplars, sharing best practice in churches. - Running cookery classes including use of leftovers. - Running a “Shopping Buddy” scheme – 2 people sharing BOGOF offers. <p>Use food bank exemplars, sharing best practice in churches.</p>
4. CONSERVING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	<p>As above downloadable information leaflet* about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making imaginative use of church grounds and promoting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting • Bee-keeping • Wildflower areas • Specialist bird nesting for eg peregrine, swift, swallow • Amenity mowing appropriate and proportionate to environment - Raising awareness of national organisations which can help with advice and with resolving local issues: SWT, RSPB, NTS, Historic Scotland, Paths for All - Promoting “citizen science” amongst enthusiastic non-specialists (adults and children) to monitor changes in biodiversity - Running or participating in local Beach – Burn – Car park clean ups - Promoting walking groups <p>Use exemplars, sharing best practice in churches</p>

***ANY RESOURCES PRODUCED NEED COMMON BRANDING**

3. Swap Shop

Participants were invited to view posters, pictures and information from a range of network meetings that have taken place on a whole host of different themes over recent years. They were then asked to select one theme that interested them and they wanted to know more about. The task was then to find someone in the room who had either been at that meeting or knew something about the theme. This exercise facilitated an exchange of ideas and inspiration for future network meetings. A list of the themes displayed is available in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1 – List of Participants

Name	Network
Richard Murray, John Steel, Morag Green	Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
Shiona Baird	Angus and Dundee
Ann Gregory, Jean and Keith Martin	Ayrshire
Ian Skinner	Central Borders
Ross McPhail	East Lothian
Arthur Chapman, Anne Currie	Edinburgh
Jo Blackburn	Esk and Tweed
Alan Werritty	Fife
Jan MacDonald, Barry Watson	Glasgow
Mary Sweetland, Sandy Kerr, Margaret Graham and Selina McGeoch	Helensburgh and Lomond
Jean Hodgson and Anne Watson	Mid Argyll
Bill Wilson	Perth
Tom Pollok, Len Gregory and Jon Cape	Stirling
William Ross, Sarah Young, Patricia Chapman	Falkirk and West Lothian
John Ferguson	Ecoldeam Ltd
Trevor Jamison and Margaret Warnock	Eco-Congregation Scotland

Appendix 2 - Evaluation

1. How useful do you feel the seminar was in terms of giving a) inspiration and motivation, b) facilitating networking between the networks, c) ideas about how to engage better with congregations and the general public d) ideas and information to take back to your network?

Almost all of the respondents found the seminar very useful or useful in providing:

- inspiration, motivation
- facilitating networking between the networks
- ideas about how to engage better with congregations and the general public
- ideas and information to take back to their network

One respondent found the seminar of little use in terms of giving ideas about how to engage better with congregations and the general public

2. Which aspect of the seminar did you find most useful?

Almost everyone commented that discussion and working together in workshops, exchanging ideas /experience and simply getting to know other was useful.

Others specifically mentioned:

- The introduction and opening worship
- The talk by John Ferguson
- The focus on reuse in one of the workshops

3. Which aspect of the seminar did you find the least useful?

More than half the respondents either did not comment on this question or stated that it was all useful.

Aspects that other respondents found least useful were:

- Session on Community Renewables
- Workshop on Conserving the Local Environment
- Swap Shop - a little rushed but still interesting
- Groups talking too close together
- Group discussions a little unfocussed but interesting

4. How do you intend to follow up on the seminar with your network?

Although one or two participants were not sure how they would follow up on the seminar most expressed the intention to take the ideas and messages shared at the seminar back to their own network and / or congregation.

Other follow up ideas included:

- Emailing churches in their own area [to raise awareness of Eco-Congregation]
- Encouraging use of the ECS website
- Planning and promoting a “big event” next year

5. Do you have any suggestions about topics for discussion at the next year's Local Network Seminar?

These were:

- Follow up on climate change and fracking
- Building / growing the network
- Ask each network to suggest a topic
- Compulsory eco-theology and eco-spirituality for every ministerial trainee as part of their preparation for ministry
- A refresher course on organisation and composition of Eco-Congregation – to help welcome new people in
- Follow on from Paris
- Find out in advance what are the most popular issues locally – then see if there is one that is very popular and choose that as a theme for the day
- Thinking around food security
- COP 21 - the effect of the instability on migration
- Impact of COP21 – what changes have happened since December 2015
- Environmental initiatives in the developing world eg plastic bag ban in Rwanda
- Ways of implementing locally and nationally the Sustainable Development Goals (all 17 of them!) Emphasise the links between Justice , Environment, Ecology, War and Economics – need to be aware of the connections

Appendix 3 – Themes used at Network Meetings in Recent Years

Can your network use or adapt one of these themes?

