

**APPENDIX N**

**REPORT OF AD HOC GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, JANUARY  
2003**

Following the Rev G Pitt's report on the World Summit on Sustainable Development to Standing Committee (SC) in November 2002, this Ad Hoc Group was appointed to report by January 2003 on measures the Church of Ireland (C of I) might take in response to global environmental problems.

Those appointed to the Group were: -

- Rev George Pitt, Education Adviser to Bishops' Appeal;
- Rev Dr. Ron Elsdon, Rector of St. Bartholomew's, Belfast;
- Rev David Humphries, Rector of St. Molua's, Stormont;
- Ms Stella Mew of the Church in Society Committee.

The Group co-opted: -

- Mr Des Loughridge, Environmental Officer of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and member of St. Molua's.

The Group met twice.

**1. HISTORY**

We note that this is not the first report to SC on environmental issues. We refer SC to reports of the former Role of the Church Committee (1986 General Synod Report p.194; 1987 GS Report pp.148-156). Though the rest of the material has dated, the section on *theology* (1987 pp.149f.) still repays attention despite its necessary brevity.

**2. DIVERSITY OF ACTION**

We note that the diversity of initiatives we recommend entails *statutory* changes through *central* church structures (e.g. paragraphs 4 and 7 below) and *voluntary* changes at parish level (e.g. paragraphs 5 and 6). We wish their effects to be both *local* and *global*.

**3. C OF I ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

We recommend that a C of I Environmental Policy be discussed and implemented at all levels (see Annexe 1 for a draft, p 244).

#### **4. CHURCH PROPERTY**

- a) We recommend that all parishes be required to carry out regular environmental audits on all existing church property. (See Annexes 2a and 2b for possible measures, p 245 & 247).
- b) We recommend that all new church buildings, (churches, halls, rectories etc.) be designed with environmental protection and energy efficiency in mind. Minimum standards for this should be drawn up and updated regularly. Annexe 3, p 248, provides an example of what is possible: a parish in North Wales has fitted solar tiles to the new roof of its hall.
- c) We recommend the C of I examine potential for combined heat and power schemes.

#### **5. ECOCONGREGATIONS**

The EcoCongregation scheme has been operating in Britain for two years. It is intended to raise awareness of environmental issues and thus to encourage people to live in environmentally sustainable ways. To our knowledge, St. Molua's, Stormont is the only C of I parish to receive the EcoCongregations award. (See Annexe 4, p 249, for a summary of the scheme and a report from St. Molua's on their participation). We commend this scheme to the C of I.

#### **6. CLEANER ENERGY**

We recommend that parishes and church people consider the use of cleaner forms of energy, e.g. eco-electricity and natural gas.

#### **7. ENERGY AND ECOLOGY FUND**

- a) Subject to canon law and charity law, we recommend that the terms of reference of the Priorities Fund (for disbursements in Ireland) and Bishops' Appeal (for disbursements overseas) be extended to include a new category of *Energy and Environment* to fund energy-saving and environmental projects.
- b) So as not to detract from the two funds' existing income and purposes, we recommend the establishment of a new 'Energy and Ecology Fund' to encourage parishes and people to go 'carbon-neutral', i.e. to offset the carbon emitted by burning fossil fuels by means of a *voluntary* 'carbon tax'. Only this new, 'earmarked' money would be used for these new purposes. We recommend that up to 50% be disbursed in Ireland and at least 50% be disbursed overseas. (See Annexe 5, p 252).

## **8. EDUCATION**

We believe that there is a great need for education at all levels of our church both on these issues themselves and on the theology underlying them. Therefore we recommend that:

- a) Dioceses appoint Environmental Officers to advise and raise awareness;
- b) The Theological College includes Environmental Theology in its courses, if it does not already do so;
- c) Parishes and dioceses run adult education courses on these issues;
- d) Parishes hold annual meetings on the environment;
- e) To those working with children and youth, the adoption of the Ecoschools project (from EcoCongregations) or the Green Schools scheme;
- f) That the issues be presented to General Synod and diocesan synods.

## **9. LITURGICAL MATERIAL**

We commend celebration of/care of the environment through liturgy e.g. through 'Creation Sunday', 'Environment Day', Harvest or St. Francis Day. We note that the European Christian Environmental Network promotes the inclusion in the church calendar of a special 'Time of Creation' from September 1st to mid-October. We recommend that the Liturgical Advisory Committee be asked to consider provision of liturgical material on this theme if they have not already done so. We commend the book *Preaching Creation throughout the Church Year* by Jennifer Phillips (Cowley).

## **10. ECUMENISM**

We note the ecumenical dimension of environmental issues with material produced by the Roman Catholic Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. We commend ecumenical action on environmental issues at the local, national and international levels. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) have an Environmental Issues Network. We believe that there is currently no C of I representative. We note also that Mrs Bet Aalen, formerly Education Adviser to Bishops' Appeal, has been involved in the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) in a personal capacity. SC may wish to consider official appointments to both CTBI and ECEN or the establishment of an Irish Environmental Network through CTBI.

