

Horsham Eco Churches Talk at HCT Forum 11.10.23 – Karen Park

1. Hello, I'm Karen Park

- Horsham Eco Churches are working together, across all denominations, sharing information, ideas and encouraging each other.
- I am now an Authorised Lay Minister at St Mark's in Holbrook and a speaker for A Rocha UK, giving talks to churches and groups.
- We are living in deeply troubling times with a steep rise in the cost of living and poverty, extreme temperatures, wild fires and floods.
- Communities and churches are responding generously to help foodbanks and refugees, caring for the poor and vulnerable.
- Advancing climate change and biodiversity loss will only increase human suffering and conflict, fortunately, what is good for the climate, helps to tackle poverty too.
- **A Rocha UK** is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world, and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment. <https://arocha.org.uk/>

2. Our God is the Creator and Lord of all things

- 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.' Genesis 1:31
- God values mankind, giving us the elevated role of being a responsible steward for the earth (to safeguard the integrity of creation).

3. We Are Living in a Climate and Ecological Emergency

- The most important commandments are to love God, and to love our neighbours.
- Tackling the climate crisis is vital to both.
- 'What does the Lord require of us: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God' Micah 6:8
- All denominations recognise the emergency and have resources to help us.

4. Church of England - The Five Marks of Mission

- Treasure is the 5th Mark of Mission promoted by the Anglican Communion worldwide.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme>

5. Methodist Church

- Action for Hope - Six Steps to Net Zero

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/environment-and-climate-change/>

United Reformed Church

- Integrates concern for environmental issues into the whole of church life
<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/become-an-eco-church-or-congregation/>

6. Catholic Church

- The Call of Creation - teaching document <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/environment/>
- Laudato Si' on the care of the common home and the update, Laudate Deum, published by Pope Francis in October 2023 <https://laudatedeum.church/>

Baptist Union Environment Network

- Works for justice for creation and people impacted by environmental change
<https://www.baptist.org.uk/BUEN>

7. Eco Church

- An A Rocha UK project for all denominations in England and Wales
- Free online survey records what the church is already doing to care for God's world
- Churches register and work towards Bronze, Silver and Gold awards

The free online resources help to inform decisions in 5 key areas of church life:

- 1) Worship and teaching
- 2) Management of church buildings
- 3) and church land
- 4) Community & global engagement
- 5) Personal lifestyle

- Over 6,600 churches in England and Wales registered for Eco Church, nearly 3,000 achieved an award and there are 40 gold-awarded churches.
- Complete the Eco Survey to gauge where your church currently is in relation to the three different levels; you may find you already qualify for an Eco Church Award!

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

8. Eco Church Survey

- The survey is automatically saved. Lines instantly change as points accumulate.
- Churches must reach the required standard in each area that applies.
- 25% points for Bronze, 50% Silver, 75% Gold
- Keep an Eco Diary and photos ready for assessors to visit and assess for a Gold award.

9. Eco Church - Resources

- Quickly explore why and how to undertake recommended actions.
- There are also longer reads and case studies.
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/>

10. Worship and Teaching

- Eco Church preaching, worship, prayer, small group and church communications resources are available.
- Kids and Youth resources
- 5 sessions for each age group, exploring the 5 different areas of the Eco Church Survey. They include a game, Bible story, activity, action, prayer and worship.

11. Management of Church Buildings

- Each church is unique and needs to carefully consider the right combination of actions, some are quick wins, others need careful planning and expert advice.
- 7% of churches are already net zero carbon.
- Sample very-high energy using buildings, indicates all can achieve net zero carbon.
- Well maintained - wind and water tight, loft insulation, manage draughts.
- Buy 100% renewable electricity and "green" gas. It is the simplest thing you can do to cut your net carbon footprint.
- Waste less electricity, gas and oil, manage timing on heating controls.

- Where possible, move to electric heating, such as heat pumps, pew, infra-red panel or chandelier heaters.
- Explore the possibility of solar panels.
- When you have reduced your energy use, you can offset the rest through Climate Stewards or other reputable schemes to become 'net zero'.
- Consider where vegetation or trees can grow to naturally capture carbon.
- Church of England Environment Programme has lots of information, webinars and recordings, open to all denominations, to support and equip us, technical webinars for non-technical people.

12. Management of Church Land

- Actively manage church land to benefit native plants and wildlife and enable the community to access.
- Create nature and wildlife friendly areas - even just a window box or doorstep pot with pollinator friendly plants, sow a metre square of native wildflower seeds, a shallow bowl of water for wildlife

13. Community Engagement

- Horsham District Foodbank
- Horsham Community Fridge
- Recycling

14. We work in partnership with

- other churches, environmental and community groups, councils and individuals to share information, resources, expertise and ideas and make a difference.

15. Global Engagement

- When we choose Fairtrade we stand with farmers taking on the climate crisis
- Climate change hits those in low-income countries the hardest.
- Increasingly extreme, unpredictable weather is destroying bananas, coffee, cocoa and other crops.
- Farmers and workers, already underpaid, have even less to spend on essentials such as education, medical treatment and even food.
- Let's help them by demanding climate justice.
- Over 6,000 Fairtrade products including: bananas, biscuits, tea, coffee, chocolate and sugar.

16. Global Engagement – Petitioning

- To bring about climate justice, we need change at all levels, as individuals, churches and societies.
- Current campaigns which churches are supporting include:
 - Tearfund – Rubbish Campaign Petition
<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns>
 - Christian Aid – Make Polluters Pay Campaign
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns>
 - Fairtrade and Climate Justice
<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/Current-campaigns/>

17. Personal Lifestyle

The 5th key area in the Eco Church Survey is Lifestyle and it can be a challenge, but our household and personal actions do make a difference.