SPIRITUAL TOPICS	Explanation	Speaker / Source
1. The Environment: a Christian Imperative?	When all churches are facing huge challenges, is environmental concern a luxury we cannot afford? Or might it just be part of the solution?	Rev Trevor Jamison – Eco-Congregation Scotland's Environmental Chaplain trevor@ecocongregationscotland.org
2. For God so Loved the Cosmos	Recognising that God is the creator of the universe, not just the creator of humankind, affects our understanding, faith and actions.	As above
3. The Theatre of God's Glory	Resources for Christian worship that's grounded in creation	As above
4. Looking at the Bible through Green-Tinted Lenses	Some Biblical Pictures Relating to Creation	As above
5. Walk the John Muir Way	Join Trevor for a gentle stroll along part of the John Muir Way (and back!), lasting one hour, and featuring conversation about John Muir, creation and faith	As above
6. Visit to Luss Pilgrimage walk		Organised by network members
PRACTICAL TOPICS	Explanation	Speaker / Source
7. Who Cares about the Bumblebee?	Bumblebees and other insect pollinators are in decline. We depend on them to pollinate our fruit and vegetables and they are an essential part of the food chain that supports our wildlife. What can we do in our gardens and countryside to help protect these wonderful creatures?	http://bumblebeeconservation.org/ Contact enquiries@bumblebeeconservation.org
8. Ethical Money	Being wise stewards - church treasurers will naturally want to use any monetary assets in a way which gives the best possible financial return, how can we ensure that this is also done in line with Christian ethical values and with due concern for creation.	A talk by Anderson MacPhie a member of the Association of Christian Financial Advisers mail@Amfs.co.uk

9. Church Development and Energy Efficiency	<p>1. Cults Parish Church have developed their lovely, new Kirk Centre, incorporating energy saving and renewable technology.</p> <p>2. St Ninian's Old Parish Church, Stirling accessed grants and sponsorship to make their 19th Century church buildings, warm, welcoming and energy efficient.</p>	<p>Donald Brown - donald.brown@dsl.pipex.com</p> <p>Mike Adam - adammjm@gmail.com</p>
10. Food Waste into Compost		A talk by Grant Keenan of Keenan's Recycling
11. Waste Matters	A talk about local waste collection services - help minimize waste and what happens to all the different items that are collected at the kerbside for recycling.	Grant Wilson from Moray Council Grant.Wilson@moray.gov.uk
12. Asset or Millstone?	Are your church buildings helping or hindering your outreach and mission?	Scott Wham, (scottwham@yahoo.co.uk) an architect specialising in church refurbishment and author of ECS Ideas for Action "Greening Church Property" – see: http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/ideas-for-action/practical-living/greening-the-cornerstone/
COMMUNITY / GLOBAL TOPICS	Explanation	Speaker / Source
13. Should Churches Invest in Fossil Fuel Companies?	Energy is one of the really big issues for our world, and the Church needs to consider how it should respond ethically. Many churches have investments, including in fossil fuels. What does it mean for you and what do you think we should do	A talk and discussion led by Adrian Shaw, the church of Scotland's Climate Change Officer. ashaw@churchofscotland.org.uk
14. Fracking	Sensible solution or disastrous development?	As above
15. Films: Food Inc	You will never look at dinner the same way again! How much do we know about the food we buy at our local supermarkets and serve to our families?	See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKqdL7A_aUI

