

# Noles from the Kick-Off Meeting of St Ursula's Eco-Church Team

on 9 May 2019 at 1215 in the Church Hall

Present: *Hector Davie, Art Funkhouser, Esther Hutchison-Funkhouser, Sue Higson, Cecily Klingler, Liz Perrett*. Revd Helen Marshall, Brian Morgan and Dominic and Miriam Roser were unavoidably absent, but had expressed their strong support for the project.

## Aims of Meeting

- brainstorming, to produce a strategy for making us even greener than we are
- looking in detail at the Eco-Church survey to see where we are falling short and discussing what measures can be taken.

## Background

Brian Morgan had been appointed Environmental Officer for the Diocese in 2007, and had been active in promoting environmental issues at St Ursula's. We appointed Stefan Germann as Local Environmental Officer in 2008, and after he left in 2011 Walter Bisig took over. Walter resigned in November 2018, and Hector had volunteered to stand in as acting LEO *ad interim*. Fortunately, we can also draw on the help of Revd Elizabeth Bussman, the current Diocesan Environmental Officer.

17 of the 43 Church of England dioceses have so far signed up for the Eco-Diocese scheme, run by A Rocha. Of those, Birmingham, Guildford, St Edmundsbury, Salisbury and Winchester have qualified for the bronze award (10% of churches registered; 5% qualified). None yet for silver (20% registered, 10% awarded) or gold (30% and 20%) of local churches awarded

## An Eco-Group

We felt there should be a core group, who would meet from time to time and keep in touch by email (perhaps via [ecogroup@stursula.ch](mailto:ecogroup@stursula.ch)). The core group would be eco-ambassadors.

There has been initiatives in the past, but over time they had all fizzled out. We needed to maintain the impetus.

## Spreading the Word

Our main concrete ideas were:

- a **Tip of the Week**: A short pithy tip to go in the Sunday notices. People to be encouraged to send in their tips to a co-ordinator, and the tip to go in the printed notices and the notice slides. The co-ordinator's job was relatively simple. The person should ideally be someone young – we might ask Miriam Roser, Annemaire Gugelmann or Ruby Wildhaber (to kill two birds with one stone, as she does the notice slides). We should ask on Sunday for volunteers.
- an **Eco-Blog**: the former church blog should be used for eco-news, and for giving more background detail on the Tip of the Week. Several people could contribute to the blog, either directly or via one of the existing editors (Tricia Carrick, Hector Davie, Sue Higson, Pieter Perrett)

Other ideas mentioned but not discussed were a special notice board (or space on one), and having a section of the church library for Christian books on the environment. Hector would make sure an article appeared in each issue of the magazine. For the forthcoming issue, he would write something himself, but again it would be good to find a younger volunteer.

## Eco-Church Survey

We looked in detail at the 10 questions on Worship and Teaching and the first 7 questions on buildings. We could only answer four of the ten and two of the seven totally positively. The survey needs to be supplemented by a **To-Do list**:

- **Worship**
- 2. *The hymns and songs (and liturgies if used) in our church services enable us to celebrate God's creation*: we need to have a specific policy on this and to convey it to those responsible for music-choosing.
- 3. *Our church prays for environmental issues*: again, we should have a specific policy and convey it to those leading the intercessions. Weekly is a good target.

- *4. Caring for God's earth is preached in our church:* We normally have a harvest festival and a creationtide service, but there is no explicit guarantee that the sermon will be about care for creation. Helen could reassure us!
- *5. Our church hosts guest speakers from A Rocha UK or other Christian environmental organisations to talk about environmental issues:* We do not do this regularly – the last time was with CMS and +Henry Scriven in 2015. We should. We noted that Sarah French in Geneva is a possible resource.
- *6. Caring for God's earth features as a teaching theme in our church's youth work:* We thought this could be made a formal part of any youth leader's task. (Tricia Carrick subsequently noted that "creation", as it happens, is a theme in the confirmation course.)
- *7. Caring for God's earth features as a teaching theme in our church's children's work:* Again, we knew that Françoise and John both had introduced the children to the Uganda water project. We should ask them if they can do more. Cecily mentioned our bee hotels and the idea of a junior church garden – these should be resurrected. Perhaps we could ask Martin Browne for suggestions. The point would crop up again later in the survey when we came to look at the church grounds.
- *8. Caring for God's earth features as a focus of small group study in our church:* Were we this group, we wondered... There had been a study course on creation care ("A Possible World") in 2015 and a bit of follow-up on 2016, but nothing since.
- **Buildings**
- *2. We have measured our energy use and calculated the carbon footprint of our church premises:* Not as such, and not recently. We needed to involve the Technical Committee in producing definite figures. The same applied to questions 3 and 4.
- *3. We have set sufficient targets for reducing the carbon footprint of our church premises and achieving year-on-year improvements in energy efficiency:* We can probably pat ourselves on the back, but we need to find out whether A Rocha expects us to reduce our footprint further.
- *4. We offset the carbon footprint of our church premises for those things we can't reduce:* We don't. According to Dominic, we should. How do we quantify this?
- *5. The electricity supplied to our church premises is generated from renewable resources and/or charged according to our supplier's 'green tariff':* It isn't. It should be. This should be submitted to Council for approval.
- *6. The gas supplied to our church premises is generated from renewable resources and/or charged according to our supplier's 'green tariff':* Nobody knew what was available from EWB and what our current supply was. Sue Higson should investigate further, possibly with input from Hans Goepfert.

At this point, we ran out of time. We agreed a further meeting was necessary when Helen could be with us. We needed input from the Technical Committee on questions 8 (wall and ceiling insulation), 9 (glazing) and further research on question 10 (lighting). (A subsequent check of the office revealed that there is fluorescent lighting, which is inadequate, and which Jana supplements with a halogen table-lamp. These could easily be replaced with ceiling LEDs.)

HD – 2019-05-10