A Rocha UK's Wild Christian Project

- Bi-monthly emails, for households, something to think about and practical actions to enjoy, nurture and protect nature. <https://arocha.org.uk/wild-christian/>

Creation Care scheme

- Encourages households
- Easy-to-use free online questionnaire
- Ideas for next steps towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold award
<https://creationcare.org.uk/>

18. Creation Care scheme

- 7 areas of life - see where you're doing well and how you can better care for God's creation
 - Worship and prayer
 - Home
 - Garden
 - Travel
 - Food
 - Possessions
 - Community and global engagement
- Use the drawing pin to create a personalised to do list.
- Churches don't see your survey responses but are notified when a household registers or achieves an award.
- Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates for households who reach at least that level in all 7 areas. Commended and Highly Commended certificates for those doing well towards the next award.
- Avoid feeling overwhelmed, use the Creation Care scheme to help you review where you are doing well, and then focus on taking one step at a time.

Of the 32 Horsham Churches Together, 14 have already registered with Eco Church, 4 have achieved a Bronze Eco Church award and 2 a Silver Eco Church award. There are currently only 40 Gold Award Eco Churches in England and Wales.

As part of Horsham Churches Together we created Horsham Eco Churches, with a webpage, emailed news and regular get togethers to encourage and inspire others to share ideas and find out more about caring for God's world.

19. Cornerstone Methodist Church at London Road in Horsham

- Bronze Eco Church Award in 2023
- Hosts Horsham Community Fridge Hub and twice weekly fridge
- Lent Lunch combined with Fairtrade Fortnight, celebration, with displays and Fairtrade films

20. St. Mary's Church

- Horsham Parish Church in the town centre
- Grade I listed building, founded in 1247
- Bronze Eco Church award in 2023
- Developing churchyard areas for different community needs and biodiversity
- Churchyard BioBlitz, 155 species flowering plants, 48 mosses & liverworts

21. St Margaret's Church in Warnham

- Semi-rural village church
- Founded 1180 to 1204
- Bronze Eco Church Award in 2022
- Partner with Wild About Warnham to benefit wildlife
- Areas of the churchyard grow in summer, meadow cut with scythes
- Warnham Butterfly Fields - grizzled skipper
- Swift boxes installed
- Repaired and replanted the boundary hedge with native species

22. Life Community Baptist Church

- Bronze Eco Church Award in 2022
- Meet at The Phoenix Club in Horsham, not responsible for land but got permission for the children to create a bug hotel in the Nature Garden, upcycling a wooden pallet, sawing, drilling, rooms filled with twigs, leaves, pine cones and a plant shelf on top
- Collect recycling for Sussex Green Living on Sundays

23. Brighton Road Baptist Church

- Founded in 1894, rebuilt in 2008
- Silver Eco Church Award
- Rooftop solar panels
- Annual carbon footprint campaign

24. St John's Church, Broadbridge Heath

- Registered with Eco Church
- Garden of Remembrance, water butt
- Evening of contemporary dance and community environmental action discussion, 30th October

25. St Mark's Church

- Rebuilt in 1990, relocated to Holbrook
- Silver Eco Church Award in 2018
- Sussex Green Living Recycling and other schemes
- Eco Church is standard agenda item for our church PCC, a report is sent to every meeting
- Environmental Policy and Action Plan
<https://www.stmarksholbrook.org.uk/EcoChurch>

26. Together We Can

- Climate change can seem overwhelming but together we can do simple things to help our planet & reduce our bills.

27. OnePlanet

- Horsham Eco Churches is helping to pioneer how churches can use the OnePlanet online platform, which enables citizens, companies and governments to collaborate to tackle climate change, build resilient communities and regenerate the earth's living systems, which we all depend on. <https://oneplanet.com/>

- Humanity's future hangs in balance, we need to:
 - RECONNECT
 - REWILD land and cities
 - Farm in ways to REGENERATE soils
 - Move to clean RENEWABLE ENERGY
 - RETHINK what is really important to us

28. Act Now

- The latest State of Nature Report, published in September included nearly one in six UK wildlife species are now at risk of extinction, compared with one in ten in 2019.
- Pollinators such as bees, hoverflies and moths, have decreased by 18% on average.
- June, July and August 2023, earth's hottest 3-month period on record.
- A climate catastrophe is unfolding around us a danger to civilisation
- We are called to be God's hands and feet, a voice, campaigning for change and making every practical difference we can.
- There is an urgent need for governments and all sections of society to act themselves and work with others.
- We can help to lead the way, by working together using Eco Church and Creation Care.
- "let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

29. Keep in Touch

- Sign up today to keep in touch with our news, activities and events.
- A Rocha UK www.bit.ly/aruksignup
- Horsham Eco Churches www.eepurl.com/hENwET
- Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HorshamEcoChurches>
- Equip your church to care for God's creation <https://arocha.org.uk/get-involved/engage-your-church/>

Revd Richard Coldicott, Vicar, St. Mark's Church, Holbrook, could not be here this evening, but he said:

"Becoming an Eco Church has led St. Mark's to truly take seriously God's call for Christians and Christian communities to be good stewards of the Lord's creation.

In our preaching, management of church buildings and land, and through the response of individual households to the challenge to safeguard the integrity of creation, we are learning to embrace this missional imperative.

Leading environmentally responsible lives is part of what it means to love one's neighbour, since our actions or inaction today affect our neighbours across God's world."