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BIG STEP FORWARD FOR ST GEORGE'S

St. George's Parish Church in High Street Belfast installed just over 3 kilowatts of photovoltaic panels on a part of its roof. They have now been producing electricity for some time.

What are photovoltaic panels?

Photovoltaics convert sunlight into electricity. They should not be confused with solar panels which convert sunlight into hot water – not least because they are more expensive!

St. George's had considered solar panels as an option but concluded that they didn't make much sense in a church where the only use of hot water was for washing dishes and that infrequently, and probably least frequently of all in summer when - in normal years – the sun is most efficiently harnessed for energy purposes.

What happens to the electricity produced?

Some of the electricity produced by these panels will have been consumed in the church itself, and



Photovoltaic panels on the roof of St George's

the balance not required to power the church will have gone on to the grid. With the increasing price of electricity the value of on-site generation to the church will obviously increase.

With the new tariffs which began this month the 1500 kilowatt hours produced on an average in the recent poor years should avoid about £120 worth of electricity charges and earn about £110 from sales.

While this is still a small proportion of an ever increasing bill for power and heat in the church, it is nevertheless a useful contribution to reducing the Church's energy bill.

Another advantage

It also reduces the church's carbon footprint. On average each kilowatt hour of mainstream electricity represents about half a kilogramme of carbon dioxide emitted into the environment.

Thus even in the lean production years we have experienced we have on average prevented three quarters of a tonne of carbon dioxide being emitted into the environment.

While it is not much, it is worth noting that each tonne avoided is avoided for ever. No need to ask where that tonne of CO2 will spend eternity or even the next few hundred years! (contd over)

KNOCKNAGONEY BEES DESTROYED

“Mindless attack”, says parish beekeeper

“This has been a mindless attack on a positive community project in the Knocknagoney area by youth from the vicinity.

“The members of the Bee Club are distraught, and many hours of voluntary work has been wasted in a matter of minutes.”

- David McCartney, Parish Beekeeper



The Knocknagoney bee project has received another setback; vandals came into the church grounds during the hours of darkness and destroyed all the beehives.

This happened two weekends in a row, and the second attack resulted in the loss of a massive number of bees and the death of the queen.

There were eleven commercial frames full of stores of sealed honey and pollen for the winter, prepared by the hard-working bees.

The Goney-Honey Biodiversity Project was used to train year two of the Knocknagoney Bee Keeping Club, and was an excellent link between church and school; the children are devastated.



The vandalised hives in the grounds of Knocknagoney Parish Church, behind the Aslan Centre.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE PARISH HAS DECIDED TO SALVAGE THE OPERATION AND CONTINUE THE BEE-KEEPING PROJECT. “NO MATTER WHAT DISASTERS BEFALL US,” SAYS BEEKEEPER DAVID McCARTNEY, “WE WILL CONTINUE OUR ENVIRONMENTAL WORK IN THIS RESPECT.”

St George’s (contd from page 1)

Two further points are worth noting about PV. The first is that it is a reasonably good fit with the church’s demand profile.

The church is in use much of Sunday and Saturday and most mornings. While there is some late evening use, the night time usage is very small.

Secondly, while PV is expensive to install and the grant position is to say the least “stop-go” - we were lucky we coincided with a grant “window.” Being a church we were able to benefit from our charitable status in that the contributions to the church’s income can be augmented by gift aid.

Was it worth the effort?

Well, it is now what economists call a sunk cost. It is beyond recall or revision, and in that sense all future benefits are free.

But even in to-day’s climate it would hardly be likely to pass a conventional investment appraisal.

Well done to St George’s for having the vision to move forward in this major way.

We look forward to hearing of more major ideas from this source!

Remember Whitechurch in Dublin, and the children's flowerbed?

Well, here it is in bloom. These photos were taken a few months ago. The kids are very proud of their environmental work in the church grounds—and so they should be! Well done, kids!



A BOOK WORTH READING



The Minding of Planet Earth - Cardinal Cahal B Daly

Veritas 2004
€19.95
£15.80

In this book Dr Daly addresses the relationship between religion, ecology and science, asserting that religion and science are complementary, not contradictory; both are needed for a completely satisfactory explanation of the world.

The book pleads passionately for peace, for fair conditions of world trade and for a more equitable sharing of the world's resources in a more just world order.

It pleads powerfully for a more responsible use of the earth's limited resources, and puts the case for world development aid and the reduction of the debt burden of poorer countries. Dr Daly insists that these issues must be faced with urgency if disasters on a cosmic scale are to be averted.

Despite outlining many problems, the book's overall message is one of hope. It celebrates the beauty of the universe, which is a reflection of the beauty of God.

GOOD NEWS

St Molua's Parish Church at Stormont is no longer the only church in Ireland to have won the EcoCongregation Award; it was recently won by Clonakilty Methodist Church.

Any other C of I parishes ready to try yet? Just let us know!



SO YOU THOUGHT WHITECHURCH ONLY DID FLOWERBEDS?

Just take a look at this!

