

Eco-church... What is it?

Well, if we are to follow Christ's teaching to 'love our neighbour as ourselves', one of the things this involves is taking care of the environment so that, as a bare minimum, our global neighbours have some hope for the immediate short term of their area still being fit to live in and also that we leave this whole planet in a condition in which their - and indeed our - grandchildren will still be able to live a good life; so a group called A Rocha UK started this initiative to encourage the church *and the wider community* to take better care of the environment. It is intended to be very much a community project, although, if you like, spearheaded by the church community.

There are 3 levels of awards - Bronze, Silver, and Gold - and in order to achieve an award level you have to reach at least that level in every one of 5 categories.

The PCC of Great Rissington have decided to try to gain at least the Bronze Award. Wyck Rissington and Bourton churches are preparing to investigate this. I hope that it will be a benefice-wide project in due course.

So far, St John's Church is at or above Bronze level in three of the categories (Worship & Teaching, Buildings, and Land), almost at Bronze on Community & Global Engagement, but has some way to go on Lifestyle.

As a result of our decision, in due course you will see - among other things - an area of the old (top) church yard cordoned off and allowed to grow as a wild-flower area to encourage butterflies, bees and other insects and small animals. Rev Nina, our minister with primary responsibility for The Rissingtons, is herself an ecologist; and will be conducting surveys of what plants, insects and small animals she can find in this patch.

We will also be asking some specialists to come and talk to us about ecology and 'green issues' – possibly in the place of the minister's sermon, but also occasionally as a stand-alone event for the entire village.

Richard Cleverley has kindly agreed to host us for the first of these village events at the Great Rissington Sports & Social Club. It will be on the 1st. June, at 7 for 7.30 pm, when I will briefly introduce the project, and our (current) Counsellor, Andrew Maclean will then give a talk on green issues with particular emphasis on how they affect us locally. Please do join us - it should be an enlightening evening, and everyone is welcome (from any of the Rissingtons or Bourton), whether or not you agree with us!

We will be doing a number of other things in the background, which you may or may not notice – these are just the two most obvious ones.

If anyone, *whether or not* an active member of the church, would like to get involved, please do contact me on (01451) 810187, or drop in on me at Lower Farmhouse Barn.

You can also find out more by going to:

<https://app.ecochurch.org>

or, to see the current results of the survey for St John The Baptist, Great Rissington, go to:

<https://app.ecochurch.org/survey/9337>

I look forward to hearing from you!

Andrew (Fleming)

P.S. If you want to see how you are doing as a household, there is a very similar scheme called Creation Care where you can take a survey. You do have to create an account, but you can say you don't want any further communication from them. Here is the link: <https://creationcare.org.uk/members/>

You can also link your account to your church account - or not as you wish!

Or, to just find out your carbon footprint, go to: <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>
<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/questionnaire> or <https://carbon-calculator.climatehero.me>