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VISION IN FOCUS



Introduction

Well, I can't believe we have already covered the five branches of our Diocesan Vision - but it's amazing that, as we revisit the 'eco' branch, it's another packed edition! Just goes to show how much wonderful work is going on across our diocese each and every day!

This month, Archdeacon Stella shares her thoughts on caring for creation and we have a few examples of good practice as well as some tips and tricks to help us all become better stewards of God's creation.

A special shout out has to go to Osbaston Church in Wales Primary School which has recently been awarded deforestation-free status from Size of Wales, making it the first school in Wales to be recognised for its efforts! What an achievement!



Caring for creation

Join Archdeacon Stella as she shares her thoughts about caring for creation, reminding us that “we are not the owners of creation, we are God’s stewards” and we should be doing what we can to fulfil this hugely important role.



Quick (ish) wins to help become an eco-church

“Having been raised in the countryside I have always been inspired by nature and how God speaks to us through His own creation.

“Like most people I am well aware of the damage we as humans have created over the years. We have to act now through our actions, deeds, and teaching so we leave a legacy of what God created for future generations.”

Revd Liz Houghton

Here are 12 quick (ish) wins to change your culture and mindset

1. Signs to say ‘switch off lights’ below all light switches

2. Fill a small container with water and place in your toilet cistern to use less water when flushing
 3. Twin your toilets – takes 5 mins - [flushing away poverty one toilet at a time](#)
 4. Include creation in your intercessions
 5. Regularly include creation etc in your sermons
 6. A Bible study which includes creation/environment
 7. Recycling – any container will do to collect your recycling
 8. When your fuel contract comes to an end – swap to a green fuel
 9. When you buy your next lot of toilet rolls swap to recycled paper toilet rolls - why not try <https://serozerowaste.com/products/ty-mor-toilet-rolls> - Welsh company, so doesn't cost the earth in airmiles either!
 10. Buy Fairtrade products, such as coffee
 11. Administration – buy recycled paper
 12. Bird feeders, Bug hotels, bird boxes, bee friendly flowers, drinking station – could be created as part of an outreach with all ages involved.
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Is becoming an eco-church difficult?

ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



This is to certify that

St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Pertholey

has won a Bronze Eco Church Award in recognition of their effort to care for God's earth in each of the following areas (as applicable)

- Worship and Teaching
- Management of Buildings and Land
- Community and Global Engagement
- Lifestyle

Signed Andy Atkin Date 23rd May 2023
CEO, A Rocha UK



ecochurch.arocha.org
arocha.org



The great thing about becoming an eco-church is that you are probably already doing lots of things required!

We caught up with Jess Graham who helped St Teilo's Church in Llantilio Pertholey secure its recent Bronze Rocha award for its churchyard!

Jess explained: "In one way, yes it was just a case of submitting the application, but in

another way we had already put the hard work in. For example in terms of our churchyard we had been part of Gwent Wildlife's Living Churchyard project back around 2010 and we

put a lot of work in then installing bug hotels, birdboxes, wildflower planting areas etc hence why we scored in the gold level for the land survey. We had also signed up to be part of Abergavenny Fairtrade Town initiative back in 2007 to ensure we were only using Fairtrade projects for after-service coffees etc, we also use Potherion Fairtrade Communion Wine. Likewise, when we planned to adapt our toilet facilities to be accessible to all we made the commitment as a PCC in our fundraising plans to twin the toilet via toilet twinning.



“My advice for any church would be to download the surveys and see what you can already answer ‘yes’ to, that’s when you become surprised at how much you are already doing, it also gives you an idea of where you need to focus your time and resources to get you to the basic position. Obviously, if a church wants to achieve silver or gold then more planning is required. However, with a little planning over a year at least one or two coffee mornings to raise funds (for the A Rocha donation and other work that you need to do) then most churches should be able to achieve the bronze award!”



A tool to help churches reduce their carbon footprint was launched at Governing Body in April.

The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is a quick and easy way for churches to find out how much carbon they use each year, helping them plan action to reduce and offset it.

Dr Julia Edwards, Climate Change Champion for the Church in Wales, said: “Once you have used the EFT and know your carbon footprint, you will be

able to compare your church's energy use with other similar-sized churches, include the footprint information in any Eco Church award application or funding bid, and the tool will help you in targeting specific net-zero actions and carbon-reduction measures for your church.”