- They have a bat house and a bird feeder, both donated by parishioners.
- They have a noticeboard for EcoCongregation material only.
- Their national school participated in a 'Cherishing Creation' poster exhibition.
- They have composting bins around the graveyard.
- They have a recycling bin for the parochial hall.
- They have a May Fete and a November Fair at which they recycle unwanted clothing, toys, bric-a-brac, etc.
- In their magazine last year they printed an article entitled "Ideas for an Eco-Friendly Christmas".
- They were involved in last year's action on climate change.
- They have drawn up their own environmental policy.
- They serve Fairtrade tea and coffee on their premises.
- They use biodegradable washing-up products as well.
- And more!

Lots of ideas here from Whitechurch—we're sure they won't mind anyone copying a few.

***And what have YOU been doing?
Do please let us know!***

FAQ

"Could we please have more of these "Greening the Church" bulletins?"

We'll do our best—but we could certainly produce more of them if we had more 'local' material. Tell us what you've been doing, and send us some digital photos—any time!

stormont@down.anglican.org



**Friends of
the Earth**



**christian
aid**



tearfund



TROCAIRE



All the above organisations are involved in important environmental work—much of it done in co-operation with each other.

They are worth supporting.

Ring the Changes on Climate Change

- Countdown to Copenhagen -

Christian Aid, Eco-congregation, Friends of the Earth, Tearfund and Trócaire invite you to take part in the Global Day of Action on Climate Change

**Remember you rang your bells last year?
We'd like you to do it again!
Here's why:**

From 1—12 December 2008 the UN Climate Change Conference will take place in Poznan, Poland. World leaders will meet to discuss action on climate change for the last time before the Copenhagen Climate Conference, which will seek to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it runs out in 2012.

Over the next twelve months, governments around the world must receive a loud and clear message that bold decisions will have to be made in Denmark next December if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change.

To coincide with this year's conference, there will be an international day of action on Saturday 6 December. Marches and demonstrations will be taking place across the world, including the UK and Ireland, which will illustrate the demand for strong action to be taken by governments on climate change.

In Northern Ireland, Christian Aid, Eco-Congregation Ireland, Friends of the Earth, Tearfund and Trocaire have teamed up to organise "Ring the Changes on Climate Change—Countdown to Copenhagen."

In the Republic the same event is being organised by Stop Climate Coalition, but at the time of going to press not all the details are available for this area.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN TAKE PART:

Arrange for the bells to be rung in your local churches and cathedrals and organise events in your town or village around bell-ringing.

Clergy, why not try to incorporate the message of action on climate change into your services over that weekend?

It only takes one or two churches in each town or village to ring their bells in order to make an impact, and we would like your church to join in.

All you have to do is arrange for the bells to be rung at noon precisely.

We are encouraging every church or group of churches that takes part to contact their local press, using a template press release which we can provide to participating churches.

In Belfast, activists are meeting on the steps of St Anne's Cathedral from 11.00am onwards.

In Dublin, Stop Climate Chaos are in the middle of organising their events; we suggest you keep an eye on their website: www.stopclimatechaos.ie

**THIS IS IMPORTANT -
LET'S MAKE IT WORK!**

For a full range of resources to help you run your events, please log onto the Friends of the Earth website at: foe.co.uk/ni after 31 October.

Revd David Humphries will also be able to help: stormont@down.anglican.org

A HELPFUL APPOINTMENT

FIONA MURDOCH has been appointed to a part-time role with Eco-Congregation Ireland.

Part of her work will involve her making contact with churches and parishes with various degrees of involvement in environmental work. This should prove to be a great encouragement to many, who may well wish to have more contact with a central source than that which I have so far been able to give.

Fiona may already have contacted your parish. If you wish to contact her, email her at:

fionam1840@oceanfree.net



David Humphries

Fiona Murdoch

FAITH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Second round of talks to take place at Dromantine

In May this year a multi-faith group met in Belfast to discuss faith-based responses to Climate Change.

A further round-table discussion is being held at Dromantine (Newry) on Wednesday 5 November, when delegates will explore the proposition that the forces that are eroding our physical life-support systems are also eroding the human spirit.

The event will be chaired by the BBC's William Crawley. Alastair McIntosh, a Scottish campaigner for social justice and environmental sustainability, will also make a contribution. The event is being hosted by Friends of the Earth.

Don't forget to tell us all your ecological and environmental news—we really want to know. Send us photos and we'll do our best to include them.

Also, let us know the email addresses of others who would like this magazine. We don't issue hard copy for environmental reasons.

stormont@down.anglican.org

INTERESTING NEWS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO FOLLOW UP

www.ecofriend.org has an interesting article about Dell Computers taking a *green route* for laptops from this year onwards.

www.greenhome.com has an enormous list of products for going green: appliances, bath, bedding, clothing, furniture, home improvement, kitchen, lighting, office, pets, garden, and many more! This is an American site, but definitely worth a look.

Ever heard of a 'high-altitude flying wind generator'? Well, www.ecofriend.org will tell you all about it! These things float in the jet stream at an altitude of 15,000—30,000 feet. No problem getting a strong wind up there!

uk.reuters.com/news/environment is always a good place to pick up the latest environmental news. At the time of going to press there's a rather depressing article about greenhouse gasses being four times greater than thought, but also many positive and encouraging stories.

Finally, www.breathingearth.net hosts an interesting world map which indicates, among other things, how many tonnes of CO₂ have been emitted since you started watching the website!