

FOREWORD

"Despite continuing warnings from environmental experts, and the clear evidence of climate event damage on every continent and in the oceans, the sense of urgency has still not impacted on governments and industry. COP29 was clearly influenced by its host nation, Azerbaijan, which flourishes on fossil fuel production. Both the positive action and the growing protest must come from ground level, from people of Faith and no-Faith who recognise the reality. It is in this way that we will insist on change and show, by changes in our own ways of living, that change must happen and disasters be avoided. The work of the Ecological Conversion Group is an important voice and advocate for the change that is essential."

Bishop John Arnold, Diocese of Salford

INTRODUCTION

After another exciting year, we are delighted to share with you our latest annual report! This year has been packed with all sorts of interesting things including deanery days, international visits and many fruitful collaborations.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters, donors, friends and participants; all who make our work possible.

John Paul, Ellie, Edd, Claire, Rosie & Fr Benedict

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'Ecological conversion' is a commitment, inspired by faith, to change our lives so as to help heal the threefold rupture caused by sin, with God, with other human beings, and with the natural world.

It is the process of change towards living in a right relationship with Creator and creation. Recovering a God centered life, living in communion with all that surrounds us.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

02/05/2023 St Anthony Forest Gate talk on CST and Common Destination of Goods

25/05/23 - Parish rep catchup

31/05/2023 Panel speaker at COMECE European Skills Conference

10/06/2023 Worthing Deanery Day

27/06/2023 Cathedral deanery catch-up

28/06/2023 Trustee Claire talk to Sussex and Brighton University Chaplaincy on Laudato Si'

28/06/2023 World Youth Day A&B pilgrims integral ecology

05/07/2023 Jesuit Provincial Ecological Conversion Retreat

01/08/2023 Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand interview, poster activity at integral ecology catechesis session WYD

02/09/2023 Our Lady of Martyrs, Aberystwyth

02/09/2023 Panellist at Ecumenical Q&A Aberystwyth

06/09/2023 Talk with Year 9 Worth School

16/09/2023 Journey to 2030 Our Lady of Margam

23/09/2023 Woking Deanery Day

25-26/09/2023 St Gregory's Talks (Y12 + 13)

28/09/2023 Environmental Leads retreat – Let us Dream

02/10/2023 St Gregory's Talk (Y9)

03/10/2023 Cardinal Pole school talks

07/10/2023 Care of Creation workshop, Lancaster

11/10/2023 St Gregory's Examen Exercise Year 8s

11/10/2023 St Gregory's Year 9 talk

17 Oct - Together for the common good conference

20 oct - Blackfriars conference

6 nov - Jesuit Missions podcast

15/11/23 LSM Animator training

16-19/11/2023 ELSiA Spirituality and Ecology Workshop, Taize

30/11/23 Las Casas lecture

06/12/2023 Online Parish rep meeting

16-19 /01/2024 Real farming conference

27/01/2024 A&B Justice and Peace Assembly

28/01/2024 Worth Parish Talk

30/01/2023 Ellie talk at CAFOD APPG

07/02/2024 Talk at Mayfield Parish

21/02/2024 St George's, Hove, Care of Creation online talk

02/03/2024 Brighton deanery day

09/03/2024 Let us Dream workshop at Liverpool Environment Conference

16/03/2024 Eastbourne deanery day

Total number of workshops/talks: 27
Total number of people attending talks and workshops: 1923

HIGHLIGHTS - PARISH VISITS

Welsh Martyrs Parish Aberystwyth

Together with our advisor Sr Margaret of Boarbank Hall, Cumbria, John Paul visited the Welsh Martyrs Parish in Aberystwyth (Diocese of Menevia) to talk with the Laudato Si Group, as well a supporting panellist for an Ecumenical Talk and Q&A Session as a part of the parish open day. The parish has been working hard on their Laudato Si' project; running a community garden building vital links to serve the surrounding community.

You can learn more about the parish's journey in a blog by Nick Howells, the project leader here: <https://journeyto2030.org/grow-fruit-and-vegetables-for-me/>



Worth Parish Talk

John Paul was invited by Worth Parish, near Crawley in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton. He shared a talk on the teachings of Laudato Si', integral ecology and ecological conversion with the 50 parishioners who attended.



