

A Year of Awakening

The past year has been one of awakening for many people. While Brexit has monopolised press and media coverage, there has also been a deepening in awareness of the climate emergency, with Greta Thunberg's speeches at international conferences, school strikes and the rise of Extinction Rebellion.

And during this period of rapid change, Green Christian has continued to play our part in supporting Christians and making connections with those of other faiths and none in the care of God's Creation.

In doing so we have continued with the five areas of focus introduced in 2016 – Formation, Participation, Media, Administration and Joy in Enough.

Formation

At the heart of our framework for spiritual formation is the Green Christian **'Way of Life'** marked by four spiritual disciplines:

- Daily Prayer & Devotions
- Living Gently on the Earth
- Public Witness and
- Encouragement.

Some members find it helpful to commit to supporting each other in this fourfold way. There are now 37 such Companions in the 'Way of Life Community', almost all of whom are linked with a nearby Companion as mutual "encourager". They receive a monthly letter sharing their personal experiences of living through the Way of Life. Any Green Christian member is welcome to explore how being a Companion might help them, though there is no expectation that anyone should.

Much of the new work of the Formation Group has stemmed from our need as Christians not only to have hope, but also to recognise that for

many of us there is also a sense of lamenting what Creation has lost and, perhaps, the acceptance of our role in this loss. Paul Bodenham has been leading in this area, working on several pilot projects under the heading of **"Responding to Climate Grief"**. More on this work will emerge in the coming months as plans are established.

The Formation Group is convened by George Dow.

Participation

The aim of the Participation group – convened by Ruth Jarman and Judith Allinson – is to "offer events on an annual cycle to enable members to meet, and more contact between members around the country." We aspire to be a co-operative movement, and an exchange of gifts between our members will be far richer than anything the "centre" can offer.

The **"On the Road Together"** regional gatherings – with presentations and discussions on the Way of Life and Joy in Enough – have been held in London, Cambridge, Derby, Bristol, Shrewsbury, Manchester and Stroud – with average attendance being over 40.

One hoped-for outcome is that these gatherings will lead to the emergence of more **local groups**. There are currently 10 groups who receive support from Green Christian, thanks to Isobel Murdoch. As they try to green their Churches, run occasional events or co-operate with other



organisations, they ensure Green Christian has a voice in their communities. The role local groups play will become more important as we seek to foster more participation in Green Christian. Green Christian could witness more widely to more communities if there were more groups and contacts. Is this something you could consider?

We were at the Greenbelt festival in both 2018 and 2019, alongside Operation Noah, whom we support by nominating three Trustees (Ruth Jarman, Reggie Norton and Martin Poulson). We were also represented at all meetings of **Environmental Issues Network** of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) – attended by Judith Allinson and Deborah Tomkins and with Paul Bodenham most recently presenting our “Responding to Climate Grief” projects.

Online contact is important to our members as a means of mutual encouragement. **CELINK**, our members’ email discussion group – “owned” by Judith Allinson and moderated by Ruth Jarman – has 202 subscribers, with 1782 messages sent in the year ended August 2019 (33 messages pw) on 566 topics.

Nicky Kierton maintains our **Facebook** group which has 770 members. Louise Cook manages the **Growing them Green** Facebook group for parents, which now has 115 members and Jeremy Williams manages the newly launched **Joy in Enough** Facebook page with its 70 members.

Media

Over the past 12 months the Media Group has established itself and focused on the task of refreshing Green Christian publications. The intention is to reach a new generation of people. It has discussed this at three phone/video conferences, and we trust shows itself in the range of publications now available.

Four teams are responsible for managing and producing the publishing output: Magazine, Storm of Hope, Online Media and Printed Media. Each has a Leader, with overall group co-ordination managed by Convener Howard Gardner.

Gathering and writing copy, sourcing graphics, cartoons, photographs, and editing final copy are all “stock in trade” for these teams, whose professionalism shows through at every stage.

Grateful thanks go to Dave Boyes, our resident Graphic Designer, for his creative attention to detail and house style. New publications are coming through during the year.

We are grateful to Jill Vogler for all her work as she steps down as Resources contact. Printed publications are now available from Geoff Perrett (magazine, Storm of Hope and T-shirts), Ruth Jarman (small quantities) and Howard Gardner (large quantities).

Green Christian magazine is published twice a year, Spring and Autumn, courtesy of the editorial team, Clare Redfern, Suzy Brecknell and Simon Court, with Tanya Jones in post as Reviews Editor.

Storm of Hope is a challenging pamphlet published every January, focusing on a subject which informs the wider public of our green Christian viewpoint. The 2019 edition was produced by Deborah Tomkins with the theme “moving from spiritual crisis to living in hope”. The 2020 edition is getting underway.

The **Website** publishes up-to-date information and news, and electronic versions of our publications can also be downloaded. Particular appreciation goes to Manager Poppy Pickard who has together with Editor Judith Allinson refreshed and updated most of the pages available. Additional assistance comes from Louise Cook, Emma King, Ed Beale and Chris Warwick and Diana Nefiodow (who manages the YouTube channel). Judith continues to manage the “What’s On” page, the Twitter account and the bi-monthly e-news.

Our **Twitter account** @greenchristian_ has 2728 followers and increases month by month. Our thanks to all who use this means of conveying comment, ideas, information and challenges.

Administration

Underpinning all the benefits we seek to offer is the vital work of the Administration Group, convened by Barbara Echlin. A large part of the Group’s work is responding to new members and keeping our membership records up to date. Current Green Christian membership comprises:

589 individuals - up 56
150 joint members - down 16

10 magazine subscribers - down 2
21 organisations - up 1
35 churches - up 2
41 ministers in training - down 20
48 additional complementary.

