



Eco-Congregation Scotland Newsletter

Issue 24

January 2013

Helping you to care for God's creation

Editorial

Eco-Congregation representatives meet MSP's at Holyrood

Representatives of several eco-congregations met MSP's at Holyrood on 25th of October to urge further action to tackle climate change. The mass lobbying event was organised by Stop Climate Chaos Coalition Scotland, of which Eco-Congregation Scotland is a member.



Alison Boyes of Dunscore Parish Church who was at the event writes:

The MSPs were keen to talk, but also to listen. They were aware of local issues which needed to be addressed, such as better public transportation in rural areas, and energy inefficient housing. Everyone was telling them about those issues, but what was it that I had come to "say well"? I am not an expert on climate change, but I do have experience of working

with Eco-Congregation, both nationally and in Dunscore, so this is what I decided to tell them about.



Alison Boyes with Alex Fergusson MSP

I told them about how churches worked not in isolation, but with their local communities and also as networks throughout Scotland. I described how we had been instructed to reduce our carbon footprint by 5% year on year (our own version of the 2009 Act!). I said that in Dunscore we had widened this by considering the household footprints of our members and other local people on clock change day and I told them about the ways in which we provided information about energy saving, renewables, eco driving and local food. I emphasised the importance that we attached to campaigning and lobbying.

A full report can be found here:
<http://gh.cm/W7e0nQ>

Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering and AGM 2013

This year's Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering will be held on Saturday 20th April at the Grassmarket Community project, Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. The event will be held in the new centre being built behind the church yard which will give us more space for additional workshops and group discussions. The Grassmarket Community Project run the woodworking project where our award plaques are made.

The venue is centrally located and easy for public transport from across Scotland.

The theme this year will be food – and will include workshops on a range of subjects from food security to local food production.

Full details will be sent to all registered congregations nearer the time, but please put the date in your diary.

An Environmental Chaplain for Scotland

The United Reformed Church is appointing an Environmental Chaplain to visit and work with churches across Scotland. The chaplain will promote a Christian understanding of the need to care for creation and assist congregations to reflect on the issues theologically as well as taking practical action. The post is ecumenical and will be based within Eco-Congregation Scotland, with salary funded by the URC and the main housing provided by the Church of Scotland. Other costs will be paid by Eco-Congregation Scotland and we will be raising money to cover these. We would like to thank the URC for their support.



Recruitment is currently taking place and we hope to have news about an appointee by the time of the Annual Gathering in April.

Award News

Report of our 100th Award Celebration

Eco-Congregation activists from around Scotland met at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Clarkston on Saturday to celebrate this parish receiving the 100th Eco-Congregation Scotland award. The celebration was led by parish priest Fr Jim Duggan and Rev Ewan Aitken, chair of Eco-Congregation Scotland. Michael Martin and Jim Seenan of St Joseph's gave a presentation on the work the parish had done to achieve the award and Philippa Bonella of SCIAF spoke about the connection between climate justice, poverty and the environment.



The presentation was made by Councillor Alistair Carmichael, Provost of East Renfrewshire Council whose ward includes St Joseph's Church.

One unexpected guest was Ken Mackintosh MSP, who interrupted a family birthday party to pop in and congratulate members of the parish on their achievement.

SCIAF have published an article on their web site with lots of great photographs of the event:

<http://gh.cm/V6GxOU>

Forfar East & Old gain first Eco-Congregation Award

On Sunday 28th October, at the morning sacrament of Communion, the Reverend Barbara Ann Sweetin accepted, on behalf of the congregation of Forfar East & Old parish church, their first Eco Award.



The plaque was handed over by Margaret Scrimgeour a member of the congregation's Green Committee who reminded the 300 people who were present that morning what they had done to gain the Award. This has included recycling, reusing pew wood in a number of ways, supporting the Fair Trade stall every Sunday, having dedicated services and Bible Studies as well as working hard in the church yard to make it tidier and more attractive for the community as well as the congregation. Barbara Ann herself has been an inspirational leader in the process.

2nd Eco-Congregation Award to Langside Parish Church

Langside Parish Church has received their 2nd Eco-Congregation Award. Congratulations! Principally the award was awarded for:

- The congregation's immersion in and commitment to environmental, community and peace and justice issues
- The integration of creation stewardship themes into worship
- The staggering amount of awareness and money raised for projects dealing with global justice and poverty.

