

# Christ Church Environment Newsletter: Summer 2024

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# Editorial

This Spring has been packed full of events, from a green spring clean to a Lent pilgrimage for the climate, a plant-based cooking demonstration to a film all about seed diversity. Find out about Christ Church's latest updates on its wildlife and green energy project, as well as what's planned in the Summer. Also, discover the ancient tradition of hedge-laying! Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter or organised these events – together we really can make a big difference and help the planet! AD

## Christ Church's Wildlife Gardens

Unfortunately, we probably won't see any Bee Orchid this year. It began to show leaves early in the spring, and I detected a second orchid (not necessarily Bee). However, since then the leaves have been eaten by slugs/insects and, when I last looked at the area, could see no sign of them. On the plus side, the wildlife area shows increased numbers of primroses and white deadnettle - both important early nectar sources for insects. SF

## Better Transport Week



Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June lies in Better Transport Week (17<sup>th</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup> June), which is an annual event where people from across the country will be trying to travel by the most sustainable way possible, whether that's by foot, bike, train, bus, or even by car sharing.

Have you used  
the new bike  
racks?  
(thanks Phillip!)

Our challenge for you is to come to church (either Rise and Shine, or the main service) in the most eco-friendly way possible!

# Green Spring Clean

The Christ Church Spring Clean was wonderfully supported on Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> with over thirty volunteers, starting with breakfast and talk and then everyone beavering away using green cleaning products where possible. Our very long pole did good service amongst the dusty spider webs of the church, and we are very grateful for the men who were prepared to wield it.

They also cleared the first floor of the tower and the ground floor. Everyone was needed to remove the chairs and at the end to replace them. The ladies and youngsters applied elbow grease to the brass cleaning, walls, windows, floors and wood polishing, hoovering the huge church carpet, 3 hoovers working at a time.



Some stalwarts stayed for a delicious soup and bread lunch provided by Sue Fairclough, and eventually we finished at 3pm. There was a lovely bustle about the church buildings and a real sense of fellowship as we enjoyed working and eating together.

There was a small group that gathered the following Saturday morning to clean the kitchen and the Office. Again, much hard work and chatter and we hope you all noticed the difference for Easter Sunday!

# Plant-Based Cooking

On the 21st May, seventeen of us arrived with anticipation at Lucy and Clive Austin's home for a demonstration and tasting of Lucy's delicious cooking. Lucy's aim was to show people that plant-based cooking can be delicious and nutritious; and to encourage people to try it occasionally as a healthy and environmentally-friendly alternative to meat and dairy-based meals.



Everyone was greeted on arrival with a selection of drinks and starters. There were bowls of *faux gras* (an alternative to foie gras), stuffed mushrooms and an 'egg' sandwich filling, along with a selection of crackers. These started the conversations off immediately and everyone became enthused and excited about what else was coming.

Then we all sat down to watch Lucy demonstrate making a Bolognese sauce, tomato dahl, a cheese sauce, a romesco sauce and beetroot and sweet potato burgers. It was amazing how she managed to keep on track with all those recipes while answering questions as she cooked. We got to try all the dishes, served with brown rice, wholemeal tortillas and garnishes as appropriate. The final dish was a Bakewell tart with plant-based cream, which Lucy had prepared earlier. Everything tasted delicious and we all felt replete by the end of the evening.



Judging by comments during the evening, I am hopeful that most of us will be trying at least one or two of Lucy's recipes in the future. Lucy was given two rounds of applause and many words of thanks for putting on this most enjoyable event. JF

# Lent Pilgrimage for Climate

During Lent, the Bishop of Kingston led six pilgrimages across the Diocese of Southwark. I went along on the first one, which went through the deaneries of Reigate and Tandridge. We were welcomed at The Yard by Reigate railway station for a briefing and a short service before setting off through a very affluent part of Reigate to the Pilgrim's Way along the North Downs.