HIGHLIGHTS - WORLD YOUTH DAY

"I am grateful for having experienced WYD, on one hand the grand of the scale of it, and the other the bonds with my small group of fellow pilgrims that I shared my days with. It highlights the care for my local community back home against the backdrop of the urgent need to care for our global family and common home. The relationships I form with God, neighbours and planet; influence my direction and method of travel from A to B in the web of interactions and relationships of our pilgrimage in a modern world."

You can read the full reflection in our blog here: <https://journeyto2030.org/wyd/>



With Integral ecology being one of the key themes of World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon, there was a huge opportunity to help people understand the aims of the Ecological Conversion Group.

In preparation for world youth day, we ran a session for participants and leaders of the Arundel and Brighton WYD pilgrimage.

John Paul travelled to WYD with the Brothers of St John Group, for his holiday, but had to put both his work, and sun hats on to help lead the integral ecology session for an English speaking group St John group from Taiwan, New Zealand, New Jersey and the UK.



As well as being grilled in a Q&A with + Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand, on integral ecology, we led a session using our examination of consicnece activity posters. Luckily John Paul thought it wise to bring them, just in case...

It was a wonderful experience to help each of us recognise ourselves as a global family, and that this encounter should leave us as brothers and sisters and not simply statistics, or pictures on a screen.

The session on integral ecology on a sweltering basketball court in Lisbon.

HIGHLIGHTS - WORKSHOPS

LET US DREAM Deanery Workshops

Workshops to make community dreams for a better future a reality

Realise the potential of your community to make lasting change

Imagine a better world together

Form a local network to put your dreams into action

Learn how to use Journey to 2030 resources, and have the confidence to use them in your community

Who is it for?

Any parish, school, or deanery community wanting to get talking and acting about social and environmental issues.

What does it involve?

A 3-hour workshop, filled with inputs and activities designed to get you dreaming of and planning the changes you want to see in your community.

How does Journey to 2030 support?

We will help you organise and advertise the event, and of course run the workshop for you! After the workshop, we will support you in setting up a local network to put your dreams into reality.



Want to find out more?

visit www.journeyto2030.org

or email Ellie Margetts at ellie@theecg.org



Since 2022 we have completed 11 deanery workshop training days using the Building a Caring Community poster pack to build local networks. The days are designed to:

- Help participants realise the potential of our communities to make real change in the world.
- To encourage them to dream about and share the world they would like to see.
- To help form a deanery network of people keen to make a change.
- To give training on using Journey to 2030 resources, so that by the end of the session you will have the confidence to run these activities in your own parishes, schools and communities.

We will be continuing to run these workshops in deaneries going forwards – let us know if you would like one!

This year, we completed workshops in:

- Worthing (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton)
- Woking (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton)
- Brighton & Hove (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton)
- Liverpool Environmental Conference (Archdiocese of Liverpool)
- Eastbourne (Diocese of Arundel & Brighton)



We are very grateful to the Plater Trust for awarding us a small grant to help in the planning and ongoing support for these workshops.



Northern Dioceses Environmental Group

John Paul was invited by the Leeds Justice and Peace Commission to run a 'Let us Dream' workshop at the Northern Dioceses' Environment Group on 8th June. He invited the group to discuss what a flourishing community should look like, and to dream of how we can get to that position. Using our 'Let us Dream' activity, he invited people to draw their hopes and share with the wider group.

Lancaster Diocese

Thank you to Lancaster Diocese Faith & Justice Commission for their invitation to participate in their 'Let Justice and Peace Flow' Care of Creation day. Together, with Sr Margaret Atkins, Dr Stephen Garsed, and Dr Paul Kelly, we were delighted to talk about the Journey to 2030 and participate in the panel discussions.

HIGHLIGHTS - PARTNERS IN ACTION

People around the country are using resources and adapting them to their needs. Here are a few examples of our work being delivered by other organisations.



Lancaster

We were also delighted to hear that our friend Sue Grubic, Faith and Justice Worker, has been busy delivering our 'Let us Dream' workshops in schools across Lancaster Diocese. She has spoken at 16 schools, visiting some of them multiple times. Well done Sue!

Hexham and Newcastle

Minnie Fraser, environmental lead for Hexham and Newcastle diocese with her son Simon at their care of creation stand at the Diocesan family festival.