- After the church had a fire, the impressive rebuilding work which had creation care and environmental concern at its core

Well done!

Dunscore Parish Church receives third Eco-Congregation award

Dunscore Parish Church, near Dumfries, has received its third award.

The presentation took place at a Harvest Supper. Everyone brought food and paid £1 with money being used to pay the congregation's Eco-Congregation Scotland membership fee. Food was locally sourced where possible. Church members provided entertainment.



There were two "trialogues", a reading of "The Deluge" in Scots and some humorous songs from the organist!



Christine Sime, the former minister, presented the award to Charlie Macallan, session clerk.

News for Networks

Local Network Web Pages

Each of our local networks has its own web page where we publish details of the next meeting and add articles which are of specific interest to people living in these areas. These pages can be accessed from here: www.ecocongregationscotland.org/networks

Mini-Gathering in Aberdeen Oct 2012

The report from the Mini-Gathering in Aberdeen held on the 22nd October is now available.



People from 13 congregations came to event, which aimed to inspire and equip congregations for their Eco-Congregation journey. Speakers from Cults Parish Church, Skene Parish Church and Queen's Cross Parish Church shared their Eco-Congregation plans and achievement. We heartily recommend reading the report if you are looking for inspiration or curious to find out how other congregations carry out their Eco-Congregation journey.

Rev. Ewan Aitken also gave an inspirational sermon prior to the gathering and abseiled off the Forth bridge for charity later the same day.

You can read the full report (PDF file) by clicking on this link: <http://gh.cm/VXOvaM>

We wish to thank everyone who made this gathering such a success. Especially the wonderful speakers from Cults Parish Church, Skene Parish Church and Queen's Cross Parish Church.

A separate event took place on the Tuesday where 37 people attended a joint climate change roadshow run by Eco-Congregation Scotland and Christian Aid.

New Registrations

The following churches have registered as eco-congregations. Please help us to make them feel welcome!

Menzies Hill Parish Church, Dundee



This is the first registered eco-congregation in the city of Dundee. Hopefully more will now follow.

News from Churches

Dunscore Church Digest December 2012

The latest edition of the Dunscore Parish Church Magazine is now available. There are two interesting articles which may be of interest entitled Get Your Act Together by Alison Boyes and How Big is Your Footprint? by Matthew Aitken.

The newsletter can be found here (PDF file):

<http://gh.cm/RWlxYs>

Old and Abbey Church Eco Christmas Newsletter

Old and Abbey church in Arbroath have published a Christmas edition of their eco newsletter. This contains lots of useful ideas for home and church over the Christmas period.

The newsletter can be viewed online and downloaded here:

<http://gh.cm/V1fHny>

Left-over wool put to good use by Skene Parish Church Eco Group

Skene Parish Church Eco Group sent out an appeal for any double knitting wool that was no longer required in order to knit some tea cosies for our church teapots! A huge amount of wool was received and three tea cosies so far have been made. At the same time one of our group members mentioned the Fish and Chips Babies project and that was all that was needed! Needles began clicking and wool was requested on a regular basis and we now have around 200 outfits ready for dispatch. And the ladies are still knitting!



The photo by Sheila Gray shows a display of some of the outfits on our new Eco Board in Trinity Church Westhill.

Knightsridge Church Sunday School Project 2012

In November Knightsridge Church's Summer Sunday School Project 2012 was dedicated with a special creation service entitled, "For the beauty of the earth" In appreciation of all the hard work, the young people were each presented with a personalised "God Bless You" mug featuring the Eco-Congregation 2nd Award plaque.

The finished artwork entitled, "God, The Father of Creation", comprises photographs taken by the young people inserted into fabric squares individually designed with fabric dyes and paints.



Photo (by Marjory McGhie): l-r Rebecca Pratt, Tia Coles and Liam Lawson of Livingston Ecumenical Parish – Knightsridge Church.

Skene's Own Little Bit of the Jubilee Woods

On Saturday 17 November, an enthusiastic group of folk from Skene Parish Church joined the Eco Group and gathered at a small piece of land next to Kirk Cottage in Kirkton of Skene to take part in a tree planting activity.



