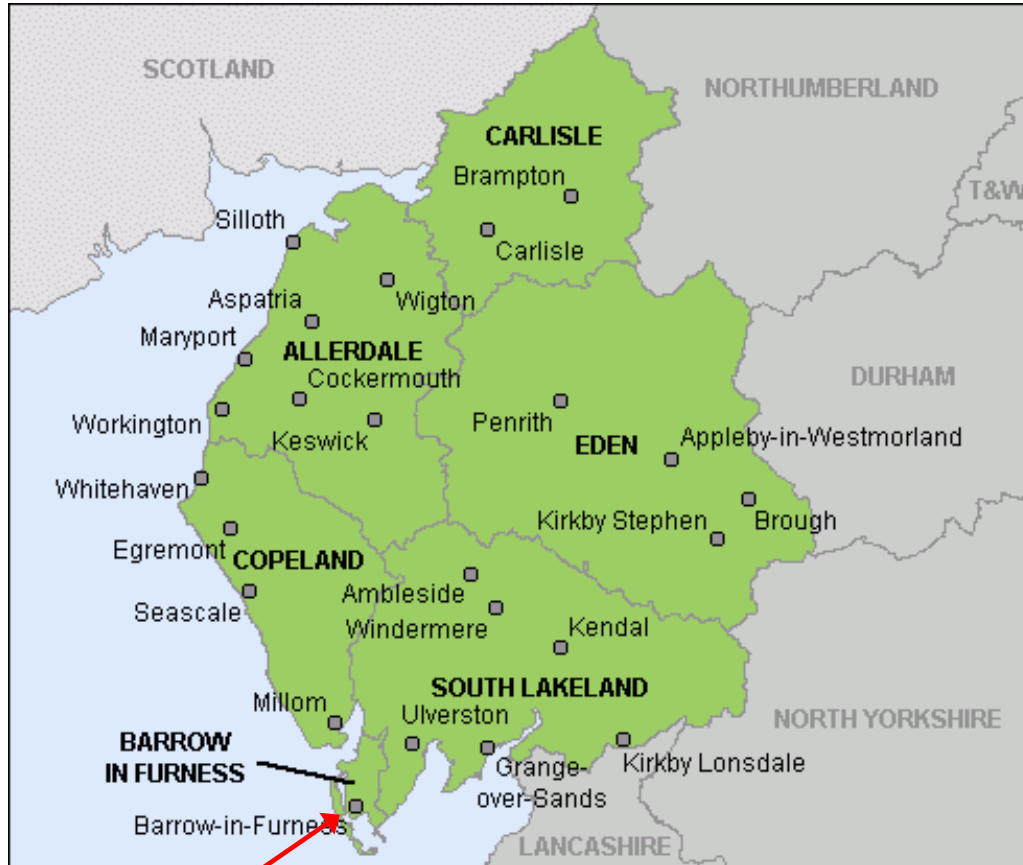


Vickerstown Methodist Church, Walney Island



An Eco-Congregation Story

2010 AWARD 2012



eco
congregation

Caring for God's Creation

www.ecocongregation.org



Why did we do it?



- We were initially given the Churches check-up as an exercise at a circuit retreat weekend which was looking at stewardship.
- We had the advantage of a new building which was already energy-efficient.
- Our Church overlooks its own garden, Walney channel and the Lake District hills in the background – it is hard not to be conscious of the wonder of God’s creation in such a setting!
- The Eco-Congregation ideals were shared by our membership

We were pleased to find a number of existing Eco-‘assets’ in Church Life....

- We were already a Fairtrade Church with a stall at coffee mornings: these also have a bring and buy stall for re-using items!
- A garden managed without chemicals, and used for flowers, and a church pair of binoculars to watch the wildlife.



- Car-sharing, an environmental notice board, using up leftover food, using crockery not paper plates...

Some things we did.....



- Afternoon tea in the garden to launch our bid
- A new cross and planting on the part of our land most visible to the community as a whole
- The Church's Cub pack planted summer-flowering tubs, made and put up bird feeders and put up nest boxes after learning about how to site them – we have had a family of blue tits!
- Emphasis on creation/stewardship in worship and study, particularly at Harvest family service



A green garden...we now have log piles, a water butt and bird bath, wildlife planting with some areas left relatively 'wild' and an emphasis on species good for bees, butterflies and berries for birds, and bird feeders out regularly.

We started a wildlife list of sightings from the windows (garden and channelside) and the Cubs have also done bug hunts – we have been impressed by the range of bird species and were delighted to get a hedgehog!





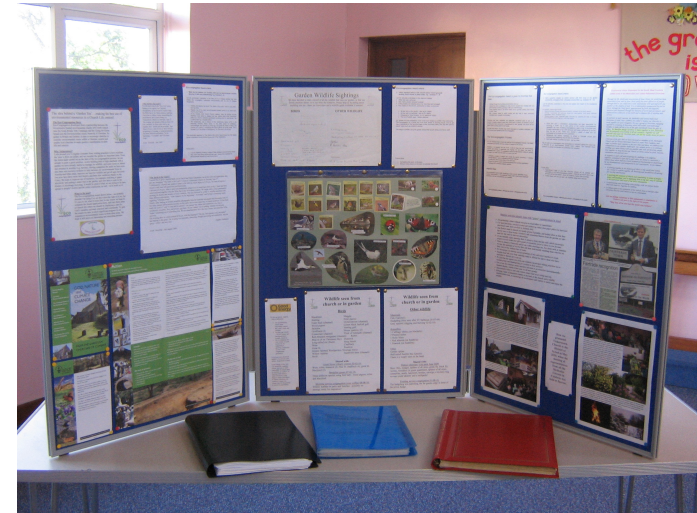
We also like other Church users to be aware and involved - as well as uniformed organisations we have many children's parties, adult education classes and a weekly weightwatchers group.

We started off with a box in the kitchen for any recycling, and notices encouraging its use as well as asking the last person out to check lights and taps were all off. We now have the above 'recycling station' prominent in the porch and it is very well used!

We have also switched our energy supplier to 'Good Energy' who commit to using 100% renewable sources of power (and have not found that this has made a major difference to our bills), and questioned our bank about their environmental policies.

Gaining the award

- Local MP John Woodcock presented us with the award at a coffee morning on 27th November 2010 - a proud moment for the church. This followed our assessment visit on October 20th where we put up displays and a PowerPoint and enjoyed discussing our work with our friendly assessors.





Beyond the first award



We will shortly need to renew our award – it is a challenge to keep going and moving forward. For us this includes:

- Putting flower tubs and baskets at the front of the church to brighten up the street; inviting neighbours to use the garden
- Widening our horizons – we have used MRDF Christmas ‘gifts’ for the last two years to help others far away, and throughout this year have also been working towards ‘toilet twinning’ with a notice in the toilets for all users!
- Publicising what we do: we put out a press release after the award presentation, and have given talks to another church in the area considering entering the Eco-congregation scheme.
- Exploring the new Methodist hymnbook ‘Singing the Faith’ for creation/stewardship themes – there are some good ones!