Brentwood

As part of the diocese of Brentwood student leadership conference, Siân Thomas-Cullinan, Director of Caritas Brentwood "led a series of sessions based on the Papal document Laudato Sí, with the support of members from the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service. The students focused on the practical responsibility of care for our common home, including what could be done in terms of leaving a legacy to future students, by using the 'Let Us Dream' task from Journey to 2030." You can read more [here](#)



HIGHLIGHTS - CONFERENCES

Grounded in the Present, Skilled for the Future

John Paul was invited by the Commission of the Bishops' Conference of the European Union (COMECE) for their "Grounded in the Present, skilled for the Future" summit in Brussels. The event was in response to, and attended by, the European Year of Skills Initiative, which aims to address the shortage of skilled labour across the continent. The event offered an opportunity for discussion around the dignity of work and how economic forces devalue some kinds of jobs, and being mindful of how technological progress can lead us in the wrong direction.

John Paul's role was to offer reflection on the 'skills needed for ecological conversion'. How do we create the 'right kind of people' to apply their technical knowledge, rather than simply training people in technical skills in order to compete. He talked of the support needed for informal skills learnt in the family and vocational settings. "In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life" (Laudato Si' 213). And the need to recognise childcare, caring, and working with the land as

critically important to forming our society and world, so that we may use technical skills with wisdom. John Paul's presentation focussed on the need to reframe our notion of 'skills' away from competition to a structure of care.

You can read more about the event, as well as watch back the recording [here](#) (John Paul's presentation starts at 40 minutes into the video).

There was also a write [here](#) up by Don Bosco International.



Climate Emergency - An Ethical Challenge for Humanity

Hosted by Las Casas institute in association with the European Union's Committee of the Regions at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford. Attended as participant.

Some startling climate predictions for the UK.

ACTION RESULTING FROM CONFERENCES

Calling Out Greenwashing

An exciting new branch of our work this year has been the decision to publish a briefing document in the build up to COP. Following a number of conferences to do with climate and biodiversity, this document aims to reveal an elephant in the room; the apparent lack of distinction between the carbon cycle and carbon stored in fossil fuels in the timescales by which we are measuring progress on climate.

"Calling out Greenwashing" warns of the dangers of relying heavily on carbon offset schemes to solve the climate crisis, by conflating these two stores of carbon. We have received a lot of feedback telling us that it is a thought-provoking and useful read, so do have a look and share.

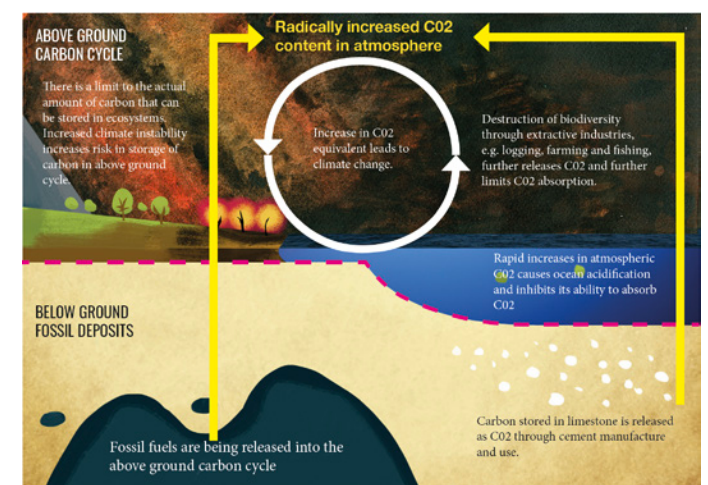
This aims to be a document to help develop thought on the topic of carbon offsets, and more specifically for nature based solutions. It is aimed at organisations, dioceses, and communities to read, reflect on and use in their planning, to stress the dire need to reduce production and use of fossil fuels, and increase efforts on biodiversity, but... don't fall into the trap of indulgences by thinking you can negate the impacts of burning fossil fuels by planting trees.