Skene Parish Church Eco Group were given a free Community Tree Pack of 105 tree saplings from the Woodland Trust as part of the charity's Jubilee Woods Project. The Woodland Trust wants to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee by helping millions of people across the UK to come together and plant 6 million trees across the country. The trees, all native species, will grow into a young wood in as little 10 years. Also included in the pack is a Royal Oak sapling, which has been grown from an acorn gathered from one of the Royal Estates.

Our hard working team of men, women and children, wielded spades and hammers and had the job done in no time at all – planted, staked and protectors fitted. The work was done under the expert eyes of Alison Sutherland, an Aberdeenshire Ranger and Graeme MacDonald.

The hard work completed, the workers were treated to hot drinks and, as we say in the North East, a 'fine piece' to eat.

The Eco group would like to thank all the volunteers who supported us in this venture. Over the next decade or so, it will be interesting to watch our woodland grow. In years to come, we will be able to bring our children and grandchildren along and show them what we helped to achieve in our little corner of the land.

Sheila Gray

Dalbeattie Church visit Eco-Congregation Hungary

Rev Norman Hutchenson and members of Dalbeattie Parish Church travelled to Hajdunanas in Hungary to promote the Eco-Congregation movement and forge friendships with a Hungarian Eco-Congregation:

Here is his story:

An invitation from Hajdunanas to Eco-Congregations Scotland was an invitation too good to refuse, so accompanied by three elders I went to Eastern Hungary to celebrate Climate Time with an eco

winning congregation – Hajdunanas Reformed Church.

What a welcome we received. It is doubtful if anyone from Scotland has ever gone further than Debrecen or Budapest to visit congregations in Hungary. The assistant Minister Aron Kocsis made sure this was to be a visit that all would remember.



Award ceremony for climate time competition

The School, a Reformed Church establishment, invited us to share in their School Assembly, and share their exhibition of creation Time art work. Even the Kindergarten had made little animals out of dough for the season. The school ran a Fete from which they raised over 100000 HUF for the work of the bird hospital in Hortobagy, a national park where they are trying to recover some of the traditional strains of animals and create a traditional agricultural area. The bird hospital to which the children raised the money deals mainly with storks, falcons and eagles that have been hit by vehicles or have themselves hit power lines.



Visitors from Dalbeattie Rev Norman Hutchenson, Ian McMickan, Lilly Stevenson and Janet Henry, along with translator Rev Aron Kocsis of Hajdunans at school presentation

Sunday worship to a packed church of over 400 of all ages was an inspiring experience. We shared a PowerPoint presentation in the church on Scotland, the Eco-Congregation movement here, and congratulated the congregation of Hajdunans on its award from the Hungarian Eco-Congregation movement.

Part of our group represented the local Initiative Company, and the Mayor was keen to share some of his new work for those on state benefit. A large parcel of land had been rented by the town, and made available on a semi commercial basis for residents. Tomatoes, peppers, courgettes and a variety of crops and vegetables were grown and managed by local people. These were taken to market and sold, and the profits divided among those who had worked the small farm. Their income was improved, together with the dignity of work and the sense of self satisfaction.

There was a lot of local interest generated by the visit. The Television company broadcast an 14 minute news report on the activities of the school, and the local radio channel had an interview on Eco-Congregations too. The Television programme is available on http://nanastv.hu/nanastv/a-teremtes-unnepe-video_9c723da99.html. One of the side issues that interested me was reported to me. While in Budapest in the summer of 2011, Hungarian Television had interviewed me as part of the religious broadcast output on Eco-Congregations, and what we as churches could do to improve the environment.

During this visit I met up with Tamas Kodacsy who informed that the Science dept of the Television Company had been intrigued by this development in the Churches, and wanted to know more. This apparently gave rise to a series on the "Green God" with a focus on the Church and the environment.

Other News

Children and Creation Care



We have added additional resources to our Children and Creation Care Ideas for Action, formerly known as the Acorns to Oaks module which can be found here:

<http://gh.cm/XAn1qW>

We would love to have examples of your own children and creation care activities to share with everyone as an additional resource to inspire others. Please Contact Us with descriptions of activities if you would like to contribute to the page. Thank you!

Join the discussion on Facebook

Over 230 people already receive updates from our Facebook page.

