



St Mary's Eaton Socon
THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

Creation Care
Loving, caring supporting



GREEN SHOOTS – SUMMER 2023

Our occasional newsletter

Fair Trade Focus

Audrey Hedges

I want to introduce you to Melina and Alexis, and the “Refill Shop” that they run. They both live in Eaton Socon, and they opened their shop at 40 St Mary's Street, opposite Eynesbury Church, in 2019. The shop aims to be zero waste, plastic free, organic, eco-friendly and fair trade. You just rock up with your own containers and purchase what you need by weight.

Everything from flour, pasta, rice, nuts, cereals to washing liquids, shampoo and conditioners. Because you are not paying for the containers it actually works out cheaper (and less plastic in your blue bins). They do an amazing range of oils and vinegars, coffee, local honey, sell locally made soda bread, and produce their own roasted mixed nuts (very yummy). They even stock dog food! And for added fun you can make your own peanut butter.

To make shopping easier for their customers they do a ‘drop your containers and list and pick up later’ service, and they also deliver shopping on a Friday evening.

And you can enjoy a tea, coffee and slice of cake while you're shopping.

So please consider visiting and using your local refill shop to reduce waste, plastic and continue buying fair trade.



Photos of the Refill Shop

The increase in the cost of **energy** over the last couple of years has helped us to focus our minds on how to use less of it. Hopefully we were already trying to use less energy anyway, as it's a critical contributor to climate warming. Some quick tips to help at home are:

- Only put as much water in the kettle as you need
- Use your washing machine when there's a full load, and at as low a temperature as possible
- Avoid using the tumble dryer if you can – no excuse while the weather is warm and sunny!
- Run the dishwasher only when it's full – and use the 'eco' setting
- Use a 'green' energy provider

There is a lot more information and ideas at ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/resources/lifestyle/.

Electric Vehicles – are they a good investment?

More and more people in the UK are now buying “EV’s”. They are not cheap to buy but they cost less to run and are “greener” than internal combustion engines. At least four couples in the life of St Mary’s have taken the plunge and bought one: Sue & Richard de Fraine, Chris & Anthony Harris, Frances & Roger Peppiatt and Anne & Tom Walker. We asked them about their experience and here is a brief summary of what they told us (numbers in brackets = number of couples giving this response):

Why did you invest in an EV?:

- To reduce carbon footprint (4)
- To use power from solar panels (3)
- Cheaper to run / rising fuel prices (2)
- Reducing size of second car (1)
- Should be more reliable (1)



What did you buy?

de Fraine – Kia Niro

Harris – Renault Zoe

Peppiatt – VW id3

Walker – BMW i3

Advantages

- Economical (4)
- In the summer 50% of power comes from solar panels (3)
- Easy to drive, quick and quiet (3)
- No visits to the petrol station (1)
- Can warm up the car & defrost windows using a mobile phone app (1)
- My wife likes it! (3)



Drawbacks

- Range can be an issue – check each time return home, carefully plan long routes to include chargers (2)
- Range is lower in winter – power is used for heating the interior, headlights (1)
- Buying a home charging unit is an additional cost (1)

Would you recommend owning an EV?: YES (4) but be clear about your criteria for purchase and carefully research the “range”, which is often less than the published one.

Space does not permit all the various comments made. However, Anthony or Roger will be happy to discuss any queries. There is much information available online – for example, <https://drive-green.co.uk>.

Overseas Spotlight: through each edition of this newsletter, we bring you news of **A Rocha Kenya's** centre at Watamu, on the coast of Kenya, north of the main port, Mombasa. This Christian organisation (www.arocha.or.ke) is pioneering exciting work in:

- marine conservation
- environmental education in schools
- community conservation (eco-tourism, which provides eco-bursaries for school children)

Recent work has included the planting of 20,000 trees, which will bring economic benefit to the local people, and a project to manufacture eco-friendly cooking stoves.

Please remember them in your prayers.



The eco-friendly stove which retains heat for cooking and requires less wood.

Churchyard Focus: After the harsh winter, it has been wonderful to see the bulbs flowering in early spring followed by the colourful wild flowers triggered by warm weather in late May. The Council have been following as closely as they can the **mowing plan** we agreed with them a few months ago, weather and manpower issues allowing. The plan is for the wildflowers to grow and flower before the grass is cut.

We announced in the last edition of Green Shoots that we are piloting a small **wild flower "bed"**, 3m x 1m to the south of the church. The area was prepared by the Town Council in the winter, and we sowed with a suitable mixture of seeds. There is now much growth and during the summer we look forward to seeing the plants flower.

Our **monthly morning working parties** continue, usually on the first Monday of each month, starting at 09:30am. Most of the work is to maintain the various flower beds, via our "Adopt a Flower Bed Scheme". One bed, the long straight one along our eastern boundary, next to the public footpath is still waiting for someone (probably 2 or 3 people) to "adopt it". Please contact us if you want to know more.

We marked, "**Churches Count on Nature**" week (3rd – 11th June) by surveying wild flowers, birds and butterflies/moths in our churchyard.

- Margaret Tabone repeated the informal survey that she has done for the previous two years, and again found over 50 species of wild flower. (And there are at least six different tall grasses as well.)
- Mike Matthews reported a couple of small blue butterflies, and a small white, and also noted some azure damselflies. While she was looking for flowers, Margaret noticed a rather beautiful burnet moth and a very jazzy-looking shield bug.
- Sue Boreham reported a limited variety of birds when she visited, including Blackbird, Bluetit, Crow, House Sparrows, Jackdaw, Robin, Wood pigeon. Is the Churchyard too busy for some birds to visit?

Monthly Wildlife Walks

Audrey Hedges

Our monthly wildlife walks resumed this April, with a slightly flooded route. We were able to observe the spring flora around the churchyard and the emerging trees and flowers around Pocket Park. Although we didn't find the otter, we did find the pink flamingo!

On our jaunt in May we found many butterflies - brimstone, holly blue, orange tip and red admirals.

These hour-long strolls culminate in tea and cakes at the Dragonfly barge and lots of chats about the flora and fauna, including muntjacs and snakes!

Our next trip takes place on Sunday 9th July, meeting at 3pm at St Mary's. Everyone is more than welcome to join us.



Cowslip



Harlequin
Ladybird

Blossom in the churchyard



“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”
Amos 5: 24

Season of Creation is the period in the annual church calendar, from 1st September to 4th October, dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life. It is an opportunity to give thanks for God's gift of creation, and to renew our commitment to caring for the planet.

Our services on 17th and 24th September will follow this year's theme 'Let Peace and Justice Flow'.

World Car Free Day is an annual celebration of cities and public life, free from the noise, stress and pollution of cars. The actual day is 22nd September, so we encourage people to walk to church on the next Sunday, September 24th, the second of our two Sunday mornings with a focus on Creation Care.

Car Share: some of you already share cars to come to church. It would be cheaper for you and better for the planet if more of us did. Near the door in church, there is a sheet to sign-up for those who wish to be involved on a regular basis, either as driver or passenger.

St Mary's Creation Care Team:

Anthony Harris, Audrey Hedges, Roger Peppiatt, Margaret Tabone.

Our group reports to the PCC. We have a page on the church website www.eatonsocon.org/creation-care, and a group on the church Facebook page. We would be pleased to hear your views and suggestions – please email to creationcare@eatonsocon.org or leave a voicemail message on 01480 352154 (church office).