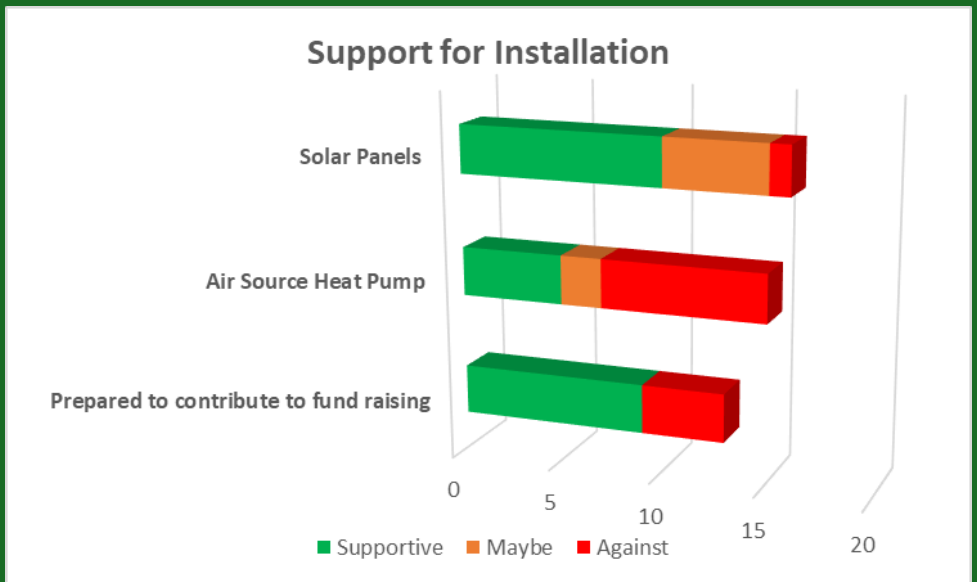
We stopped at several spots along the way to reflect on the various environmental issues that concerned us, such as roads and houses, Gatwick airport, fossil fuel extraction, noise and air pollution, farming and water.

We were welcomed at St Andrew's Gatton, St Katharine's Merstham (where we were provided with a choice of delicious soups to complement the packed lunches we had brought, and the Bishop planted a tree) and St Peter and St Paul's Chaldon. We sang a lament, prayed and spent time in reflection on our journeys and what changes we might make in our future.

We chatted to each other about our own experiences and feelings. Most people came from within our deaneries, but I did meet people from Bromley and Epsom amongst others. Some intended to walk more than one of the pilgrimages. There is more information in the May issue of The Bridge about all the pilgrimages. JF

# Low Carbon Energy

Over Spring this year, we have shared information on solar panels and heat pumps, to consider their possible use at Christ Church. We have asked for the congregation's views in a questionnaire, and had a good response, with a summary of responses here:



These show a strong level of support for installing solar panels, and included offers of help for fundraising, obtaining quotes and reviewing options. There was much less support for installing a heat pump and some concern over whether they would be effective, with a continuous low heat in dated radiators.

The results were presented to the PCC on the 16<sup>th</sup> May and we have agreed to proceed to obtain quotes for installation of a suitable level of solar panels.

# Hedge-laying: A beneficial ancient skill

Hedge-laying is believed to have been started at least 1000 years ago in Britain as a means of providing a stock-proof barrier - long before the advent of more modern forms of stock fencing. Left to its own devices a newly planted 'hedge' will eventually become a line of trees with gaps through which farm animals can easily push their way through, but if the stems are cut and all prised over in the same direction (uphill) and 'pleached' (woven) together these can be filled. A hinge of sap-wood is left which is sufficient for the trees to continue growing, putting up new growth vertically, as well as new growth at the cut.



The hedge is firmed-up in a variety of regional styles. In Surrey, a line of stakes are driven mid-way through the hedge 18" apart and firmly held in place with hazel 'binders' which are artfully entwined. The stakes and binders will eventually rot away by which time the hedge should be quite thick and robust, and can be re-laid every 20 or so years.

Hedge-laying is undergoing something of a comeback, with volunteers taking up the work with simple tools as a Winter activity beneficial to wildlife providing great cover and a natural corridor for wildlife, irrespective of its visual appeal.

# Coming up this Summer...

## 'Being Church in the Climate and Justice Crisis' by Reverend Helen Bennett

On *Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August*, Reverend Helen Bennett will give a talk on 'Being Church in the Climate and Justice Crisis'. A tasty breakfast will be included. We will provide more information in the next couple of weeks.

## Eco-Film Club

The showing of 'The Seeds of Vandana Shiva' on the 28<sup>th</sup> April was well supported and the courage, determination and fierce intelligence of this Indian lady was widely appreciated. On *Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July*, after the main service, there will be a showing of three films: Greenpeace's 'Don't Stop', 'The Positive Alternative' by Dr Anika Molesworth, Diet Future, and 'Food Waste Future', followed by a small lunch.

## Transforming Surrey into a Home of Thriving People and Nature

On *Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June*, from 10:00-16:00, the Surrey Climate Commission and the Institute for Sustainability at the University of Surrey, in partnership with Zero Carbon Guilford, are hosting a participatory workshop to understand how to transform Surrey into a thriving place, while respecting the wellbeing of all people, and the health of the whole planet. Find out more [here](#)

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