Eco Church Annual Summary for Holy Trinity APCM 2023

* **Activity since 2022 APCM report - categories are those used by the Oxford Diocese at their online Eco Hub.**

1. Liturgy –
   1. **Climate Sunday service**, 21/08/2022, accompanied by several days of Facebook posts covering Oxford Diocese’s achievement of Eco Diocese status; the environmental goals of the CofE E and Oxford Diocese; and the Lambeth Conference (international meeting of Anglican bishops), Day 8 of which was dedicated to prayer, reflection, and action on the environment and sustainable development**. Advance notice** – Our next Environment Sunday service will be 11 June, 2023.
   2. **Explore Popup church** in Long Grove Woods has been led jointly by Janna Holder for Holy Trinity and Louise Gilbertson for the Baptist Church on 08/05/2022, 10/07/2022, 9/10/2022, 29/1/2023 and 12/3/2023, celebrating the beauty and value of God’s natural world to delight by all attending.
2. Teaching and learning –
   1. **Pew sheets** regularly include a link to the Diocesan Environment hub, and topical information, e.g. for April we included a paragraph on Bishop Steven’s address to the Diocesan synod on the Fifth and Sixth Horsemen of the Apocalypse – greenhouse gas and environmental pollution destroying nature, and his belief that the CoE can offer leadership in this arena.
   2. **Eight O Clock Club –** this club is sponsored by Holy Trinity although hosted at the Baptist Church; it regularly offers speakers on nature and environmental issues; in the past year these have included e.g. Helen Lindsey-Clark on vegan and vegetarian eating, which of course is environmentally friendly; and John Tyler, nature conservationist, on "Natural Signals - how plants and animals communicate (and what they are saying)". Many thanks to Monica Sado for running this organisation.
   3. **Community Leaders Climate Change Training** and **Becoming a Net Zero Carbon church** – zoom sessions provided by the CofE on 11/10/2022 and 28/02/2023, watched by Nora, both very informative. The latter stressed the CofE’s wish that churches look at alternative electric forms of heat in order to make use of green electricity tariffs, rather than gas heating.
3. Outreach –
   1. **CSG Eco-church committee** - meeting 29/03/2023, attended by Nora as HT’s Eco-church member. I am on the online mailing list and attend these when I can to share information and inspiration.
   2. **Toddlers in the Woods** – Weekly fun in Crutches Wood with activities fostering love of nature, fellowship for children and parents/carers, and a brief devotional song in each session. Involvement from Holy Trinity includes Ali Cork, Rachel Gibson and Nora Bennett. Rev Jez has attended twice and is always welcome.
   3. **Recycling** - Katharine Parker has suggested we might sponsor a ‘niche’ recycling station for use by the village – to be discussed when Nora and Katharine have time available.
   4. **Liaison with Marion Cox**, the Baptist’s Eco-church member – Nora assisted Marion and children from Seer Green After School Club to plant flowers in the Baptist Church nature area on 14 June 2022.
   5. **Parish magazine articles** **relating to environmental issues** – in addition to the features listed here, the magazine provides monthly reports on the Allotment Association and Seer Green Gardeners, and regular updates on Toddlers in the Woods.
      1. May 2023: A walking route for Aldbury, Ashridge and the Ridgeway; local Dunnocks; local spring scenes as photographed by Phil Moody.
      2. April 2023: Orchard, vineyard and nesting boxes at Woodvine Wine/Newbarn Farm; History of Hodgemoor Wood; vegan options at the Eight O’Clock Club; the Oxford Botanic Garden; the Slow Worm seen locally,
      3. March 2023: the three trees planted by the Parish Council as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative; book swap locations in Seer Green; recipe for wild garlic pesto; the Grey Heron in local gardens; photos of local plants decorated by frost.
      4. February 2023: Seer Green Baptist Church achieving their Silver Award from A Rocha; all about the beloved Snowdrop; local business ‘Community Flower Farm’; the Treecreeper in village woodland.
      5. December/January 2023: Forest School in Jordans; the Robin.
      6. November 2022: the Eurasian sparrowhawk as seen in the village; how to use up green tomatoes rather than wasting them.
      7. October 2022: How to store produce to avoid waste; Chiltern Society walks programme; the Pipistrelle bat.
      8. September 2022: Save water to save our Chilterns chalk streams; Courgette recipe to avoid wasting the veggie patch glut; walking route Wigginton and the Ridgeway; local Roe deer.
      9. July/August 2022: new organic vineyard in Seer Green; plans and fundraising for Jubilee Trees; local cuckoos.
      10. June 2022:the new tree plantation at Long Bottom and Potkiln lanes; local fox activity and vocalisation; foraging for Hedge Garlic; recipe for foraged elderflower cordial.
4. Advocacy –
   1. **Prayers for overseas environmental projects -** A Rocha asks churches to commit to ‘pray for’ a specific overseas environmental project, e.g. the Baptist church supports and prays for ‘Well Found.’ The charity committee reviewed some short listed candidates and we decided to sponsor A Rocha itself for the month of September 2023. Nora will write up the profile for the parish magazine and pew sheet for that month.
   2. **No Faith in Fossil Fuels** – Nora Bennett and Jane Spoerry from Holy Trinity, and Margaret Dykes and Rev'd Jenny Tebboth from Chalfont St Giles Church attended the ‘No Faith in Fossil Fuels’ environmental service at St John’s, Waterloo on 20 April, where we met up with Rev'd Gill Lovell of Prestwood, the CofE Parish Development Advisor.