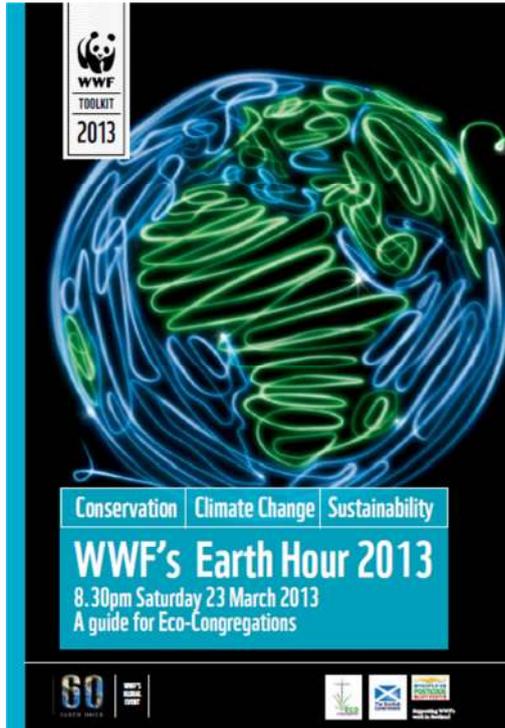
Anyone can post ideas to our page and this is sure to generate a discussion so why not join us?



Visit us here:

www.facebook.com/ecocongregationscotland

Earth Hour 2013



This year's Earth Hour takes place on Saturday 23rd of March. We have worked with WWF to produce an information pack for churches interested in taking part which can be downloaded from this web page:

<http://gh.cm/W6vP5Q>

Many churches took part last year and we hope that more will this year.

Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum



The Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum held its AGM at Luss on the 18th of October. A full report is available to view online here:

<http://gh.cm/Un6LZs>

This new group is aiming to be a focal point for discussion and development of Pilgrim Routes within Scotland.

You can visit their web site here: www.sprf.org.uk

Scottish 50% renewable electricity target to be achieved by 2015



The Sustainable Scotland Network and BBC News have reported that a new target to generate the equivalent of half of Scotland's electricity needs from renewable energy by 2015 has been set by the Scottish Government.

First Minister Alex Salmond stated that "This target is ambitious, but also achievable. It is based on current data about capacity which is operational, under construction, or has been consented."

You can access the full Sustainable Scotland Network article here : <http://gh.cm/VeiOJM>

Global carbon emission growth

The Doha climate Change Conference has been marked by more reports on the growth in carbon emissions. The latest is from the Global Carbon Project which and summarises global carbon emissions for 2011.

"CO2 emissions from fossil fuels burning and cement production increased by 3% in 2011, with a total of 9.5±0.5 PgC emitted to the atmosphere (34.7 billion tonnes of CO2). These emissions were the highest in human history and 54% higher than in 1990 (the Kyoto Protocol reference year).

Current trajectories of fossil fuel emissions are tracking some of the most carbon intensive emission scenarios used in the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC). The current trajectory is tracking the Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 (of the latest family of IPCC scenarios) that takes the planet to about 4°C to 6.1°C above pre-industrial times by 2100."

You can find out more at the global Carbon Project website: <http://gh.cm/VejbUB>

Head of Friends of the Earth calls on churches to lead fight against climate change

Churches must play a leading role in urging action on climate change, Friends of the Earth's Executive Director Andy Atkins said when he delivered the 2012 Operation Noah Annual Lecture on 21st November in the Small Meeting Hall at Friends House, London.

Andy Atkins spoke on 'Overcoming fossil fuel addiction – the next moral revolution?' where he will challenge the churches and attendees to play their part in fighting for a low-carbon future.

"UK churches were at the forefront of historic campaigns to end the injustices of slavery and child labour. They must now show leadership in ending one of the biggest threats humanity currently faces – our addiction to fossil fuels.

Without action, we are effectively breaking our social contract with future generations, sentencing those that come after us, our children, our grandchildren and their children, to climate chaos and all the social and economic consequences that this will cause.

With UK energy policy standing at the cross-roads there has never been a more important time to act. Churches must join with us in calling for the Energy Bill, which will shortly be going before Parliament, to include targets to get us off our fossil fuel dependency and help build a safer, cleaner future for us all."

Mr Atkins used to work as the Policy and Campaign's Director at Tearfund, where he was one of a small group who set up the 'Make Poverty History' campaign in 2005.

