



West Lothian and Falkirk Eco-Congregation Network

7.30pm, Wednesday 2nd October 2013
Winchburgh Parish Church

Present:	Rena Moore	Blackbraes and Sheildhill
	Chris Gunstone	St Michael's, Linlithgow
	Maureen Blake	" "
	Patricia Chapman	St Ninian's – Craigmillen
	Tom Jack	St Andrew's Bo'ness
	Jean and Peter Kershaw	Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh
	Bruce Burnside	" " "
	Myra McPherson	Strathbrock – Uphall
Apologies:	Eilidh Young	United Reformed Church, Bathgate

The meeting opened with a welcome and a prayer taken from this year's Creation Time materials – see:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_for_sunday/archive/creation_time

1. Networking

Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh achieved a first Eco-Congregation Award some time ago and have since tried to graft creation care ideas into all that they do. They have now completed a second major refurbishment of their church buildings. This has involved replacing under pew heating, which was both inefficient and costly. They have also removed the pews to make the space much more usable. The work was funded by through a grant from the local Landfill Tax Trust.

Lighting was also very inefficient and, after employing a consultant (Stewart King Environmental <http://save-energy.org/> 01466 751411), they have recently changed to much more efficient LED lighting with the result that their electricity supplier now owes them £800! They use water based paints in the buildings and nothing is wasted with some of the old pews being used to make cupboards and old slates used for paths and driveways

A memorial garden has been created in the grounds, where they have planted for wildlife and used unwanted soil from a nearby building site. A restored cast iron lamppost and seating, using wood from sustainable sources, have also been installed in the garden.

A record has been kept of seasonal changes in nature for the last five years and support given to the West Lothian Food Bank.

Strathbrock have started their own Food Bank, already having made 500 distributions locally and with local schools supporting their Harvest Appeal.

They are also measuring their carbon footprint and are helping Uphall School to revamp their garden, with the church donating split plants. Both the Boys and Girls Brigade have been involved in helping Eric Burton from Breich Valley Church and Oatridge College with a new small garden opened to help people with mental health issues.

Fair Trade work in the church has recently been expanded to include Palestinian gifts.

Blackhall and Shieldhill have just registered and have a full range of youth groups involved. The Guides have been helping improve the gardens, including raising money for a bench and they are also planning to make a wildlife garden on a piece of redundant ground.

The young folk have also led on the church becoming a Fair Trade Church and other groups are involved in banner making and a prayer shawl ministry that reaches out all over the world. They recently held a "tribute night" in a local restaurant and raised funds for Christian Aid to provide two wells in Kenya. In the buildings, windows have been replaced and cushions added for the pews.

St Michael's, Linlithgow are also recipients of the Eco-Congregation Award. They are a Fair Trade Church and host the West Lothian Food Bank.

As the church has to be rewired this has presented the opportunity to convert to LED lighting, although this is going to cost in the region of £200,000. Funding is being sought from the Landfill Tax Trust and the Climate Challenge Fund (NB news was released the day after this meeting that St Michael's had been successful with their application to CCF! See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/howyoucanhelp/communities/ClimateChallengeFund/projects/CCF15>). As a condition of funding, CCF requires that the project shows evidence of behaviour change and St Michael's have therefore set up a type of "Light Bulb Library" where members of the congregation can borrow different types of energy efficient LED light bulbs, so that people can "try before they buy".

The Energy Savings Trust have also carried out a full energy audit of Cross House and they are currently reviewing the large number of recommendations made.

St Ninian's Craigmalen gained their award earlier this year and are now mentoring St Andrew's in Bo'ness. They have an eco-group of four plus their minister and a recently retired architect. They are just about to apply for a CCF grant, which they hope to use for new heating controls, insulating the hall ceiling and walls and putting up heavy curtains on the windows.

Their gardener is very eco minded and the Brownies have their own beautiful garden, which they look after. They are measuring and monitoring the carbon footprint of their buildings and have created a fun questionnaire (example attached with these notes) to try and involve different groups in the congregation)

They are also involved in supporting the local Food Bank with everyone in the Guild bringing contributions.

3. News from Eco-Congregation

The Local Networks Seminar was held in Dunblane on September 7th with folk from Torphichen Parish Church representing the network. The Rev Trevor Jamison, our new Environmental Chaplain led a bible study, a wide range of topics such as plastics, personal carbon footprints and recruitment to ECS were discussed, as well as the usual networking between the networks. A full report will soon be available on the ECS website.

4. Planning for the network programme

The following three meetings were agreed for 2014:

5th March Fracking: sensible solution or disastrous development? Adrian Shaw Venue tbd

4th June Energy Efficiency work at St Michael's, Linlithgow

1st Oct Christianity an Environmental Imperative, Rev Trevor Jamison Venue tbd

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