



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD AND ABBEY CHURCH ARBROATH

ECO-AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

April 5th 2015

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PICK IT UP AND BIN IT!

Angus Council's Prevent Litter and Pick Up campaign, which focuses on the area between West Links and East Haven, is gaining momentum. It involves school-children, local community groups and businesses. People visiting the area are asked to pick up any three items of litter they come across and place them in nearby bins. Five new recycle bins and 10 notice boards, depicting litter's impact on wildlife, have been installed across the area.

FOOTPRINT GROWS!

Scotland's carbon footprint increased in 2012 by 5.3% from 2011, the latest published figures show. However, this is 6.3% lower than in 1998. The figure for emissions produced by Scots has remained at a steady 17% since 1998. Emissions from imported goods and services account for 44% of Scotland's footprint, up from 39% in 1998, and after a sharp fall between 2007 and 2011.

SUPPORT FROM THE PRINCE

In a speech Prince Charles said global warming was 'already causing eco-system collapse, loss of habitation, poverty, starvation, migration and conflict.' In another speech he said the cures for the Earth's sickness would also be beneficial for people. 'Actions which are good for the planet are also good for human health: taking a more active approach to transport by walking and cycling and adopting healthy diets reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but also reduces rates of obesity, heart disease, cancer and more, saving lives and money.' He added, 'Reductions in air pollution also results in separate and additional benefits to human health. A healthy planet and healthy people are two sides of the same coin.' and 'the fact of climate change was now accepted by every major scientific body.'

FORTHCOMING EVENT: Adrian Shaw, Climate Change Policy Officer for the Church of Scotland, is to speak at an Eco Congregation Network meeting in October, possibly in Dundee, on the subject of FRACKING. The date and venue will be decided in the near future.

Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside. Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure which allows the gas to flow out to the head of the well.

BEACH CLEAN SURVEY

Last year's national beach clean, (in September) under the auspices of the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and which our eco group participated in, has shown that some of Scotland's beaches are filthier than ever because of our love for wet wipes. More toilet items are found on Scotland's beaches than anywhere else in the U.K. In the U.K.-wide survey Scots volunteers found 27,085 items, an average of 1803 per kilometre, a drop of 8% on 2013. However, the sewage related debris on Scotland's beaches amounted to 14% of the litter. Wet wipes should not be flushed down the toilet, because they do not disintegrate like toilet paper and may contain plastic and on reaching the sea can last for a very long time. All sanitary items, including wet wipes, nappies, cotton buds, contact lenses, plasters etc, should not be flushed down the toilet but disposed of in the general waste bin.

LIVING WITH RUBBISH!

A study by Plymouth University biologists has found scientific records of 395 species which had ingested or become entangled in rubbish. 67 of these are on the international list of threatened and endangered animals. Another 300 species were seen living with debris, making their nests out of plastic rubbish or swimming among trash on the seabed. Plastic accounted for nearly 92% of the cases, according to the paper published in the Marine Pollution Bulletin.



AGREEING TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

The leaders of the three main U.K. political parties, David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband, have agreed to work together to tackle climate change, as they warned it posed a threat to national security and economic prosperity.

They agreed to work 'across party lines' to agree cuts in the U.K.'s carbon emissions. They also signed up to seeking a 'fair, strong, legally binding' international climate deal, set to be negotiated in Paris at the end of the year, to limit global temperature rises to below 2%, the level beyond which 'dangerous' climate change would be expected. They also pledged to move to a low carbon economy, ending the use of coal without technology to capture and store its emissions for power generation.

Longannet Power Station seems to be set for closure in a year's time. The coal-fired plant will shut down because apparently a carbon-capture replacement has been ruled out, having previously been scrapped by the U.K. Government. The National Grid decided not to award a vital contract to the station's operators Scottish Power. High transmission charges were a problem. Over 1000 jobs are now at risk.

Notes From Angus And Dundee Network Meeting Of Eco Congregation Scotland

The meeting was held at Forfar Old and East Parish Church on Monday March 2nd 2015. Churches represented were Menzieshill, Dundee, East and Old, Forfar, Abroath Old and Abbey, represented by Fiona O'Connor, Margaret Tulleth and Alex Robertson, Auchterhouse, Dundee, St Bride's, Monifieth, and Glens and Kirriemuir Old Parish Church. Trevor Jamison, chaplain, Eco Congregation Scotland, hosted the meeting.

Trevor welcomed all to the meeting and led an opening prayer.

Participants introduced themselves, mentioning the churches they had come from for this meeting, then there was a time to share news about what was happening in their churches, the challenges they faced and for wisdom to be shared. This included: how challenging it can be to generate wider interest in congregations about environmental issues, including the important role of strong individuals in getting things going (sometimes this was a minister), the important role of green groups in churches (sometimes as part of a wider group dealing with fair trade and development issues) to encourage a positive ethos.

Eco Congregation Awards: Some churches were heavily involved, using the award scheme to structure their work. Others were happy simply to register with Eco Congregation and then get on with actions appropriate to their setting, feeling little need to mark this with an award.

Another church had gained a first award but then felt confident to move forward without seeking a second one.

Trevor emphasised that the award structure is in place as a resource to help churches where appropriate, not as a requirement.

Making links with groups outside the congregation has great potential. Sometimes this is in twinning with other churches elsewhere in the world for learning and inspiration.

Schools and other community groups can become partners for change in a local area.

News was shared from individual churches: Auchterhouse was currently undertaking the church check-up and the minister was very supportive; Forfar East and Old also had a very supportive minister, creating appropriate groups in the church's life and appointing people to them, then stepping back to let them do the work; Arbroath Old and Abbey continued to produce its eco news letter and was marking Earth Hour by providing Church members with a tea light and a prayer card to take home; Glens and Kirriemuir worked with a four-part focus, congregational, personal, outward (including getting Fair Trade Town status and working towards Transition Town status), and educational; St Bride's were also using the Church Check-up, finding it unexciting but useful; Menzieshill were encouraging ongoing small actions, looking at work on the buildings, have a Plants As Therapy Group and a church garden/allotment with spaces for community groups which also linked to the local food bank.