Renewing Creation

A newsletter for Christians in Newcastle and Northumberland

April 2010

The UN International Year of Biodiversity

From David Shreeve,
Environmental Advisor to the Archbishops' Council

"In many urban areas the churchyard is often the only 'green lung' for the community and the rural churchyard can often be a haven of biodiversity surrounded by acres of chemical-drenched monoculture. If all our churchyards were placed side by side and end to end they would form a huge national park open for all to share producing a festival of wildlife and nature rightly being celebrated in this very special UN International Year of Biodiversity.

"Thousands of churches are preparing to celebrate *Cherishing Churchyards Week* (18th-27th June) as part of a nationwide project being run by Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) and supported by the Church of England's national environmental campaign *Shrinking the Footprint*.

"During *Cherishing Churchyards Week* churches are being encouraged to run events to raise awareness and celebrate the treasures of their churchyard. *Shrinking the Footprint* is encouraging churches to submit wildlife discoveries and projects as part of a new central database, which will list all the biodiversity that churchyards are holding in store for the country.

"Many churchyards have a new feature that will be the subject of a new survey taking place this year. *Yews for the Millennium* was a project created by The Conservation Foundation to celebrate the year 2000. The Foundation gave away 8,500 young yew trees propagated from ancient churchyard yews estimated to be at least 2,000 years old. Now, ten years later, the Foundation will be asking all those who planted Millennium Yews to say how their trees are doing."

For more information about the UN International Year of Biodiversity visit http://www.cbd.int/2010.

More about biodiversity

Christian Ecology Link recommends two articles on the subject of biodiversity, which might form the basis of a parish magazine article. They can be found at http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/17037IIED.pdf and http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/m1003.htm.

Growing Organically

Using church land as a model for environmental change

Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham
10am-4.40pm, Saturday 18th September 2010

The conference will cover the importance of church land management, give practical examples of projects and explore the conservation potential that church land may hold.

The main speakers will be Professor Sir Ghillean Prance, Scientific Director of the Eden Project in Cornwall, and the Rt Revd James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool.

For more information visit www.arocha.org/gb-en or email kajsa.brittsjo@arocha.org.

The Local Environmental Action Fund

The Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) supports projects that have a positive impact on the environment and educate people about global environmental issues. The fund aims to demonstrate how local action can contribute to tackling global issues by making grants to voluntary and community organisations in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

LEAF supports projects that are able to demonstrate one of the following outcomes:

- have a positive impact on the environment
- raise awareness of environmental issues
- educate people about global environmental issues
- demonstrate how local action can contribute to tackling global issues

Most projects have social and community benefits along with environmental outcomes. LEAF supports projects that address environmental issues through practical action (e.g. installing renewable

energy systems or creating a community garden and learning about food growing) or through supporting behaviour change (e.g. encouraging people to recycle or take up energy efficiency measures). Projects can be focused on any environmental issue. They should enable people to engage with their local environment and think about global environmental issues.

Grants of between £1,000 and £20,000 are available to voluntary and community organisations for revenue and capital projects. Occasionally grants may be made over more than one year. The grants are available from the Local Environmental Action Fund for projects in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. For more information visit www.communityfoundation.org.uk/funds/fundsk-r/local_environmental_action_fund or contact Katie Wellstead on 0191 222 0945.

Life after Copenhagen

The John Ray Initiative (JRI) is an educational charity with a vision to bring together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment in a way that can be widely communicated and lead to effective action. It was formed in 1997 in recognition of the urgent need to respond to the global environmental crisis and the challenges of sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

Sir John Houghton has written a JRI briefing paper entitled, "Copenhagen and the Climate Change Crisis." It can be downloaded from http://www.jri.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/JRI_19_Copenhagen.pdf.

'The Eco-tipping Point and Our Way of Life'

Ray Simpson, who lives on Holy Island, has given a lecture with this title. It is available as a download from www.aidanandhilda.org.

The new *Shrinking the Footprint* website

More from David Shreeve,
Environmental Advisor to the Archbishops' Council

"Over the past few months the *Shrinking the Footprint* website team have been researching and editing a wide range of material which we hope you will find helpful and informative. The website is not finished yet, and you can help by letting us know your views on what has been done so far and sending us ideas, news and views that we can add over the coming weeks before we start to publicise the site. We still need more case studies to illustrate the many actions that churches can undertake to improve energy efficiency, manage buildings and encourage biodiversity. We have a template for this, which you can download from the case study section of the website.

"Later this year we will be using the website to carry out our second *Measuring the Footprint* audit. The details will help to work out the annual total energy usage of the Church of England, a total that General Synod voted to reduce year by year. Suggestions and advice for saving energy can be found in the Toolkits section of the website.

"Please take time to explore the website. We hope to feature new developments as they happen. It is important for others to learn from experiences, both good and bad, so please keep us posted with details of any projects with which you are involved, even if they are only just beginning. By doing this we can share experiences of fund-raising, planning and development, and help get others started.

"So, do please use the new website and help us keep it bang up to date."

A selection of future environmental dates

- **5th June: World Environment Day** For more information visit http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english or http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/Other/Events/world_environment_day.

And finally ...

Contributions to *Renewing Creation* are welcome. Please send them to Rob Kelsey. The copy deadline for the next issue is **27th June 2010**.

Contacts

- Rob Kelsey, Diocesan Environment Officer,
  Tel. (01665) 578250,
  Email Robert@josephkelsey.fsnet.co.uk
- Jill Elphick, newsletter distribution organiser
  Tel. (01670) 790764,
  Email jill.elphick@virgin.net