

## World Environment Day 2016 - fighting the illegal wildlife trade

The illegal wildlife trade is one of the biggest threats to some of the world's most threatened species - second only to habitat destruction.

High on the endangered list are Africa's rhinos and elephants. In South Africa, poaching white rhino for their horn has increased from just 13 in 2007 to over 1200 in 2014. Since 1970, 95% of Black rhino have been killed leaving less than 4,800 surviving in the wild. Elephant numbers have dropped by 62% in the last decade and more are currently being killed for their ivory, than are being born. Gorillas, orang-utan, tigers, turtles and a host of other species are listed as endangered. *"I believe passionately" says Prince William, "that we have a duty to prevent critically endangered species from being wiped out. If we get together, everywhere, we can preserve these animals so that they share our world with future generations".*

## Celebrate Environment Sunday

We encourage all our churches to celebrate Environment Sunday again – on June 5th or 12th, whichever best suits your church. If those planned to preach on this Sunday need assistance with resources, please contact Mark.

## Circuit Eco Gathering June 4

On Saturday 4 June you are again invited to spend an leisurely afternoon in

unspoilt Cotswold sheep country and enjoy a 'bring and share' picnic at Colemans Hill Farm which recently received the Regional Award for the 'best sustainable house 2015'.

Please bring a picnic chair if you can, as well as a mug, plate and some cutlery; drinks will be provided. Do share transport whenever possible; plenty of parking space is available.

Starting at 3.00pm, you can sit and relax, talk to friends from other churches, look at an experimental wind turbine and learn a more about how our EcoCircuit Programme is progressing.

## Methodists debate fossil fuels

On March 23rd JACEI & the Methodist Central Finance Board met to consider what they should be doing about investments in big oil and gas companies. We have already withdrawn from companies mining coal & tar sands but are still debating what action to take about oil. Mark Campanale of Carbon Tracker said that detailed research indicates greenhouse gas emissions are already approaching a tipping point and we cannot afford to even burn all the oil and gas which has already been discovered. Yet the oil companies spent some \$670 billions last year exploring for more. Opinions varied between those who feel we should stay in and try to influence the companies and those who felt we should no longer invest in companies which are behaving so irresponsibly.



ECO CHURCH

Caring for God's Earth

EcoNews  April 2016

Stratford & Evesham Circuit of the Methodist Church



A ROCHA

Christians in Conservation

## Eco Church replaces EcoCongregation

**In January over 300 people filled St Faith's Chapel in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate the launch of Eco Church, an award scheme to replace EcoCongregation for churches who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. Following a number of inspiring and action-focused speeches, including a keynote from the Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, the evening also saw St Paul's receive the very first Eco Church award.**

Eco Church aims to equip church congregations to care for creation by helping churches integrate environmental care throughout their church life; through worship and teaching, the management of buildings and land, community and global engagement, and through the personal lifestyle of church members.

Revd Nigel Hopper, Churches and Resources Manager at A Rocha UK, explained: *"At the heart of Eco Church lies a unique online survey that enables churches both to record what they are already doing to care for God's earth and to reflect on what further steps they can take to that end and so act accordingly."*

As churches complete the survey, they collect points towards an Eco Church award at one of three levels – bronze, silver or gold. In order to qualify, churches must attain the required standard in each of the areas covered by the survey that apply to them. Eco Church enables your church to take advantage of measures

you have already implemented such as installing low energy bulbs or fitting double-glazing; it also allows for the fact that some churches have small congregations or do not have buildings or land, for instance.

Churches apply for an award by downloading and completing an application form, which for bronze and silver awards, just needs confirmation from Church leaders that they have seen and approved the eco survey. For the gold award, an Eco Church assessor will visit the church.

*"From meditation to insulation, from location to invocation, loving God and his creation should impact everything in our church lives,"* said Churches and Theology Director Dr Ruth Valerio.

To begin, just register with Eco Church at [ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk); (more details at: [arocha.org.uk/break-new-ground-with-eco-church/](http://arocha.org.uk/break-new-ground-with-eco-church/)). If you are unable to access the internet, please ask Mark or any member of the EcoTeam for assistance.

