

# Whitechurch Parish, ( Church of Ireland ) Dublin.

## Transformation of Church grounds for pollinators.

with advice from :-

**Eco Congregation Ireland – National Biodiversity Data Centre - Royal Horticultural Society.**

### *Introduction and Progress*

2007 In April Mrs. Pamela Sheil, a parishioner of Whitechurch, was introduced to Eco Congregation Ireland by a friend and received approval from our Vestry to complete and post the registration form. We started with Modules 3 & 4 (Creation & Christianity and Acorns to Oaks). She formed a small committee and introduced Module 4 to the children in the parish. This was followed by Module 7 (Church property). In September 2007 the project started in earnest with Module 6 (The Spiritual Module).

2008/9/10 We got the local community involved under the umbrella of ‘Three Rock Churches Environmental Group’.

Whitechurch has been involved in ‘Sound the alarm, Stop climate Chaos’ campaign.

August 08 – Cherishing Creation – National school art exhibition, Dundrum.

2009 – Secondary school essay competition.

“ “ - Film ‘ The age of stupid’

2010 – Transition year students – ‘ Saving our planet’.

2011 - “ “ “ ‘ Our Planet, our Home’.

Outreach :- Attended service for the Copenhagen Conference.

Distributed Mothers Union shoe boxes and Christmas hampers in the local community.

Age care, – Meals-on-wheels – Eastern Health Board day centre in our parish hall.

Module 5 :- Our youth group went to Lesoto to do voluntary work in two orphanages.

Module 12:- Global concern :- We sponsored a number of projects abroad :- building a health centre in Shyogue Parish, Rwanda and setting up a pineapple factory in Romania. We also supported the Old Folks Home in Precupetu Vechi Church in Brasov.

Module 10:- Personal lifestyle :- An environmental policy was drawn up and suggestions for an Eco-friendly Christmas appeared in our Parish newsletter. Reduction in the use of plastic, advice and encouragement regarding recycling. Fair trade tea and coffee are served in our parish centre after church. An Eco Congregation notice board was placed in our parish hall to inform people on progress

Module 9:- Church lands:- As Sexton and grounds man of Whitechurch Parish and an amateur photographer, I undertook the task of photographing the church and graveyard headstones for Mrs. Harkin’s book and in doing so gave me an intense interest in the upkeep of the church grounds.

2010 - We received an Eco Congregation Bronze award and since then we have been transforming the church grounds into a pollinator friendly area for bees and butterflies.

- 2015 We were most grateful for the variety of helpful literature received from ‘Eco Congregation Ireland’, ‘National Biodiversity Ireland’ and the ‘Royal Horticultural Society’ which greatly assisted us in this transformation.
- 2016 Parish representatives joined with our two neighbouring Roman Catholic parishes in a very valuable weekly study of Pope Francis’s Encyclical ‘Laudato Si’
- 2017 We set up a volunteer maintenance rota for the Church grounds with much reduced grass cutting. This has now resulted in the emergence of wild Primrose, Cowslips and Lady’s Smock in the church grounds.
- 2018 Parish representatives attended all-day lectures on biodiversity, held in the Phoenix Park. Subjects covered included ‘Pollinator friendly planting’, ‘Bee-keeping’, ‘Wildlife habitats’, ‘Wildflower meadows’ and ‘Composting’. We also attended a local inter-church seminar, held in the Augustinian Order’s Orlagh House, entitled ‘Lets talk about Biodiversity’.
- 2020 We prepared and planted Irish wildflower seeds (sourced in Carlow) in 12 sq. meters of our church grounds.  
 July – We completed the Faith Communities ‘Action to help Pollinators’ summary table and this was sent to the Administrative Office of Eco-Congregation Ireland in Belfast, along with a memory stick containing photos of our work in progress.  
 Requested and received 4 copies of ‘Faith Communities – Action to help Pollinators’. These were distributed to two parishes to encourage them to become involved in this work.
- 2021 March:- an additional area of 26 sq. meters was prepared for extended wildflower planting.

Pam Sheil is our valued parish Eco-Congregation representative. She includes an important and practical article in each issue of our parish magazine relating to Eco-Congregation . In addition, she maintains a most colourful and interesting notice board in our parish hall, which gives all sorts of Eco advice relating to the four seasons of the year.

Our Rector, Canon Horace McKinley (now retired) has always put a special emphasis, through both preaching and liturgical opportunities, on the core values of the Eco-Congregation programme and the challenges that ‘Climate Change’ is presenting.

### **Biodiversity awards received.**

year	<b>Beautiful South Dublin County Council</b>		
2010	Best Environmental Youth Initiative Category	---	Highly Commended
“	Best New Entry Category	---	Highly Commended
“	Best Biodiversity Initiative Category	---	Winner
2011	Best Biodiversity Initiative Category	---	Winner
	<b>Eco Congregation Ireland</b>		
	2010 Caring for God’s Creation	---	Bronze award
	2021 Caring for God’s Creation	---	Gold Award
			<b><u>Photo Files</u></b>
			No.1 Whitechurch Parish Church & Graveyard
			No.2 Pollinating shrubs and flowers
			No.3 Pollinators
			No.4 Grounds Maintenance Volunteers
			No.5 Wildlife visitors & habitats