



# newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- The Big Tidy Up
- New website for Eco-congregation England & Wales
- Making an impact in the community
- New resources available
- Volunteers needed—any offers?
- 100th Award given in England & Wales!
- Ideas for action: 'spiritual', practical and reaching out to the local community

eco-congregation (England & Wales)

## Get involved in the Big Tidy Up!!

This September ENCAMS is launching **The Big Tidy Up**, its first national clean up campaign in 8 years.

The Big Tidy Up campaign will encourage communities to get together and clean up their local area. The campaign is open to all, with groups, individuals and businesses working together to get their community clean.

The campaign will launch on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, with events linking in to World Clean Up weekend. Volunteers are encouraged to run their tidy up during September although tidy up's can take place anytime throughout the year.

The Big Tidy Up website ([www.thebigtidyup.org](http://www.thebigtidyup.org)) will go 'live' in June and will contain all the information needed for volunteers to run a safe and effective tidy up.

Volunteers can register online and once registered they will be sent a tidy up kit containing posters, stickers, tabard bibs and badges. The kit will also contain a brochure with guidance on how to carry out a safe tidy up.

Every registered group will be asked to return to the website and record how many bags of rubbish they have collected. This will appear on the site as a growing barometer, providing an overall national picture of how much rubbish has been cleared.

During July and August a national advertising campaign will be appearing across the country, raising the profile of The Big Tidy Up brand and galvanising the public to join the campaign.

Encams are looking to generate as wide a network of people taking part in the Big Tidy Up as possible. From football clubs and international organisations to community groups and committed individuals, they are working together to put pride back into our country and have a great big Tidy Up. Could your church be at the heart of making this happen in your neighbourhood? It has a natural tie-in with Hope 08 aims.

## New website launched for Eco-congregation England & Wales



Using a grant from Christian Aid, a new website has been developed using opensource software. This makes it much easier to upload material (no additional software package is needed). Do have a look—there is lots of information there under each module heading, and on the blog.

As ever, I'm keen to put as much information on the site as possible—especially stories! If you could write just a paragraph of any activity giving some detail, that would be so helpful. Have a look at the stories that are already on the module 2, 7 and 9 pages (under 'Real life stories' on the right hand side of the page). Most are stories I've found on websites, it would be much better to be able to give more detail. It's inspiring for others!

Also, as churches gain their Awards, so I am putting up a précis of their activities which you can get to by clicking on the churches in the Awards list. There's a backlog of stories to put up, so apologies if your details aren't on there yet. I'm getting round to it slowly!

PLEASE take pictures of what you are doing—'before' and 'after' shots of any practical work undertaken are great—and send them to me! Try and get people doing things, rather than shots of just buildings or churchyards. If the photographer can catch people as they are engaged in an activity (ie not necessarily looking at the camera) that is great. Focussing in on one or two people is better than trying to get lots of folk in. And please do use a good resolution (lots of megapixels!) and electronic versions are best! This really helps to liven up the site.





Stratford Eco-Fair—stalls and the Mayor with a 'green' Shakespeare



## Could you hold an eco-fair for the community at your church?

**Stratford Methodist Church**, along with other green groups in Stratford put on an eco-fair, getting 23 stalls on everything from campaign groups to commercial companies and local environmental projects.

60 people attended the lecture given by Canon Kenyon Wright CBE entitled "The Future – Green or Grim" in the adjacent church sanctuary, and others attended workshops run by Ox-fam, Christian Aid and Practical Action. A further workshop looked at the Transition Towns initiative locally.

The good turn up for this biggest green event was helped by the weekly articles over a period of 5

weeks by the local news papers, Stratford Herald, Midweek and Observer on the launch of Eco-Business Trail, the interview of the principal speaker, the programme of the Eco-Fair and the introduction of the workshops. Posters had been on display in the town library, churches, websites of the town hall, district and county councils, while flyers were distributed to certain residential areas.

The whole day event was also made more enjoyable by a team of volunteers from both the Stratford Methodist Church and the Stratford Soroptimists serving fair-trade drinks and home made lunches. This raised more than £100 for the Burma Cyclone

Appeal.

As a whole this Eco-Fair provided a most welcome opportunity for the town people to learn more what they can do about climate change as well as for those engaged with the campaign to share their experience. This event was sponsored by Mid-counties Co-op, Friends of the Earth and Stratford Methodist Church. Stratford Climate Action Network should have a better base to go forward in the future.

St Andrew's URC Southampton brought their Mayor to their green fair in a rickshaw. What could you do to draw people in?!