At the beginning of 2019 we introduced a new way for people to join Green Christian online by setting up a monthly direct debit through CAF Donate. Between January and August 2019, of the 69 new members, 58 joined through CAF Donate. It is easy to do by clicking on the Join button on our website. Richard Kierton, our Membership Secretary, keeps the mailing database up to date. Chris Warwick now helps by sending out the initial mailing to new members.

Ministers in training We offered a third-year free digital membership to those who joined in autumn 2016 as they finish their training and take up their first posts.

Particular thanks go to Simon Court and Ashley Ralston for their work on drafting 17 organisational **policies**, ownership of which is spread amongst all the Trustees, thus ensuring that all legal requirements are in place and that we are responsible employers.

Joy in Enough

Our Joy in Enough project is a challenge to Christians to join in building a just economy within the ecological limits of the Earth.

Following on from the launch of *Awakening to a New Economics*, the project's "core document", trial runs of the *Plenty!* "café conversation" session on

CAN YOU HELP US?

There are many ways in which you can share in our work, such as:

- **Helping us bring an "On the Road Together" event to your area**
- **Contributing social media content, articles for our publications, including for our Joy in Enough project on new economics**
- **Contributing your skills to one of the Groups outlined in this report, or to the Board of Green Christian.**

consumerism have featured in all of the *On the Road Together* events. Soon all five topics in the *Plenty!* series will be completed, forming a series of weekly 90-minute sessions.

The website joyinenough.org is now well established and receiving 800 views a month, hosting discussions, talks and sermons, a reading list and the *Joy in Enough Confession*.

This project is convened by John Payne.

Finance

A third donation of £10,000 from the Passionists contributed to an increase of 3% in Green Christian's income in 2018 over 2017.

However, expenditure increased by 6%, resulting in another small loss in the year. One component of the increased expenditure is a full year of staff working part time on the Joy in Enough Project. The other main expenditure incurred by Green Christian is printing – of the magazine and a number of informative leaflets. Costs in this area are well controlled and thanks are due to our printers for this.

The Board is giving thought to ways of increasing Green Christian's income, but for the moment the bank balances at the end of 2018 were a healthy £39,377.

People

Over the past year the **Trustees** of Christian Ecology Link, as the charity is still formally named, were:

Paul Bodenham (Chair), Louise Cook, Dr Tim Cooper, Barbara Echlin, George Dow (Way of Life co-ordinator), Peter Grimwood (Minutes Secretary), Eleanor Orr (Treasurer), John Payne (Joy in Enough), Poppy Pickard (Web Designer), Ashley Ralston and Deborah Tomkins (Storm of Hope).

Kevin Scot, after 25 years as Company Secretary, resigned in August 2019 due to pressure of other responsibilities outside of GC.

Peter Grimwood resigned from the Trustees part way through the year, but he and former Trustee Tony Emerson continue to take an active role within Joy in Enough.

In July 2019 Paul Bodenham resigned as Chair of Trustees. He has been succeeded by Deborah Tomkins and George Dow as Co-Chairs. Barbara Echlin is now Vice Chair.

The **GC Board** consists of the Trustees, plus the following non-voting members: Dr Judith Allinson, Simon Court, Ruth Jarman, Howard Gardner (Print Manager) and Clare Redfern (Commissioning Editor for our magazine).

Part-time staff: Ruth Jarman is our Administrator for general Green Christian work and also for Joy in Enough. Judith Allinson is our Web Editor. Richard Kierton is Membership Secretary. Jeremy Williams and Hilary Blake work for Joy in Enough. Enabling us to employ this growing team is Simon Court, HR Consultant. We are grateful to the Passionists for generously continuing to give us an annual grant which enables us to employ staff.

Tributes to:

The following people are stepping down from vital roles within Green Christian.

Paul Bodenham as he stepped down from GC Chair in July 2019 after 12 years in the role. Paul joined the Steering Committee around 2002 and by 2003 he and Ruth Jarman were leading the CEL energy campaign. Thank you Paul!

Philip Clarkson Webb has compiled our much-appreciated monthly *Prayer Diary* for 29 years. We are hugely indebted to Philip for his dedicated service. He started the *Prayer Diary* in July 1990 on retirement from teaching, as a result of meeting Eve

Dennis and Dr Martin Palmer at an Interfaith Service in Canterbury Cathedral that year. The *Prayer Diary* is currently emailed to 478 people at the beginning of each month by Emma King, and by Jo Rathbone daily to 47 people. Emma also puts each day's entry on to Facebook.

Poppy Pickard started in 2009 by just putting the prayer letter up on our website and it grew from there. Since 2011 she has kept our new WordPress website up to date with the ever-changing use of technology. Most recently she has revitalised our website to be viewed most effectively on mobile phones. We have been fortunate to have a former lecturer in Mathematics and Computer Science in charge of our website, and one who also has a good eye for design.

Since 2001 Jill Vogler has efficiently performed the important role of sending out resources on request. Our Admin Officer, Ruth Jarman, now does this task for small quantities. Howard Gardner supplies larger quantities.

John Hudson helps Richard Kierton with recording membership information.

Euan McPhee and Deirdre Munro are on the co-ordinating group for the Way of Life Community.

Martha Cooper and Diane Harrison help on the Participation Group, engaging with our members.

And finally ... a huge thank you to all our members and supporters who have not been mentioned by name above, but without whom GC would provide a much less effective service!

Join Green Christian

Membership online starts at just £2 a month for individuals and families, and £5 per month for corporate or Church membership. Please go to greenchristian.org.uk/join-us/.

Or contact Green Christian Membership Secretary, Flat 1, 31 St James' Terrace, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6HS.

Cheques payable to Green Christian



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