2020 Climate Group launch the Waste Pledge for businesses

Businesses across Scotland can sign up to meet the Waste (Scotland) Regulations target coming into force in January 2014 through the 2020 Climate Group. The regulation makes it a legal requirement for all businesses to separate their waste.

According to SEPA: "The regulations require all non-domestic waste producers to take reasonable steps to ensure the separate collection of metal, plastic, glass,

paper and card (including cardboard) from 1 January 2014."

No doubt many of you are already meeting the requirements of this regulation. If your congregation would like to sign up to this commitment please complete this online form: <http://gh.cm/VHrxoV>

Use the Carbon Account to monitor your carbon footprint.

If you want a carbon calculator that is a bit more sophisticated than the eco-congregation calculator you may wish to try the Carbon Account website: www.thecarbonaccount.com

It allows you to input data from your gas or electricity meter, car mileage and flights and presents the results in a good graphical display.

They also offer to set up group accounts if your congregation is interested.

But be warned: you may be shocked at what you find. Despite reducing my heating bills, driving a small fuel efficient car and trying not to fly my footprint still appears to be on the wrong side of five tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. Guilty!

Adrian Shaw

Food saving tips from Greener Scotland

Any easy way to save waste is to focus on food! Greener Scotland have some wonderful food saving tips and fun competitions to encourage you to not waste food.

Access their website here. www.greenerScotland.org

Funding for insulation in church buildings

As temperatures drop, the Energy Saving Trust has been receiving a lot of enquiries about insulation. However, there has been some confusion about who gets what for free.

Many local authorities across Scotland offer free insulation to householders. However, the scheme is

limited to domestic properties. Churches fall under the category of 'non-profit organisation.'

The Energy Saving Trust offers churches a free, detailed energy review and, depending on the recommendations which result, an interest free loan to implement the changes. They can usually suggest a number of worthwhile energy- and money-saving measures, ranging from no cost and low cost, to others (like insulation) which require some investment.

Further information on this can be found here:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Organisations/Business-services/In-depth-energy-advice/Energy-Reviews>

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Organisations/Business-services/In-depth-energy-advice/Small-business-loans>

If your church is looking to fund an insulation/energy efficiency project, another avenue for funding could be the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF).

CCF grants up to £150,000 per year provide funds and support for community groups, (including faith groups), to fit insulation and other energy efficient measures in community owned buildings such as churches and church halls. To qualify for funding these buildings must be owned, managed and used by the community; grants cannot fund projects in buildings that are used exclusively for worship.

For a community group to be eligible for a CCF grant they must be community led, operate on a not-for-profit basis, prove they can achieve measurable cuts in their carbon footprint within their neighbourhood and leave a sustainable legacy in the community.

CCF grants are available until March 2015. For more information and full criteria please see www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf or call a Development Officer on 01786 468 779.

Sign up to Clean Up Scotland

The Clean Up Scotland campaign aims to get one million people in Scotland working together to clean up our country in time for the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup in 2014, and to work towards long-term behaviour change so that dropping litter and

mess becomes as socially unacceptable as drink driving.

Simple ways you can help:

- Like them on facebook
www.facebook.com/CleanUpScotland
- Follow them on twitter @cleanupscotland

For more information or to register a Clean Up please see their website.

www.cleanupscotland.com

The Nature of Scotland Awards open for entries

We have received the following news from the RSPB:



The Nature of Scotland Awards recognizes and rewards those who are making a real difference to the conservation of Scotland's natural heritage.

The 2013 awards opened for entries on the 14th November 2012. It is free to enter and there are eight categories, each identifying a different area of nature conservation: Marine Conservation; Sustainable Development; Politician of the Year; Innovation; Outstanding Contribution; RSPB Species Champion; Community Initiative; Education.

If you feel you work with, or know of, an organisation, group or individual who has participated in activity that has aided Scottish nature conservation, we would like to hear from you.

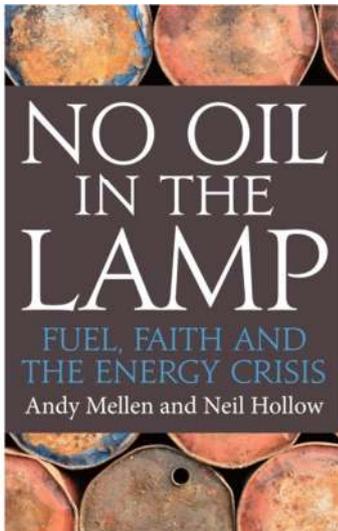
Deadline for submission 15th March 2013.