## What's On

### Events Page

There is a new events page on the Eco-congregation England & Wales website, so please send me details of events that are happening in your area, and I can put them up for others to see. For example:

**Window on the World: Caring for Creation** - a conference from the Council for World Mission European Region August 4-10 2008, Urdd Centre, Langrannog  
A family conference for Christians of all ages. What is our

Christian responsibility in the face of increasing environmental destruction, climate change and growing economic injustice? Key-note speaker, Revd Dr Hielke Wolters, Director of the Justice, Diakonia and Creation programme of the World Council of Churches, with a vibrant youth and children's programme and hands-on workshops.  
[www.cwmeurope.org](http://www.cwmeurope.org)

**Climate Camp—Kingsnorth Powerstation** - For the more campaigning-minded among you, could you help out with the

Christian Café space being prepared? It will be in Kent between 3rd and 11th August 2008. A group is working hard to create a cafe space, run by Christians, to provide tea and coffee, cakes and more to campers during the day, and somewhere for Christians to gather for fellowship and prayer amidst the hectic activity of the site. The project, whilst independently run, has received support from Student Christian Movement, Christian Ecology Link and the i58 network. For more info see [www.i58.org.uk](http://www.i58.org.uk)



Ruth Jarman from Christian Ecology Link attended the Climate Camp last year at Heathrow—she said it was very well organized. "We are armed—only with peer-reviewed science" was the slogan.

## 'Care for the world'—children's resources , and new books

Rev Chris Stafford, Rector of Newchurch and Christ Church Croft has just had another book of resources for children published. It is called 'Care for the world' and has been written for Key Stages 1 and 2 (primary) and is also ideal for use in all-age worship.

It has 3 sections - Times and Seasons (assembly material on Harvest, Remembrance, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter) 10 assemblies on the environment.

Others focus on specific issues such as green house gases, over

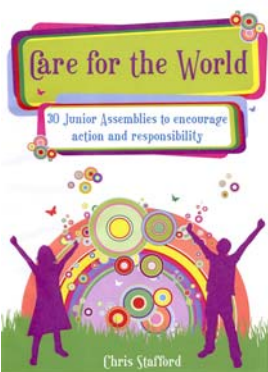
fishing, Frogs [2008 being the year of the frog], animal extinction, watch your waste, alternative energy, water etc).

The third section of the book looks at issues, and includes assemblies on bullying /asylum seekers /when someone dies / science and faith /poverty and fairtrade/ community and relationships / people with disabilities.

It also has a resources section at the back of the book—including 'green' websites and books, puppet resources etc.

Other new books out:

- **'Cherish the Earth—** reflections on a living planet' by Mary Low (Wild Goose Publications).
- **'Living with the Planet—** making a difference in a time of climate change' by Catherine von Ruhland (Published by Lion).
- **Hell and High Water** by Alastair McIntosh, addressing the fundamental issue of our addictive mentality: wants have replaced needs ...(Published by Birlinn Press, Edinburgh)



Chris' book is available from [www.kevinmayhewltd.com](http://www.kevinmayhewltd.com)

## Fund-raising and Admin—help needed

Eco-congregation is currently running on about £12k per year—all in. It would be great to be able to offer a better service, to spread the word more widely, and to see more churches taking the challenges of climate change seriously.

Do you have access to any grant-giving body? Could you possibly help with the task of fund-raising? It would be great to have a full-time person running the programme, alongside admin support.

The other need is for the modules to be re-written. I'm working with Eco-congregation in the other nations to try and achieve that, but it is difficult

without proper funding. The last round of 'cold calling' to grant giving bodies only produced £1k of finance, and we think it will cost more like £15k. Do get in touch if you have any contacts! Or perhaps you would be prepared to work at getting some finance in to the organisation—do get in touch either way!

### Sorting out assessments

With more churches requesting assessments, the workload is increasing, just to try and find local people to undertake the assessments. Would you be interested in taking on this piece of work as a volunteer? It involves locating 2 people local to the church which has applied, who visit the church and make a deci-

sion about whether they should be given the Award. After the visit, the church needs to have the decision confirmed, and the plaque sent out, with thanks to the assessors.

This is a clearly defined piece of work which could be undertaken from home with no great difficulty. Could you think of anyone who might like to do such a voluntary job on behalf of Eco-congregation?

Please do contact me if you have any leads on either of these big issues: funding or volunteering.

Alternatively, you could ask your church to give to Eco-congregation as part of your mission giving.



## Greenbelt—an opportunity to come and volunteer! August 22—25

Greenbelt is a Christian arts festival which takes place on the Cheltenham race course every August Bank Holiday.

There is a big space for organisations to have stands, and Eco-congregation has its own stand this year (A Rocha UK will be in the CMS Tent so we'll have a presence in both locations).

I have some cheap tickets to offer to anyone who is prepared to help out for a few hours on the stand. It's a great opportunity to meet folk, and encourage

them to get started in their church. You might be coming to Greenbelt anyway—please offer to do a stint on the stall!!

