

Synod Notes

Eco Church Group led by the Revd Mark Woodrow and supported by the Revd Karen Burton

The Revd Mark Woodrow outlined the history and aims of ARocha and the Eco church programme, using a guide from ARocha UK.

Marks suggestions were to:

1. find someone who can take the lead as an Eco-warrior
2. work with local schools
3. gather facts and figures to look at green tariffs
4. achieve the bronze award is relatively easy.

The Revd Andrew Dotchin (Felixstowe) suggested

- Register as an individual church rather than as a Benefice
- Within the church encourage different organisations/groups to be the most eco friendly
- Twin your toilet and your food bank as this counts towards the eco awards
- It is important to work across your Deanery

The Revd Jenny Seager (Stamford) said, that by following a difficult Bible study on the environment, there has since been an amazing engagement in eco church awards – and it is growing.

Mary Hare (Woodbridge) said, they had a commitment across the deanery for all church to achieve their bronze awards in a year. One issue is that a small village church needs someone to help with the paperwork and the online survey. They have a Deanery champion who's leading this and shares information on the Deanery website.

The Revd Mark Woodrow suggested looking through parish magazines to identify who's interested in environment issues and invite them directly to get involved.

He also said the bronze award is stepping stones while the silver award starts making conscious decisions to do things differently.

The Revd Ben Edwards (Thingoe) said that it is important to remember that the church needs to use the influence it can have within the community, to focus on larger plans for housing developments. The church can have big influence and impact. There is a need for the whole church to be putting pressure on the organisations doing the most harm.

Andrew Dotchin mentioned that the Diocesan Environment Group includes members of the DAC. Andrew also reminded us that the National Church Commissioners are ending the investment in all fossil fuels. There are plans for church housing associations to provide social housing in eco homes.

It can feel overwhelming in response use the popular saying *"how do you eat an elephant - one bite at a time"*.

Elaine Hawes (Saxmundham) suggested to invite local government to talk to the church/Deanery Synod about their strategic planning policies and plans. They invited the Chief Executive of East Suffolk Council and the Strategic Director of Suffolk County Council.