

A review of Congregations for a Low Carbon Future

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Original aims and objectives

- To implement energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies
- To implement measures within church owned buildings
- Support for low-income and vulnerable households in energy efficiency
- To increase awareness and understanding of sustainability issues
- To provide a flagship project for replication.



Summary of initiatives

- Aim 1 - Training workshops, networks and groups and technical inquiries
- Aim 2 - Insulation of parsonages and vicarages, changing light bulbs and audits
- Aim 3 – Parishioners referred to ‘Warm Front’ for potential grants
- Aim 4 – Information resources, presentations and media impact
- Aim 5 – Review and stakeholder meeting



Questionnaire

- Randomised contacts
- 49% response rate
- Coding
- Quotes and comments
- Provided opportunities to follow-up

Questionnaire findings – relationship with MEA

- 47% had worked in partnership with MEA
- 30% had attended a training course
- 44% had benefited from an energy audit
- 24% were members of a working group
- 12% had attended an MEA presentation
- 6% had benefited indirectly through others
- 9% had no known links with MEA

Questionnaire findings - outcomes

- 47% - mutually beneficial relationship
- 35% - arranged events or services
- 29% - practical response to an energy audit
- 21% - members of a local church group
- 21% - challenged by training and taking action
- 18% - members of a regional church group
- 15% - challenged but unsure of action

Questionnaire findings - action

- 85% (54%) low energy light bulbs
- 44% (7%) renewable electricity
- 53% (27%) improved insulation and/or double glazing
- 42% (23%) improved heating system
- 35% (4%) more sustainable use of transport
- 12 % (0%) solar panels
- 24% (7%) mentioned other actions



Questionnaire findings – future hopes

- 59% - speakers for events and meetings
- 56% - energy audit and advice
- 47% - regular info (6% initial info pack)
- 35% - networking
- 26% - more training courses
- 18% - help in establishing an action group
- 6% - no interest in further support



Our need to respond to climate change

- 62% - highly concerned (10)
- 17% - very concerned (9)
- 15% - concerned (8)
- 3% - not at all concerned
- 3% did not respond

Do churches have a need to respond?

- 79% Yes – responsibility for creation as stewards
- 42% Yes – impact on the poor
- 32% Yes – moral and prophetic obligation to show leadership
- 21% Yes – church is in every community
- 15% Yes – joy and appreciation of creation

Who should take the lead?

- Government 22%
- Individuals 16%
- Local churches 12%
- National church 14%
- Small groups 14%
- Regional church groupings 11%
- Charities and NGO's 11%




Key successes

- Very positive feedback from beneficiaries
- Audits for church buildings
- Technical expertise
- Training workshops
- Information resources
- Effective use of media



Other Christian initiatives

- Anglican – shrinking the footprint
- Methodist – target members not leaders
- Quakers – considerable resonance
- Protection of ‘our supporters’
- MEA’s unique placing and potential for building links



Lessons learned – energy savings

- Make effective use of baseline studies based on randomised homes within the target area. Provide an incentive ...
- Ensure people interested in renewable energy or energy efficiency services are followed-up by outside agencies with clear referral benefits ensuing for MEA.



Lessons learned – church structures

- Work within church structures, however slowly
- Don't assume decision makers share MEA views on technical aspects of energy efficiency.
- Share good practice and case studies to win over doubters
- Use MEA website more effectively




Lessons learned – equip 'champions'

- Provide 'champions' with information that equips them for action
- Identify people to work with households experiencing fuel poverty
- Train champions to carry out simple audits



Lessons learned – support 'champions'

- Follow-up training contacts for support and information
- Capture contact details to build up local networks (without infringing data protection legislation)



Lessons learned – share learning

- Replicate learning, building on MEA's reputation and unique status
- Continue to produce excellent information resources and presentation materials
- Document energy efficiencies in church buildings with informative display boards
- Provide training in effective use of media




Recommendations

- Discrete packages of work
- Training of 'champions' in cooperation with NGOs
- Information pack
- Follow-up of 'champions'
- Networking of 'champions'
- Upgrading of Church buildings
- Referrals
- Group visits

Ideas for discussion:

- Motivation for networking
- Resonance of training and support for 'champions'?
- Can MEA break through the 'ownership' barriers?
- Will organisations provide funding to train and support 'their' people
- Possibilities for Church buildings?

- Discuss issues of interest from the findings of this review.
1. What are the key benefits and barriers of improved networking among faith groups concerning climate change issues?
 2. What is needed to stimulate rapid progress for church buildings to model a low carbon future?

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4. How best can members/supporters/champions be mobilised and supported at local level regarding action on climate change?

 5. How can ideas from these recommendations best be taken forward? What should MEA's role, if any, be in this?