## **Mickleton signs up to EcoChurch - who will be next?**

Mickleton's Church Council has signed up to the new Eco Church Programme - the first of the smaller circuit churches to do so. The online survey is yet to be completed and will probably take place after a special service focussing on 'Caring for Creation' followed by a LOAF lunch (using produce which is Locally sourced, Organically produced, Animal friendly and Fairly traded).

In the meantime we have signed up with Good Energy (via 2by2) saving significant money in the process. Good Energy has recently launched its carbon neutral 'green tariff' and cut gas prices by 7.2%.

The congregation is already collecting used batteries, old mobile phones, printer cartridges, used stamps and spectacles in special boxes placed in the vestibule.

## **Disappointment & hope in Evesham**

Sadly attempts to put solar panels on Evesham church roof failed after Community Energy Warwickshire had to pull out of helping us when the Government cut community energy subsidies. Wychavon planners said Evesham had little hope of getting planning permission due to us being in a 'conservation area'; we said we were interested in conservation of the whole planet, not just one tiny corner of it, but it seems those in charge of planning

controls (and the present Government) live in a rather small world.

However there are plans that the Local Food Festival, (suspended last year), will take place in 2016, alongside the Evesham Carnival, which is planned for Saturday June 25th. It will be a larger event, taking place on Crown Meadows, and there will be a procession through the town, music, a funfair and lots of local food.

Meanwhile Transition Evesham Vale is preparing the eighth edition of the Local Food Directory, listing all the outlets for local food and also establishments in the 30:30 club - those which source at least 30% of the food they use from within 30 miles of Evesham (and thankfully there are quite a lot who do). Keep asking in shops, cafes and restaurants, "is this food LOCAL?"

## **Stratford church cuts carbon footprint and saves money too**

One aim of the redevelopment project was to improve energy efficiency and sustainability and this is already cutting costs and reducing energy use.

In 2015, (the second year after installing all the green measures), the annual electricity consumption was 12,726 kWh and gas consumption was 70,436 kWh making the total fuel bill £4,747 (about half of that in 2012). But income from their solar panels (£1,846), meant the actual fuel expenditure was only £2,901, one third of that before the redevelopment.

Replacing the inefficient gas boiler/ piping system, better insulation for the whole building and heating the New Room entirely by the ground heat pump has cut their carbon footprint, reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from 27.5 tonnes (2012) to 16 tonnes in 2015.

Stratford's 'eco' redevelopment is really making a difference - a fitting tribute to a 'Third Award' church. Not content with this excellent start, the church is aiming to further reduce energy use in the coming years.

## **Church urges Christians to switch to green energy deals**

The Church of England's lead bishop on environmental issues (Bishop Holtam) endorses campaign encouraging Christians to choose renewable electricity tariffs. "*If Lent is about renewing our lives in response to the love of God here is a way to follow. You can do it, and so will I.*"

The campaign, launched by Christian Aid and Tearfund on Ash Wednesday, hopes to spur "hundreds of thousands of Christians to switch to 'clean' energy suppliers".

Bishop Holtam said: "*The Big Church Switch is a simple, practical, good idea. It supports the move to renewable energy.*"

Before renewing your existing electricity contract - whether at church or at home - why not join the Big Church Switch which calls on churches and individual Christians of all denominations to switch their energy supply from fossil fuels to renewable

energy. By using clean, renewable energy your Church can demonstrate its commitment to care for its neighbours and for the earth - our common home.

Contact the Methodist Churches specialist 'green' energy provider; check out 2buy2. ([www.2buy2.com/church/home.html](http://www.2buy2.com/church/home.html))

## **Global Warming: The Heat is On! the warmest February on record**

During the Paris climate talks last December, world leaders reaffirmed their goal of limiting global temperature increase well below 2 degrees Celsius, while urging efforts to reduce the increase to 1.5 degrees, which is seen as "dangerous climate change that they want to prevent".

Figures released by NASA records that a dramatic surge in the Earth's surface temperatures took place in February. This was the biggest month-on-month rise in global warming on record, surpassing the previous global monthly record. NASA confirmed that February 2016 was not only the warmest month ever measured globally, at 1.35C above the long-term average, but that it was more than 0.2C warmer than January 2016, which itself had held the previous monthly temperature record.

The fact that these recent monthly deviations are of that scale, suggest that we are already rapidly approaching that dangerous level of climate change.

Warm, wild and wet: 2015 was the hottest year on record. Will 2016 be hotter still?