

Change your electricity supplier

100% green electricity now seems available from several more suppliers and in the last issue we highlighted the campaign launched by Christian Aid and Tearfund, backed by the Anglicans, to get “hundreds of thousands of Christians to switch to ‘clean’ energy suppliers. See: www.bigchurchswitch.org.uk/

There is now plenty of choice though it means you need to be prepared to do a little more work to get the best deal. You need to have your last electric bill to hand as it has information the quote forms will almost certainly require. Even better try to find out roughly how many kW hrs of electricity you used over the last year; (just add up the figures on the last 4 quarterly bills).

You could start with the Methodist option from 2buy2 which will give you a basis on which to compare possible other green deals (ring 03333 201 015) or visit www.2buy2.com/church/home.html.

Good Energy carries the highest rating but you can also have a look at the score card rating the greenest suppliers. www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/energy/greenelectricitysuppliers.aspx

This is something we could **all** do - as churches and as individuals. It might even save you money - but even if it costs a little more, is it not something worth serious consideration as your commitment to Caring for Creation?

Living Planet Report 2016



As humans (us!) continue to swallow up the globe, we do so at the expense of the planet's biodiversity as animal populations continue to decline at an alarming rate. A new report from WWF and the Zoological Society of London reaffirms the fact we're in the middle of a human-produced mass extinction event that is seeing populations of animal species evaporate in front of our eyes.

The collapse of wildlife suggests that we are entering a new geological era, the Anthropocene, in which humans dominate the planet. The number of wild animals living on Earth is set to fall by two-thirds by 2020, part of a mass extinction that is destroying the natural world upon which humanity depends. Some like elephant, rhino, gorilla and tigers still capture our imagination: others frogs, bats and spiders less so but still have their role in the cycle of life. And what about the continuing destruction of forests whose species have given us new foods and medicines?

WWF points to habitat loss and habitat degradation as a key factor in Earth's declining biodiversity, along with climate change, unsustainable practices in things like the global food supply and an overuse of the Earth's natural resources which exceeds the planet's biocapacity.



ECO CHURCH

Caring for God's Earth

EcoNews  **NOV 2016**

Stratford & Evesham Circuit of the Methodist Church



A ROCHA

Christians in Conservation

The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.' Psalm 24 v1

How 'Eco' is our circuit?

It is three years since we produced the first issue of EcoNews which explained what would be involved in the invitation for Stratford & Evesham churches to pilot the first Eco-Circuit Programme in England. As a result the circuit meeting approved a Three-part Action Plan which committed us to seek to develop spiritual, practical and community responses to 'Caring for Creation'. So this is an appropriate time to review what we have achieved so far and consider where we would like to be in three years time.

The Circuit now has two 'Third Award' churches and the eco aspects incorporated in the re-development of Stratford Church must make it one of the 'greenest' churches in the country. Mickleton has now signed up to what has become the EcoChurch Programme and is close to being able to qualify for the Bronze award.

Most, if not all our eight churches, now celebrate Environment Sunday and we have held two well attended EcoGatherings at Colemans Hill Farm on the first Saturday in June. This is the 7th edition of EcoNews which we hope helps to inform members of our progress as well as about the broader environmental issues both nationally and worldwide. Climate change, wildlife conservation, renewable energy and water conservation, divestment of fossil fuels, recycling and fair trade are just some topics we have covered and which a few of us have brought to the attention of our MPs. So what should we do next?

Under the new EcoChurch Programme it is now relatively easy to do an online assessment to see how green your church is already, and how near you are to quality for the Bronze Award (to learn more visit: <http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/eco-survey-non-saving-example/>) but note to be able to save your results, you will need to register. So far only one of our six 'non-eco' churches has completed the questionnaire this and one of the Ecoteam is available to help you do this. Just ask! Despite the negatives moves made by this Government towards solar installation it is still an excellent investment - economically and environmentally so we are considering the possibility of installing solar on our manses. At the same time we would encourage all churches (and perhaps manses and members too) to review their current suppliers and seriously consider buying 'green' electricity. More details on how to do this are given on the back page.

