

EcoNews Around the District.

A periodic issue for the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Methodist District.

Autumn Synod 2022

Where are we now?

Here we are just over 12 months old. It was only last July that the District became registered as an EcoDistrict, just the fourth in the UK.

The spring survey showed that there was a significant lack of knowledge about what being an EcoDistrict involves. This

newsletter is to spread the information as widely as possible. See over for more details.

At the end of our first year we have about 15 churches registered as EcoChurches. You will find some stories about them here. We would like to achieve the same growth this year. There is a section of the

Joy and Andrew Geake District Environment and Climate Change Advocates.

district web site devoted to Eco matters and that is in continuous development. www.cornwallmethodists.org.uk/eco-district

There is a small team promoting the EcoChurch concept and available to talk to Church Councils or any group or occasion. Email: ecodistrict@cornwallmethodists.org.

uk. This is also the place to send any stories.

We lack a social media presence, primarily because of lacking the necessary skills. We would welcome any offers to run social media. Likewise we need to think about the longer term future of running the District EcoChurch Scheme from October 2023.

Degibna First to Gain Silver Award.



Degibna Prayer Chapel was awarded an Eco Church Silver award in November 2021 – the first of any denomination in Cornwall to achieve this!

Now they are going for Gold.

Tasks undertaken so far include: holding an annual Environment Sunday; adopting an environmental policy; minimising use of disposable cups, plates etc.; encouraging wildlife in the Prayer Garden (bird-feeders etc.); offering quarterly Creation Walks which explore local area; changing to LED lighting; providing a planter cycle rack at front of chapel; changing to a green energy provider.

The chapel is uniquely situated close to Loe Pool near Helston, surrounded by fields and adjacent to a National Trust Car Park. The area is well-known for its outstanding natural beauty and peaceful walks. They offer a range of regular and occasional events -see their website for details.

During national 'Churches Count on Nature' scheme, some 61 species were identified, ranging from Cornish Elm to Wall Pennywort, from Silver-ground Carpet (moth) to Green Orb-weaver (spider). There were also several species of insect, lichen and moss that we failed to identify.

'The Big Garden Birdwatch' revealed 10 species landed in the garden during the survey hour.



Balwest Gain Bronze. (almost without trying!)



LED lamps in the schoolroom give good light and minimal shadows.

Balwest had arranged for LED lights to be fitted to the Sunday School building as well as the old stable and trap house buildings. This prompted them to look into EcoChurch. When they went through the EcoChurch questionnaires they found that actually they were already almost there. Being a grade II listed building was not a barrier.

Years ago they had registered to be a Fairtrade church. All that was needed was to re-register and ar-

range for cleaning solutions, eg washing up liquid, to be changed as well as some other general cleaning items. They also had to become far more diligent with recycling. The awareness of ecological issues are regularly raised. Services include prayers for the climate in the intercessions from time to time.

Thus they achieved their Bronze award. The replacement lighting showed the way!

Your Church may be further forward than you think.

Spotlight on Kehelland.

A recent feature on *Spotlight South West* highlighting the impending energy crisis, featuring Kehelland Chapel as an example.



This was an excellent opportunity to show how the Church can give a lead on matters of social importance. The village is being used as a testbed as part of a national scheme to convince the Government that there are lower cost alternatives to air source heat pumps. The taxation rules need to be revised as currently the fuel, HVO, if sold, is not taxed as heating oil, making it too expensive.

One of the very first buildings to be converted prior to the launch of the main project was Stithians Chapel.

The fuel is produced by treating an almost inexhaustible supply of recycled vegetation and is already in use in Scandinavia.

Changeover involves a minor adjustment to an existing oil fired boiler costing little more than a normal service, so would be well suited to rural Chapels with existing oil fired boilers.



What is EcoChurch and A Rocha?

EcoChurch is about the whole way we live our Christian lives as a Church and as individuals, not just about Church buildings.

It was developed by A Rocha in conjunction with various Christian bodies to highlight environmental issues. (see ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)

Why? Recent weather events have finally driven home the consequences of climate change.

"They ought to do something about it." The Church is one of the **Theys** that people should be able to look up to. That is us, you and me, we are the Church showing a lead in the things which can be done.

Show Leadership.

We can demonstrate best practice. Talk it up. In conversations, tell people what your Church and you are doing. Environment conversations are our opportunity for Soft Mission to introduce the Church to the 95% who are not regular church goers. Even the timid amongst us can engage using these natural conversations and work towards "Make disciples of all men"

The Five Areas. The EcoChurch programme is centred round five areas of our Church life, not just buildings.

Worship and Teaching. By including concern for the environment in our regular worship and prayer life and related material for children and youth work, keeps this to the fore.

Management of Church Buildings. It is the congregation and what we do that is more important than Church buildings. Many of our Churches are listed, limiting options. Dual flush toilets and more efficient lighting, only used when necessary, are just some of the many things every Church and person can do.

Land. What Church does not have a bit of land attached? A bug hotel, a bird box, avoiding harmful chemicals are all possible, easy and cheap. How about a planter with flowers for insects?

Community and Global Engagement. Do we consider food miles in procuring food for our catering? Is it organically sourced? Do we encourage car sharing? Congregation members join environmental campaign

issues and lobby local politicians?

Lifestyle. This is much more the Church as individuals. Do we LOAF around? (Locally grown, Organic, Animal friendly, Fairtrade). How much do we follow the Eco 3Rs "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."?

Awards. The EcoChurch award system reviews the Church's progress on environmental issues.

As we improve, a Church can move up to a bronze, silver or gold award, "We care about God's world".

Very often a Church is already doing many things without realising it and well on the way to an award.

Why Not? Your Church has nothing to lose by registering as an EcoChurch.

To choose to do nothing about the environment is an active decision and we are seeing the consequences.

To do something positive as a Church body or an individual, however small, can only lessen humankind's impact on God's creation.

By Rev'd Iris Bray .

District Environment team.

Glass half full or half empty?

The summer drought reminds us that water is a precious gift of God. As we reach for the tap for a quick sip, resist the temptation to run off water first which then goes straight down the drain. Think twice

about filling a whole glass and then only drinking some of it, discarding the rest. Our half a glass of water will then be



filled with care and consideration for this precious resource. There is an additional hidden bonus. As electricity is

needed to produce each litre of water, saving water also saves electricity so saving the resources of creation still further, without even trying. How's that for a win-win situation!