



## East Lothian Eco-Congregation Network

*Notes of meeting at Belhaven Parish Church, Dunbar  
16<sup>th</sup> April 2013*

**Present:** Barbara Richerby (Belhaven Parish Church, Dunbar) Bill McClure (Abbey Church, North Berwick), Alison Milne (Yester Parish Church, Gifford), Zoe VanZwanenberg (St Anne's SEC, Dunbar), Margaret Warnock (Eco-Congregation Scotland)

**Apologies:** Ross McPhail (St Mary's Parish Church, Haddington) Joann Russell (St Andrew Blackadder, North Berwick)

### **1. The meeting opened with a prayer**

### **2. Introduction to Eco-Congregation**

Margaret gave a brief overview of Eco-Congregation Scotland (see website)

### **3. An Eco-Congregation Network for East Lothian**

Each church represented then explained where they were on their eco-congregation journey:

**Yester Parish Church, Gifford** are registered as an eco-congregation and the issues have been discussed at Kirk Session meetings. They are a small and ageing congregation but in terms of practical action the congregations they have installed a biomass boiler (wood pellet), which enables to keep background heat in the church for seven days a week for slightly less than the cost of previously heating the church (by oil) on Sundays only. This means the building is much warmer and drier – better for the congregation and better for the fabric. There have been a few teething problems, learning to understand the system, but it is now working well.

**Abbey Church, North Berwick** are also registered and have carried out some refurbishment in the work in the church buildings, including putting a glass partition between the entrance to the church and the sanctuary which helps conserve heat. They have also installed a new more energy efficient boiler and lighting system. The church has a big south facing roof and would, perhaps, like to consider installing solar panels.

**Belhaven Parish Church, Dunbar** have undertaken a range of creation care work and have gained their first Eco-Congregation Award. Environmental issues were integrated into the services and work carried out in the Eco-garden with the youth group. They have strong links with Christian Aid and Fair Trade is promoted within the church. Work in the buildings included changing the boiler and radiators in the hall (so that individual radiator thermostats could be fitted). The church has also shown films such as Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" and has been involved with the "Sustaining Dunbar" group.

**St Anne's, Dunbar** is new to Eco-Congregation but is already involved in Fair Trade. They have had a discussion series on "Life Beyond Fossil Fuels" and are planning another series entitled "Mindfulness", which will include environmental themes. The church is currently going through a renewal process and will consider becoming an eco-congregation as part of this.

**It was agreed that:**

- the network should cover the East Lothian local authority area, acknowledging that congregations on the fringes may find it more convenient to link with other existing networks such as Edinburgh or Esk and Tweed
- everyone present would try to use their own contacts and local networks to involve others
- a programme of meetings would be put together to give those interested in the area the opportunity to get together, exchange information and invite speakers on relevant topics
- participating congregations would hope to offer to organise and host meetings so that the load was shared around the network.
- one further meeting will be organised for 2013, with, perhaps, 3 in 2014

**Next steps**

**ALISON** will check with the church diary, that **Yester Parish Church** can host a meeting on **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September** and it was agreed to invite

**MARGARET** will invite Changeworks to give a talk about their “**Love Food, Hate Waste**” campaign (once the date is confirmed). There would also be an opportunity to see and find out more about their **biomass boiler**.

**ALL** to publicise (Margaret will produce a flier / poster) and invite people to this meeting. Further meetings and the programme for 2014 would be discussed at this meeting

*MW130420*