**ANNEXE 1 – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

“Rejoicing that

- We live in a beautiful and awe-inspiring world; and

Recognising that

- Climate change, air, land and water pollution, the unsustainable consumption of valuable resources, disposal of waste and many other interrelated environmental issues have an ever increasing and detrimental impact on the Earth and its peoples, especially the poor; and that
- Christians believe in a Creator God who entrusts humanity with the care of each other, of the planet and of all living creatures for present and future generations;”

Therefore:

- "We are dedicated to carrying out all our functions and activities in ways which minimise negative impact on the environment;
- It is our objective to co-operate with statutory, voluntary and community bodies in an attempt to reduce negative impact on the environment.

In keeping with this policy we will

- Monitor and improve energy use;
- Set targets for reduced waste generation;
- Promote recycling within our organisation;
- Minimise the risk of land, water and air pollution;
- Include environmental considerations in our decision-making;
- Inform and update all staff, members and contractors on policy;
- Apply sustainability objectives in all aspects and activities;
- Attempt to make ongoing improvements to this policy.”

**ANNEXE 2A - SAMPLE AUDIT ON ENERGY AND WATER**

**(FROM ECOCONGREGATIONS MODULE 1)**

**ENERGY: GENERAL**

1. Have you checked your Church's energy consumption over the past 5 years? If you have and find variations it is useful to identify the reasons. If you have adopted energy saving measures, can you see the impact that they have on fuel bills?
2. Has your Church had or considered having a professional environmental consultation? This can be particularly valuable prior to any rebuild or new build, and prior to working on heating and wiring systems.

**ENERGY REDUCTION MEASURES**

1. Has your Church installed low energy light bulbs wherever practical? This saves energy, money and cuts the frequency of changing bulbs.
2. Do you choose rooms that are an appropriate size for each meeting/activity, so avoiding heating a larger volume than is necessary?
3. Does your Church ensure that heaters are not left on in rooms not being used?
4. Are events/meetings time-tabled so that as many activities as possible fall within the same heating period?
5. Are Church windows regularly cleaned? Apart from looking better, clean windows let in more light and can brighten a previously gloomy room.
6. Does your Church encourage everyone to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items such as a photocopier permanently on?

**ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES**

7. Has your Church considered installing draught-proofing and insulation? This is particularly worthwhile in areas that are regularly heated through the week.
8. Do you reduce draughts by quickly replacing cracked or broken windows?

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

9. Have you assessed your Church heating system? If your boiler is older than 15 years or your system has poor thermostatic control of the temperature in each room or an inadequate timing system, it is wise stewardship to have a professional environmental audit by a qualified engineer.

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10. Is your heating and boiler system regularly serviced?

**WATER**

11. Have you monitored your Church's water consumption over the past five years and compared it with current use?
12. Do you check all water outlets for leaks/drips and mend as appropriate?
13. Has your Church installed water-saving devices such as dual flush toilets or taps that automatically turn off? Do you collect rainwater from down pipes for use in the Church garden?
14. Has your Church installed a meter? It should cut down on costs.

**CHURCHYARD**

- Is it feasible to refrain from cutting grass until wild flowers have seeded?

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ANNEX 2B STORMONT PARISH CHURCH OF ST MOLUA: ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT												
ACTIVITY	Frequency	Numbers	Area Used <sup>1</sup>	Heating	Lighting	Water	Water Heating	Waste	Materials	Transport	Eco points	Costs
Appearance												
Badminton												
Boiler												
Boundary												
Bowls												
Choir												
Cleaning												
Coffee												
Cttees												
Deliveries												
Events												
Friendly Circle												
Guides												
Houses< 100m												
Inks												
Kettle												
Ladies guild												
Landscape												
Microwave												
Noise <sup>2</sup>												
Open window												
Oven												
Paints												
Paper												
Petrol <sup>3</sup>												
Photocopy												
printing												
s. school												
s. vestry												
Smoking												
Spirits												
Tea												
Toners												
Water boiler												
worship												

1. C: Church SC: Side Chapel H: Hall MH: Minor Hall CR: Committee Room

2. Noise: Bells, Mower (leadfree), Traffic, Boiler

3. Petrol: Rector, Mower, Meetings

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**ANNEXE 3 - LETTER IN *CHURCH TIMES*  
STEWARDSHIP MEANS SUSTAINABILITY**

*From the Revd Martin Batchelor and Mr Andrew Rainsford*

Sir, - Professor Murta (Letters, 11 October) raise important issues. Stewardship is often referred to as “being more than money”. It is about care of creation as well.