Our group enjoyed an inspiring service, with music provided by Engage Worship, plus a Salvation Army band in the gallery. The congregation spanned the ages from grandparents to babes in pushchairs; our preachers included former Archbishop John Sentamu, who described the Government’s energy policy as an “offence against humanity”, Bishop Olivia Graham of Reading, and first-year Salvation Army cadet Elizabeth Kitchenside. Sponsors included A Rocha, Christian Aid, Tearfund and many more.

Over a thousand Christians then marched to Parliament, splendid with banners and singing hymns, led by Lord Sentamu and accompanied by the Salvation Army band, as part of ‘The Big One’ environmental protest calling for action against climate change and environmental destruction.

* 1. **Fair Trade** – Holy Trinity has stated as part of our Bronze Award that we use fair trade cleaning products and items such as tea, coffee and biscuits. This year the PCC has decided not to carry on with the biscuits as it’s not clear how much they directly benefit Fair Trade growers, but we continue to use Fair trade tea and coffee.

1. Technical -
   1. **Heating –** the church’s two gas boilers are irreparable and a committee including Rev Jez, Janna, Tom Allen and Peter Vinall are developing a plan for replacement. Under floor heating is being investigated as a solution; the aim is a system that is effective, efficient, low carbon and aesthetically suitable to the listed building.
   2. **Replacement of energy inefficient lighting** - Local electrician Mark Podbury was hired to replace the old, inefficient lights in the hanging lamps over the aisle with new LED fixtures. All lamps within the church are now LEDS. In the vestry and parish hall most are fluorescent, which are relatively low carbon, so not urgent to replace.
   3. **Electricity tariff** – Audrey Hardy has tried repeatedly to find out from SSE if we are on a green tariff. Despite long periods of time on hold she has been unable to speak to anyone, or is told someone will ring back, who never does; and has emailed only to be told by auto-response ‘ we’re currently very busy’. Plans are to post a letter, this may elicit a response.
   4. **Smart meter** – we were scheduled to have a smart meter installed on 24 September 2022 but this has been repeatedly put back by SSE on one grounds or another. We now have another appointment scheduled for 26 May. This will hopefully enable us to better understand our usage and see how we could economise most effectively.
   5. **Parish return carbon footprint data** - Data on hours of use of the church in the past year, and figures from the past 12 months’ utility bills, is in the process of being gathered and submitted to the CofE by Nora as part of our online parish return, due 31 July, 2023.
   6. **Churchyard** –
      1. Quotes have been obtained by Sue Puttergill from three tree surgeons (Fineland Forestry, Penn Tree Services and Whyte & Sickenger) for work on the trees in the churchyard work (pruning yews and the magnolia by the door). Fineland has been chosen and the work is booked for September 2023 to avoid bird nesting season.
      2. Mowing is being organised by Janine and Rev Jez, who recently used the village chat group to invite volunteer mowers from the community to come forward.
      3. Sustainable maintenance is the aim for the churchyard, with a view towards tidiness and easy upkeep, and ideally also allowing some aesthetically pleasing areas of long grass and wildflowers to preserve our wild plant heritage and the insects, birds, small mammals, amphibians etc whose home it is.
      4. Following a suggestion by Monica Sado, Kathy and Richard Campbell designed and constructed signboards explaining to the community that some areas were left long for environmental reasons and these were deployed last summer.
      5. Small groups of volunteers have spent time on several occasions mowing, weeding, pruning trees, clearing rubbish and digging out the compost heap at the far end. Compost has been redistributed onto beds where it was needed.
      6. The raised area of plastic, turf and rubble near the compost heap, was cleared into a skip at Three Horseshoes with their consent. Having established that this was not a grave site, volunteers dug out and levelled the area so that it can be mowed along with the surrounding lawn.

Nora Bennett, Eco Church member for PCC, 26 April, 2023.