Planeat	Inspires you to make the right food choices. Choices that can dramatically reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer; protect our environment and make our planet sustainable while celebrating the joys of food.	http://planeat.tv/
The Story of Stuff	The Story of Stuff Project began with a 20-minute online movie about the way we make, use and throw away all the Stuff in our lives. Five years and 40 million views later, They are a Community of more than a million changemakers worldwide, working to build a healthier and more just planet.	http://storyofstuff.org/movies/
16. Food issues	We all need it but how does the way we produce, process, transport, buy and prepare it affect our environment?	Prof David Atkinson Author of ECS Ideas for Action: " Why Worry about Food" see http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/ideas-for-action/global-living/why-worry-about-food/
17. Food for Thought: the local food revolution	Getting involved in the local food revolution that's happening on your doorstep	Emily Harvey – Forth Environment Link Emily@forthenvironmentlink.org
18. Energising our Communities:	The community energy aspects of Stirling's Low Carbon Future.	Morag Buxel – Stirling's Low Carbon Future moragslcf@gmail.com
19. Local Food	- Moffat Community Allotments - Cheese making at Loch Arthur - Dumfries and Galloway Orchard Project	Organised by local network
20. Eco-Congregations and Eco Schools	Over 99% of schools in Scotland are now Eco Schools and so there will be one near you. Is this a link your eco-congregation could make with young people in your community?	See http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/our-schools/contacts/
21. Helensburgh Beach Clean		Organised annually by local network members
22. Visit to local Wind Farm	Braes of Doune – Airtricity site	Organised by network members

23. West Lothian Food Waste Collection and WL Food Bank		Speaker from Local Council
24. Visit to the Binn Eco Park, Glenfarg	Demonstrating what a circular approach to industry means	John Ferguson john.ferguson@ecoideam.co.uk
25. Visit to Seafield Recycling Centre, Edinburgh	Includes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a waste talk• a guided tour of the Recycling Centre• a chance to see some special machines at work.	http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_and_recycling/257/waste_education_cabin
26. A Walk in the Park	Holyrood Park, Historic Scotland Ranger led	http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/rangerservice or contact hs.rangers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
27. Fairlie Glen and Waterfall	A gentle 5km stroll through beautiful countryside, followed by a cup of tea in Fairlie Parish Church	Organised by network members
28. Do Dalbeattie	An informal evening to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enjoy a private viewing of Dalbeattie museum- See and hear about the allotment project – starting from an empty field a couple of years ago, they now have 48 productive plots- Visit the historic Dalbeattie port and the restoration project- Chat with like-minded people from other churches	Organised by network members
29. An Election Climate Cafe	An informal and engaging way to discuss climate change with local Parliamentary candidates	Organised jointly by local network, WWF and Stop Climate Chaos
“BIG EVENTS”	Explanation Organised by a network jointly with other organisations and open to wider audiences	Speaker / Source
30. A Green Day Out at the David Livingstone Centre, Blantyre	At the David Livingstone Centre Blantyre, National Trust for Scotland Fun activities for all the family: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Guided walks in the grounds- Games and activities for the	Organised by network members

	children - Information about how to be an Eco-Congregation - Eat in the café or bring your own	
31. Nature and People in the North East of Scotland: Human Impacts and Ways to a Better Future	An event with a well-known local speaker, which was open to all. Special efforts were made to invite members of local environmental organisations RSPB, SWT, NTS etc	Speaker Dr Ian Francis RSPB Scotland
32. Love God, Love God's World	Leaders from four Scottish Denominations give their views on why caring for creation is a vital part of Christian living.	1. The Most Rev David Chillingworth Scottish Episcopal Church 2. The Very Rev John Chalmers - Church of Scotland 3. Philippa Bonella -Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund 4.The Rev John Humphreys - United Reformed Church in Scotland Contact Heather McHaffie heathermchaffie@hotmail.com
ECS TOPICS	Explanation	Speaker / Source
33. What's it all about?	An opportunity to ask questions about joining the eco-congregation movement, hear what other congregations are doing and the help and resources available to care better for creation	Margaret Warnock – margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk
34. Awards Workshop	To explain the award system and involve more congregations in applying and assessing.	As above
35. Helensburgh and Lomond Eco Coffee Morning	A fund-raising event for ECS organised by the network, involving local schools and environmental organisations	Contact: Elizabeth Lambert e.lambert@talktalk.net or Mary Sweetland mary@marysweetland.com

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