Within the Rectorial Benefice of Hawarden (diocese of St Asaph), we have St Francis’s Church, Sandycroft. The church hall is a few yards away from the church. Both the church and hall require upgraded facilities. The plan is to join them together. As part of the exercise, we have looked at sustainable energy.

Site meetings have been held with the diocesan advisory committee (DAC), and the Archdeacon informs us that our plans were recommended for faculty approval at the most recent meeting of the DAC. These plans include having the south-facing roof on the new build, and the re-roofed south-facing aspect of the all roofed and covered with photo-voltaic shingles. These are of grey appearance and look like roof tiles. Through the proposed supplier and installer of the roof, it is possible to negotiate a “net metering agreement”. This will mean that the surplus electricity generated by the roof can be sold, at retail price, into the National Grid.

We have also requested that the architect investigate the installation of storage heaters that will be powered from the roof. These could keep the church above the “dew point”, and assist with associated dampness caused by cold buildings. The feasibility of that aspect of the project has yet to be fully established.

Additionally, in the matter of photo-voltaic tiles/panels etc. the Energy Saving Trust has a generous grant scheme. No church buildings (places of worship or halls) have received grants under this scheme. We were hoping to be the first, but if Professor Murta’s letter inspires others to be quicker than us, then so be it. We hope to have the system up and running by spring of next year, and would be happy to share what we have discovered with others.

From a diocesan perspective, we have also floated the idea of using churchyards as a site for community composting schemes (the flowers to compost are there anyway), and have just opened discussions with one of our county councils regarding community recycling schemes. Both proposals are embryonic; but sustainability extends beyond energy and into waste-management as well.

All discussions and projects are being driven by the simple view that in order for the Church to have a credible voice on sustainability, we have to be doing, and be seen to be doing, what we can within the bounds of available resources.

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*Church Times 18<sup>th</sup> October 2002*



## ANNEXE 4 - ECOCONGREGATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

EcoCongregations developed from a partnership between British environmental charity ENCAMS (formerly Going for Green) and the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It aims to encourage churches to consider environmental issues within a Christian context and to enable local churches to bring these issues into their life and mission.

EcoCongregations was launched in Scotland in a service at Dunblane Cathedral in March 2001 and in England at an ecumenical service at St Paul's Cathedral, London, in September 2001. It has received endorsements from denominations and church leaders and is the subject of some denominational environmental policies. From 2001 churches started registering for the programme and working towards the EcoCongregation Award.

In the EcoCongregation programme, parishes commit to:-

- incorporate care for God's creation into the worship and spiritual life of their church;
- practise what they preach by taking practical action in their church/ churchyard;
- link with/share their concerns and action through their local community.

The EcoCongregation programme has three core components: -

1. A set of resource modules (see below) designed for use in church life;
2. A process to provide support for churches by linking them with appropriate local environmental groups/networks, including within their local authority;
3. An award scheme to recognise the work of churches.

The programme, including resource modules, is available free from ENCAMS, Elizabeth House, the Pier, Wigan, WN3 4EX; or [www.encams.org/ecocongregation](http://www.encams.org/ecocongregation). (If the C of I were to promote this scheme, we recommend minor changes to some material to give it an Irish accent.)

### RESOURCE MODULES

1. Church check-up (environmental audit).
2. Celebrating creation (worship resources).
3. Creation and Christianity (theology).
4. Acorns to oaks (children's activities).
5. Tread gently – go green (youth activities).

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6. Exploring God's green word (Bible studies for small groups).
7. Greening the cornerstone (caring for church premises).
8. Greening the purse strings (financial, catering and purchasing matters).
9. Planting and conserving Eden (church grounds and churchyards).
10. Green choices (personal lifestyle).
11. Community matters (local community involvement).
12. Global Neighbours (how to think globally and act locally).

#### **ST. MOLUA'S, STORMONT, AND ECOCONGREGATIONS (TO FEBRUARY 2002)**

##### **January 2000**

St. Molua's Men's Society invite Environmental Manager of a local major public body to address them and other Parish organisations on the subject of Environmental Stewardship.

##### **March 2000**

Select Vestry introduce a Parish Environmental Policy. The Policy is displayed prominently on Church premises, included in Parish website ([www.molua.org.uk](http://www.molua.org.uk)) and published in Parish magazine, "Contact".

##### **May 2000**

Environmental Audit of premises and grounds completed by parishioners included Energy, Waste, Purchasing Policy, Grounds, Animals, Transport, Contact with wider community, Investment and Financial Policy, Political Pressure, Worship, Increasing Understanding. Duologue sermon at morning service on Environmental Issues and progress in Parish.

##### **June 2000**

Detailed audit of all activities, clubs, societies and services against frequency, numbers involved, area used.

##### **December 2000**

St Molua's progress on Environmental Stewardship presented at meeting of Clergy of Holywood and Dundonald Rural Deaneries - reported in March 2001 Issue of Church of Ireland Gazette.