It's still getting hotter

Apologies if your initial reaction is 'No - not climate again' but the problem is not going away - indeed it's getting worse. NASA reports that July 2016 was the hottest month ever - that is until August 2016 which was the hottest month measured since contemporary records began in 1880; an extraordinary occurrence. At some point later this year, these records will likely taper off. Heat records in 2016 have been affected by El Niño, an unusually warm pattern in the Pacific Ocean that itself might have been added by climate change. Even so: 2016 simply has no precedent in the record books

Economist Lord Nicholas Stern, maintains green development is the only route to global economic growth and points to China leading the world on climate change action. Clean, green development is the sole route to future global economic growth; continuation with polluting, high-carbon growth will only lead to self-destruction.

Transition Evesham Vale AGM

Guest speaker Andrew Billie, from Evesham Vale Growers spoke about how he had developed his business in the Vale using increasing amounts of renewable energy. This includes the use of an anaerobic digester, which also takes some crops such as maize from surrounding farms who can sell it for more for the digester than it brings in for food. Through the digester and solar energy, EVG produces enough

energy to heat 16,000 homes and also harvests rainwater to use in its vast tomato greenhouses. Being able to store power is now urgent as then tomatoes could be grown all the year round instead of 8/9 months at present. EVG has built a large solar farm near Bishampton, to provide power its greenhouses.

The presentation created much debate about whether this was the future of agri-production, or whether organic was more the direction which should be taken. Most likely both are needed. Everyone agreed the amount of renewable energy EVG is now generating is very positive. However the way subsidies are used to encourage (or not) this style of production is a vital piece of the jigsaw. Almost all forms of energy are subsidised, so the way this is done is vital, with environmental issues also taken into economic equations.

Enough is plenty

. . . was the title of a conference addressing contemporary moral, economic and theological issues in our affluent and waste-prone society. Christmas is already here in the shops; what should/can we buy for someone who already seems to have enough? Why not give an Extraordinary Gifts from All We Can? You could give a beehive (£10) to a family in Ethiopia or drought and flood resistant seeds (£10) for a family in Nepal . . . and plenty more. www.allwecan.org.uk/gifts.

Alternative Investment: for Earth's Sake

"Why are we in the Christian church so slow in responding to the most important moral issue of our generation: climate change? If the scientists are right, and there is huge majority agreement, much of the Earth could be uninhabitable in 100 years, and the world my grandchildren inherit would be very different... and more painful. Yet most Christian people carry on with business as usual".

So said Bishop Richard Cheetham of Southwark Diocese, speaking at a gathering in Southwark Cathedral, and quoting Bishop David Atkinson, former Bishop of Thetford and member of the Society of Ordained Scientists. The meeting focussed on investing in clean energy and was arranged by Operation Noah, along with Climate Change Collaboration and Quaker Peace & Social Witness. Representatives from many different denominations attended. The title was "Investing sustainably: Protecting financial assets and supporting the transition to a zero-carbon future".

Experts in sustainable finance allowed church investors and ethical investment advisors to learn more about alternative investment options that have a positive environmental impact, but also offer a financial return. Fr Seamus Finn, Chair of the US Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) attended representing nearly 300 organizations including faith-based institutions, socially responsible asset-management companies, unions, pension funds,

colleges and universities that collectively represent over \$200 billion in invested capital. It is vigorously outspoken, whereas UK church investors take a more cautious approach.

The wider context was the ratification process for the Paris Agreement, following the 2015 UN conference on climate change. Christiana Figueres, who chaired the climate talks in Paris, has said investment in renewable energy needs to increase to \$1 trillion a year – triple the current level – to meet the Paris goals. Is it not a Christian imperative that all with investments or pensions need to explore this issue with great urgency?

Toilet Twinning

As a thanksgiving for the improved toilet facilities provided by the redevelopment, Stratford Church is hoping to raise £900 to twin 3 school latrine blocks as well as 3 individual latrines in Africa before Christmas. To know more about the Flush Poverty Campaign see: www.toilettwinning.org/twin-your-toilet-now

Government energy and Hinkley

Taxpayers will pick up the bill should the cost of storing radioactive waste produced by Britain's newest nuclear power station soar, according to confidential documents which government has battled to keep secret for more than a year. Greenpeace UK executive director, John Sauven, said: "We now have it straight from the horse's mouth. Increasingly cheaper renewable energy sources do indeed offer better value for money to British bill-payers than Hinkley".