For those who don't have tickets already, I have available:

- 1 weekend ticket for £60 (currently online price till end July is £80)
- 2 each of day tickets for Saturday and Monday for £20 (online price £30). Day tickets don't allow you to camp.

If you've never been to Greenbelt before, why not give it a try? It is quite the most wonderfully di-

verse place, with all ages (from babes in arms to those of great experience and wisdom) and everything in between all discovering together what it means to follow Jesus in a changing world.

Greenbelt is an edgy place, not a particularly comfortable place. If you let yourself, you can be challenged on all sorts of issues. For some of us who perhaps find the church is not moving as fast as it should on certain issues, then you will feel at home at Greenbelt. Let me know if you'd like to help out on the stall.



## Ecominds—a new fund for environment and well-being

Ecominds

Part of the Changing Spaces programme is **Ecominds** is a new pot of funding awarded to the mental health charity Mind, to transform environments and build the confidence and self-esteem of people with mental health problems.

Over the next five years Ecominds will award grants up to the value of £250,000 to 125 environmental projects. Examples of eco-projects eligible for funding could include returning habitats to their natural state, starting up

recycling initiatives or community agricultural projects. Research by Mind has shown that Ecotherapy, the combination of nature and exercise, is extremely beneficial for mental wellbeing, reducing stress and depression and boosting self-esteem.

One church has already gone down this route—St Ninian's Church in Corby have a community allotment, growing fresh vegetables, and a link with the local social worker has led to a joint project involving folk with

mental health problems.

What about using any glebe land or a section of the church yard for a joint project with a local Mind group? Could members of your congregation have skills to pass on to others in nature conservation or gardening? Could you involve others in developing a 'quiet garden' in your church yard which might give community space to help alleviate stress?

[www.ecominds.org.uk](http://www.ecominds.org.uk)



*Working on the allotments at Queen Camel, Somerset, on church land.*





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## The Churches' Environmental Programme

**Eco-congregation provides a framework to get churches involved with environmental issues. Start with the church check-up (module 1), draw up an action plan, download the modules, get on with the work, and then apply for the Award!**

**Set up initially in partnership with Encams, it is now a project of:**

**A Rocha UK**  
13 Avenue Road  
Southall  
Middlesex UB1 3BL  
Registered Charity 1089276

**The Eco-congregation England & Wales office is at Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. Jo Rathbone is the part time co-ordinator of the programme.**

**All material is freely available from the website: [www.ew.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ew.ecocongregation.org)**

**It is helpful if you register your church after working through the church check-up (so that we can build up a national picture), and receiving the Award is a way to publicise your activities, and encourage other churches to get involved!**

All donations gratefully received: please make cheques payable to 'A Rocha UK'. Thanks.

**Find more resources on the web:**

**[www.ew.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ew.ecocongregation.org)**

## 100th Eco-congregation Award given in England & Wales!

The 100th Award was given to St Thomas' Salisbury in May—it is their second Award. Their work in the 3 main areas of church life which are assessed, included:

- **'spiritual'**: through regular services on the theme of creation care, using organic communion wine, and locally sourced bread; ensuring that prayers for the earth are made during services; regular inclusion of a 'green' theme in the Sunday School teaching
- **practical**: using low-energy light bulbs, using electricity from renewables (through a 'green electricity' supplier), fitting thermostatic radiator valves in their offices, shrubs and perennials planted by active gardening group to provide a green lung for the city and to attract wildlife
- **mission**: active in sharing their concern for creation care

with other church groups locally, working with organisations eg local council and Stop Climate Chaos coalition.

Recent Award winners are:

- Leytonstone United Free
- St Andrews Eastern Green, Coventry
- Gildersome Baptist
- St Andrew's Roundhay, Leeds
- Wesley Place Methodist, Alsager
- Harrow Baptist
- Christchurch Davyhulme, Manchester
- Goodmayes Methodist
- St Thomas' Salisbury
- Bramhall Methodist, Stockport

Here are some ideas as to resources you might use towards your Award:

### **Spiritual:**

- Time for God's Creation—CTBI have put together a huge resource of prayers and liturgies for use during this special time 1st Sept—4 Oct [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)
- Methodist church resources on climate change including Bible studies, and resources for use with children [www.stemthetide.org.uk](http://www.stemthetide.org.uk)

### **Practical:**

- Have a look at the info about wood-fuelled boilers on the Module 7 page of the site: [www.ew.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ew.ecocongregation.org)

### **Reaching out:**

- Could your church take a lead in setting up or simply get involved with a local Transition Towns initiative? Stirling Methodist Church took a lead, and that project is now changing lives in Stirling Going Zero. [www.transitiontowns.org](http://www.transitiontowns.org)

