**Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Methodist District**

**Report to Synod 16th September 2023.**

**District Environment and Climate Change Team report.**

**Background and Development.**

How are we doing?

On a national scale there are still only 8 out of 30 Districts registered as EcoDistricts of which we were fourth.

At the last count at the end of August we have 25 churches registered as EcoChurches. Of these 10 are registered with a Bronze award and 4 with a Silver award. Not all of these are currently listed on our EcoDistrict web site. Why? There is no mechanism whereby we are advised when a church joins the scheme or gains an award. Unless you email us to tell us, we just do not know.

When the next church achieves a Bronze award, we should be able to apply to become a Bronze District and become only the second Bronze District in the UK!

**The future.**

We reiterate from the Spring Synod that while willing to support any incomer, Joy and Andrew Geake will not act in a lead role from the end of October????. A new face will hopefully bring new initiatives and new vitality to the project.

It is certainly good news about the number of churches engaging with the EcoChurch project, but this is still less than 20%. One is left wondering why? What is the drawback? What is the disadvantage?///// If there are real reasons for hanging back, we would love to hear of your problems. //// if that would help Talk with one of the District Advocates who would be pleased to visit (Isles of Scilly please note!) if that would help your Church Council, or talk with one of the Churches already registered to hear their experiences.//////

**Year’s Activities.**The Connexion has appointed Dr Hamish Leese as the Action for Hope Implementation Officer and EcoChurches are coming under his umbrella. We have been in conversation to give him a background to our experiences and he is developing a national forum for District representatives to be able to exchange ideas and stories.

As mentioned in the spring Synod, the environment tips EcoWise for each Church to include in their notices is now hopefully reaching all Churches via their District Administrators. If you would like these sent direct or are not receiving them, please let us know. We are hoping that this is something that we can develop through Dr Leese’s efforts to become a national Connexional initiative and reduce any overlapping efforts.

The register of refill stores is now up and running on the EcoDistrict section of the District web site. The number of stores is still quite small so if you know of any locally pass on their contact information and we will invite them to supply their details for inclusion.

Our contact with the Cornwall Churches Environment Group and with the local Town Council is ongoing and we would encourage Churches to use local environment issues as a route to engage with their local secular community through a shared goal, thus taking the Church out into the community and an opportunity to share our faith.

One highlight was to link up with the Grace project (https://www.wadebridgeparish.org.uk/) run by St Petroc’s Church, Egloshayle in Wadebridge where they collect clothing etc and sort it into gift carrier bags which are distributed quite widely over Cornwall. Although not needing much space, such a project needs a dedicated team of volunteers will not be possible everywhere, but a spinoff idea from this is the “ShoeSwap” on display, almost a shoe library. Most churches could find space for a table of children’s shoes. As a child outgrows one pair they could be exchanged for a larger size although returning a pair would not be essential. Hopefully friends and relations could be encouraged to donate to refresh the stock.

Another idea we bring to Synod addresses the problem of heating. Some churches are using the concept of heating the congregation not the building and giving a new meaning to “Central heating”. A cushion is pre-heated and as worshipers arrive, they are offered a cushion.

By the time Synod takes place, we should have had a visit from Anais Pedron, The Connexional Team Media Officer, so we may find ourselves the subject of some publicity.

**Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Project.**

( <https://futurereadyfuel.info/hvo-demonstration-project-features-on-bbc/>)

Kehelland village is the centre for a trial run by the UK and Ireland Fuel Distributors Association in conjunction with the Oil Firing Technical Association which involves converting a number of oil fired boilers to use the alternative renewable fuel which produces 88% less emissions. This has included the boiler at Kehelland Chapel and also at the local school to illustrate the viability for a range of buildings. The success of the HVO project aims to persuade the Government to change the Taxation rules on this renewable substitute of normal heating oils and other related legislation. Currently after 2026 any oil fired boiler will have to be replaced with an alternative heating method usually involving vast expense.//////

The MP Mr George Eustace continues to lobby in parliament for this change and is recruiting other MPs with rural constituencies. Residents as well as Kehelland Chapel have featured on local BBC news Spotlight and the project has featured in both local and national newspapers. We have been interviewed and appeared on a number of occasions to support this initiative and recently been part of a meeting with Andrew Griffith, Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

The implications of parliamentary success are huge. Not only for the Methodist Church and Cornwall. ////All Churches and community buildings like band rooms and WI and village halls throughout the country stand to benefit if they can retain their oil fired systems long term. More letter writing the better but very soon.