##### **January 2001**

Parish stationery now on recycled brands. Service sheets carry the Environmental Stewardship Logo based on "Christ the Carpenter" bronze at Parochial Hall.

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### **Spring 2001**

Parish contact established with other environmental organisations: -

- ARENA Network (environmental arm of Business in the Community) staff met with Environmental Stewardship Committee to hear of progress in the Parish and to help establish links with District Councils;
- Conservation Volunteers and Northern Ireland 2000 advised on procedures for turning maintained grass area into wild flower meadow;
- Contact established with Tidy Northern Ireland Group. St Molua's offer to host an inaugural meeting in Northern Ireland of Ecocongregation;
- Local Primary school and Parish Sunday School plant wildflower seeds in trays for later planting in church grounds. The exercise was not wholly successful but had a useful educational component. Work on the wildflower scheme continues;
- St Molua's submit an entry to the *Belfast Telegraph* Awards Scheme for Environmental Awareness;
- St Molua's respond to Belfast City Council sponsored Local Agenda 21 Case Studies exercise and are included in the 2002/03 calendar poster. Boundary trees removed for road widening chipped for mulch;
- Bottled water "banned" from Church premises.

### **September 2002**

Traditional Harvest Thanksgiving service with emphasis on Creation and stewardship. Innovative decoration of church with pipe/tank lagging material, low energy bulbs, reflective heat panels. Use of drama, narrative and involvement of children and adults in prayers and readings.

### **February 2002**

Belfast City Council in conjunction with City Centre Management Team launch Tidy Belfast Awards. St Molua's submit entry and await assessment by Environmental Health department assessors in April.

Please also refer to Parish website and follow links to Environmental Stewardship ([www.molua.org.uk](http://www.molua.org.uk))

**ANNEXE 5 - ENERGY AND ECOLOGY FUND**

1. We recognise that, in a perfect world, we should *eliminate* carbon emissions but, currently, this is not technologically feasible. Our goals, therefore, must be to *reduce and offset*. We therefore recommend that the Church of Ireland establishes a new ‘Energy and Ecology Fund’ to encourage parishes and people to go ‘carbon-neutral’, i.e. to offset the carbon they emit through the burning of fossil fuels.
2. To furnish this new fund, we recommend that church members and wealthier parishes be invited to impose on themselves a *voluntary* ‘carbon tax’ to offset their carbon emissions. We recommend this be in the region of 2p/3c per litre of fuel, 0.3p/0.5c per unit of electricity or gas, and 80p/€1.20 per hour of air travel. (These are approximately the figures used by [www.co2.org](http://www.co2.org). ‘Carbon off-sets’ trade at \$1-5 per tonne on the world market).
3. We recommend that *up to 50%* of this Fund’s income be used in Ireland to fund energy-saving and energy-efficiency measures, especially in poorer parishes and districts, and to fund projects of environmental protection, regeneration and/or education. Such projects may include energy-efficient lighting, heating and insulation for church property; tree planting or ‘wildlife gardens’ in churchyards or school grounds; or donations to domestic charities to fund wildlife or environmental protection.
4. We expect that needs overseas will always exceed needs in Ireland. Therefore we recommend that a *minimum of 50%* of this Fund’s income be used overseas to fund energy-saving and energy-efficiency measures, especially in poorer Anglican dioceses and provinces, and to fund environmental protection, regeneration and/or education. Such projects may include tree planting for ecological regeneration or for fuelwood, solar energy projects, or simply donations to international charities such as WWF to protect biodiversity or the habitats of endangered species.
5. Rather than appoint a new committee to administer this, we wonder whether canon law and charity law will permit the terms of reference of the Priorities Fund (for disbursements in Ireland) and Bishops’ Appeal (for disbursements overseas) to be extended to include a new category of *Energy and Environment*. (We have consulted neither on this point.) Only this new, ‘earmarked’ money would be used for these new purposes so as not to interfere with their existing incomes and purposes.
6. We do not claim to calculate accurately the true cost of carbon emissions. However, this Fund’s value would be both practical and symbolic. Its *practical value* is that it would help to achieve the aims of sustainable development by:
  - a) Reducing carbon emissions and so mitigate the effects of climate change.
  - b) Promoting ecological renewal and protection; and

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- c) Achieving greater equity between rich and poor, both within Ireland and between nations. We also believe that this Fund – and its unusual means of finance - will promote greater environmental awareness and action among church people.

Its *symbolic value* is that it indicates the Church of Ireland's concern on these issues and that we accept the 'Rio principle' that 'the polluter pays'. It will enable the Church of Ireland to speak with moral authority on environmental issues. It may also encourage our governments to show courageous leadership in reducing the use of fossil fuels, in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, and in protecting biodiversity.