For more information on how to enter, please visit:

www.rspb.org.uk/natureofscotland

Book review

No Oil in the Lamp: Fuel, Faith and the Energy Crisis
by Andy Mellen and Neil Hollow, published by
Darton, Longman and Todd, 2012, £12.99



Neil Hollow is a member of the eco-congregation at St Paul's and St. George's Scottish Episcopal Church in Edinburgh and with Andy Mellen has published this challenging new guide to the complexities of faith and energy use. Its rationale is clear: the crisis of 'peak oil' is so important that it will change society and churches must be alive to these changes. The authors examine the effects of peak oil and our energy addiction and pose some challenging questions. The book argues that we cannot place any long term reliance on carbon fuels like gas coal and oil and that these sources of energy - a gift from God- have been squandered through thoughtless use. In turn this profligate waste of the earth's resources has so consumed us that we have forgotten our responsibilities to care for the earth and for each other. The authors find hope in the Transition Town movement; a community based response to peak oil that offers a positive alternative to oil dependence and a response to climate change.

Of particular interest to eco-congregations will be chapters on the theology of peak oil. The authors tackle head on tricky issues of 'man's dominion', ecological justice and the relevance of Jesus' ministry and teaching. The book concludes with the question 'what can I do?' to which the response 'keep calm and start doing things differently' includes practical tips for individuals and congregations.

The book will be an excellent if demanding primer for eco-congregations. It could form a valuable start for discussions in eco-congregations around issues that

are changing all the time. It does not answer all the questions but it can start discussions on a range of issues. For example the discussions taking place in churches around the world following the economic crash are relating environmental damage to the economy more closely and the debate on food and farming is also leading to new understandings. And it is great that members of eco-congregations are contributing to the debate!

Adrian Shaw

Rev Sally Foster-Fulton writes to Scotsman

The following letter from Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, convenor of the Church of Scotland Church and Society council was published in The Scotsman on 5th December 2012.

Gas let-down

I was disappointed to learn that the Chancellor intends to signal an expansion in the use of natural gas for electricity generation when he unveils the government's gas strategy later this week.

Although I applaud the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change's support for renewables, I am calling on him to stand firm in his convictions and stand up against the continuing long-term role for fossil fuels in the UK's energy generation.

Any expansion of the use of natural gas will prolong the UK's dependence on fossil fuels and will make it all the more difficult to meet the carbon targets set out in the UK Climate Change Act. It also sends out a poor message to the rest of the world about how seriously the UK Government is taking these targets, especially in the context of the current ongoing meeting of the UN Climate Change Conference at Doha.

At a time when the international community is desperately looking for leadership to address the worsening crisis of climate change, the UK Government is yet again engaged in an internal wrangle between the Chancellor and the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

(Rev) Sally Foster-Fulton
Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council

*Create in us a new heart
and a new vision, O God,
that the gifts of Your Spirit may work in us
and renew the face of the earth.
May we be one with you so that our work is
yours and your work is ours.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who lives with you and with the Holy Spirit
for ever.*

Amen

(From a prayer by Sister Catherine Brennan SSL
and Sister Ann Concannon SSL,
from Resources for Creation Time 2012, CTBI)

Register your church

Registering on the Eco-Congregation programme is easy and free. It gives your church access to free resources, the chance to be part of a local network, and to work towards an Eco-Congregation Award. It's easy to register. Contact us for a form or visit <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org>

Enquiries

To enquire about the programme and request an introduction pack contact:

Gordon Hudson

Email: manager@ecocongregationscotland.org

Phone: 0131 240 2274

Eco-Congregation Scotland

121 George Street

Edinburgh EH2 4YN

For advice and support contact:

Margaret Warnock

Email: margaret@ecocongregation.org.uk

Phone: 01877 330182

Keep in touch!

For environmental and financial reasons the main circulation of the newsletter is by email. Please ensure you keep us informed of any changes to your email address.

We welcome new recipients of the newsletter. If it has been forwarded to you, to receive future issues email manager@ecocongregationscotland.org

Do we have your latest email address?

If you change email address please let us know so you can continue to receive our newsletter.

You can update your email address by sending us a message through the [contact page on our web site](#).

Eco-Congregation Scotland

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