You can find out more about the tool and how to use it in the [Church in Wales website](#)

Eco Cathedral

Newport Cathedral has recently secured its A Rocha Bronze award for its environmental work, and is already setting its sights on gold!

From bug hotels to ethical investing - all those involved are committed to becoming an Eco Cathedral.

Canon Andrew Lightbown, says: “I strongly believe that, as Christians, we must now recognise St. Paul's ancient observation that 'creation itself' needs setting free from 'its bondage to decay;' a state of bondage largely causing through human agency. Of course, through its actions the church can't by itself 'set creation free,' but it can set an example and model a better, more missional way, of relating to the environment and as we do so what we will rediscover is the authenticity of the prophetic voice as we dare to speak truth to power.

“Caring for, and exercising prudent and loving stewardship over the environment is a distinctive mark of Christian mission, and is central to the Diocesan vision and strategy. To exercise good stewardship is also prophetic in the sense that it points to where institutions and individuals have historically failed and encourages corrective measures so that future generations can enjoy the good fruits of creation and the created order.”



So, what has the cathedral done so far this year? • Recommitted to the Church in Wales net zero by 2030 aspiration. • Reviewed investment portfolios and reaffirmed commitment to ethical investing. • Switched to a clean energy supplier. • Decided that all hygiene and toiletry products will be ethically sourced and that only Fairtrade tea and coffee is used. • Ensured that sustainably sourced paper is used. • Registered with A Rocha. • Applied for and been awarded an A Rocha Eco Church Bronze Award, with an aspiration

to be awarded a Silver Award later in the year. • Twinned toilets with toilets in developing countries • Introduced two hedgehog hotels and a small bug hotel into the cathedral grounds

There are also plans to build a giant bug hotel, on the 10th of July at 3 p.m. Everyone is welcome so why not pop along and lend a hand!

First deforestation-free school in the world?

We caught up with Osbaston Church In Wales Primary School in our previous 'eco' edition, as they were already achieving so much in their journey to become an Eco School. However, they 'teased' us that an even bigger announcement was going to be made and that we should 'watch this space.....'!

Year 6 pupils are celebrating their recent success of achieving the status of first deforestation-free school in Wales, and possibly the world!



The pupils worked tirelessly throughout the year with Size of Wales, a climate change charity, learning about the 5 commodities that are driving deforestation of the tropical rainforests in Africa & South America. Those commodities are beef, cacao, coffee, palm oil & soy. The children have learnt about the negative impact that these commodities have on the tropical rainforests & have been determined to ensure that their school is not part of the problem. They truly are ethical informed global citizens!



Several children went to the Senedd in the Autumn Term to hear about how Wales was helping to support Fairtrade farmers in Uganda. They met with Delyth Jewell (Plaid Cymru politician) & Lee Waters (Deputy Climate Change Minister), both of whom were very impressed with the children's knowledge but also their determination to do things differently and not be part of the problem but rather the solution. This meeting then led on to a series of other events. Families and

the local community were invited to a coffee morning where the pupils explained why Fairtrade was so essential for farmers like Jenipher from Uganda, who the children actually met when she visited school. This led to a change in habit with parents and teachers signing a pledge to only drink Fairtrade products in the future.



This led on to the children investigating the school menu to see which meals might contain products that are driving deforestation. It is their goal to change the school menu, one meal at a time. Mr Lee Waters was keen to meet the class to



see how things were progressing & on 4th May the Year 6 pupils presented their findings to him, Will McLean (Chief Education Officer) & representatives from Monmouthshire County Council. The audience were absolutely astounded by what the children were doing, all agreeing with the summary by the children that 'the solutions are so simple that even a child can understand.' They all pledged their continued support for the project. The story even made the BBC Wales news!



Since then, the children have met with Monmouth Town Council to explain their journey and request support in terms of getting local businesses on board – this made front page news in the Monmouthshire Beacon. They also met a couple of weeks ago with Castell Howell, the company providing the school with most of its food products, to ask about the sustainability of certain products. It was a very productive meeting with promises made work on commitments identified by the children.

On Thursday 22nd June, World Rainforest Day, Year 6 were awarded their Deforestation-free status from Size of Wales, indeed making Osbaston the first school in Wales to be recognised for its efforts!

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