

Renewing Creation

A newsletter for Christians
in Newcastle and Northumberland

July 2010

‘Church and Earth 2009-2016’

This is the title of the Church of England’s Seven-Year Plan on Climate Change and the Environment. It was published in October 2009, and is ‘a statement of the Church of England’s beliefs, activities and ambitions relating to climate change and environmental action over the next seven years.’

The plan includes a section entitled, ‘The basis for environmental action,’ and a longer section entitled, ‘the environmental record of the Church of England,’ in which the Diocese of Newcastle gets an honourable mention!

Perhaps the most important section is that entitled, ‘Challenges for future Church of England action,’ which includes a summary of both existing achievements and new challenges under the following headings:

1. Buildings and assets
2. Governance and partnerships
3. Education and young people
4. Lifestyles
5. Pastoral and community work
6. Media and advocacy
7. Celebration

‘Church and Earth 2009-2016’ is an important document, and is well worth a read. It can be found on the Church of England’s *Shrinking the Footprint* web-site at www.shrinkingthefootprint.org. The report will both inform and inspire the work of the Diocesan Environment Group over the next few years.

Good news from Bedlington

Two members of the Diocesan Environment Group recently gave a presentation at Bedlington Deanery Synod. The focus of the presentation was informed by the responses to a questionnaire that had been sent out in advance, which enabled the Environment Group members to report back to the synod on the good work that was already taking place in the deanery and to address the specific

queries of individual parishes. The Environment Group members were impressed by the amount of good work being done ‘out there.’ The argument has moved on from ‘Why should our church be environmentally friendly?’ to ‘How can our church be more environmentally friendly?’ It was interesting to note that parishes don’t always know about the good work being done by other parishes, even in the same deanery.

The responses to the questionnaire indicated that many parishes were concerned about energy use and energy efficiency, and the presentation that addressed these concerns is to form the basis of a future ‘Archdeacons’ Briefing.’

Woolly thinking!

*From Dagmar Winter,
Diocesan Rural Affairs Officer*

Farmgate prices for wool do not even cover the cost of clipping sheep. However, wool is a fantastic renewable resource!

As part of their ‘Campaign for Wool’, the National Farmers’ Union (NFU) is backing an attempt to get the Olympics in London to use carpets made of British Wool. A special range has been designed, using the natural colour of the wool and making a feature of the darker fleeces that come predominantly from hill breeds. These have traditionally been worth less than paler lowland fleeces that can be readily dyed. The Olympic wool campaign highlights the contribution made by more than 60,000 farming families around the country and the ‘tapestry’ of sheep breeds that they keep.

To support the campaign by signing a petition and for more information go to www.nfuonline.com/News/Woolly-thinking-urged-for-2012-Olympics.

To bee or not to bee

*From Russell Nelson,
Newcastle City Council*

The nation’s beehives have suffered massive losses in the last few years, largely due to a disease spread by the parasitic varroa mite. Other factors include the loss of habitat, climate change, pesticide use and a mysterious condition known as ‘Colony Collapse Disorder.’ Bees are dying and colonies are being lost at an alarming rate.

This is worrying as the pollination of crops by honeybees is worth an estimated £200 million each year to the British economy. In order for plants to produce fruit and seeds their flowers must be

pollinated. Bees are responsible for the pollination of more than 40 important food crops grown in this country, and it is estimated that one-third of the food that we eat relies on bees for pollination. It has been said that, 'If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man!'

Newcastle City Council has established a Bee Steering Group, made up of various Council officers and external representatives including Newcastle University, a range of local bee keepers, allotment holders, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Natural England. The two main objectives of the Bee Steering Group are (1) to raise awareness locally and encourage people to be more 'bee friendly' and (2) to find out where bees are at present and encourage them to flourish in the future. More information is available from www.newcastle.gov.uk/bees.

Possibly the biggest factor in sustaining bees is to ensure that gardens, parks etc have bee friendly flowers so that they can get the adequate food supply they require. Churches can play a vital role in this, since churchyards offer great potential for the provision of the food and habitat required by bees. Newcastle City Council is in the process of creating about twenty bumblebee homes, to be installed across the city in the autumn, in the hope of attracting queen bees in the spring. If your church would like provide a home for one of these sites, please contact Russell Nelson at russell.nelson@newcastle.gov.uk or at (0191) 277 8930 ext 28930.

For advice on how to make your own bee home visit www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Create%20a%20bee%20hotel%20.pdf or www.bumblebeeconservation.org.uk/Providing%20Nest%20Sites.pdf.

An important part of the Bee Strategy is to find out where bees are at present, in order to establish a baseline. If you spot a bee hive you can register it at www.eyeproject.org.uk.

A selection of future environmental dates

- **1st September – 2nd Sunday (?) of October 2009: 'Time for Creation.'** Resources should be available from www.ctbi.org.uk.
- **3rd October 2009:** Animal Welfare Sunday. The theme this year is 'Animals and War.' Animal Welfare Sunday guide booklets are downloadable from www.aswa.org.uk/animalwelfaresun.html.

Christianity and Vegetarianism – Nature, Creation and the Peaceable Kingdom

A two day conference organised by the Christian Vegetarian Association UK in association with academics at Leeds University.

14th-15th August 2010,
Leeds Humanities Research Institute

The conference will reflect on the relationship between Christianity and vegetarianism and consider how the call to a diet of meat-abstention might be made manifest in Christian belief and practice. For information visit www.caninestyle.co.uk/leeds or contact Don Gwillim at dgwillim@gmail.com

'Green on the Screen'

All films cost £3.00 and start at 7.30pm at St James's Church Centre, Alnwick

Thursday 29th July: 'The Cove'

A taut, thrilling investigation into the murky activities of the Japanese fishing mafia
Best Documentary winner, 2010 Oscars

Thursday 26th August: 'Our Daily Bread'

A comment-free look into industrial food production and high-tech farming
'A must see! Superb!' – *New York Times*

For more information visit www.alnwickfoe.blogspot.com

And finally ...

Contributions to *Renewing Creation* are welcome. Please send them to Rob Kelsey. The next copy deadline is **26th September 2010**.

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