You can download the full document here <https://theecg.org/download/3663/?tmstv=1701184325>

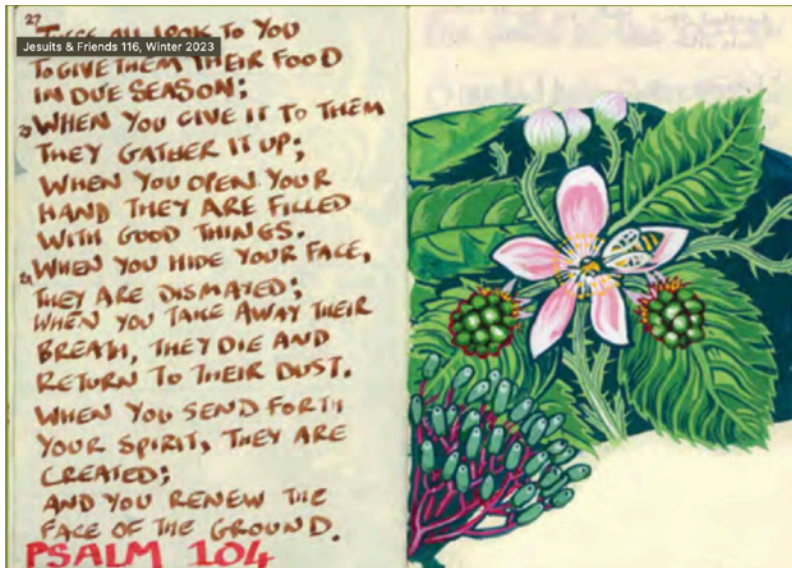
If you want to learn more about carbon offsetting and greenwashing, there is an interesting panel debate by the University of Oxford that you can watch here <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/videos/carbon-offsetting>

Real Farming Conference - Oxford

Participated to learn more about Agroecology and the links between community cohesion, health and wellbeing. Some great ideas that could work in parishes.



HIGHLIGHTS - RETREATS



Jesuits in Britain

Fifty Jesuits and coworkers gathered at St Beuno's for a special province retreat. The aim was to see where the Lord was calling the Jesuits in Britain on the path of ecological conversion. John Paul was very grateful to have been invited to participate.

You can read about it in Jesuit and Friends magazine [here](#):



National Environmental Leads Retreat

The diocesan environmental leads retreat was an opportunity for collaboration and conversation around some common themes facing dioceses. The ECG delivered a talk and workshop session. The retreat took place in The Franciscan Spirituality centre, where we were reunited with Sr Shirley, a good friend of the ECG from its infancy.



European Laudato Si' Alliance Spirituality and ecology Workshop

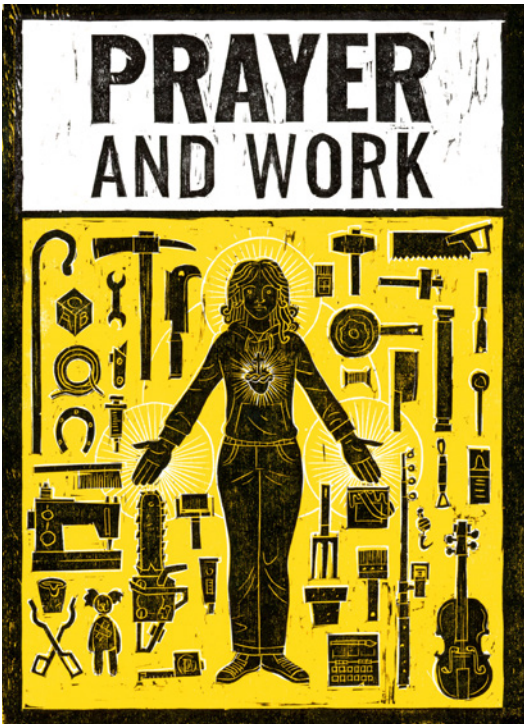
Following the conference in COMECE for the European Year of Skills conference, John Paul was invited back to further expand on this theme with members of Catholic organisations from around Europe forming the European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSIA). The ECG led a workshop exploring skills for ecological conversion, taking inspiration from the monastic practices of "Ora et labora" (prayer and work), addressing the question of why we do not use our hands today?

The 4-day event in Taizé explored how manual work and spirituality can be brought together for the good of our common home. John Paul led the opening session, focussing his discussion on spirituality being the way we frame our relationship with God, neighbour, and planet. He emphasised that it is in recentring our focus on God that we are then able to address our relationship with prayer and work in a way that allows us to live out an integral ecology.

You can read more about the event in this post by Pax Christi <https://paxchristi.net/elsia-spirituality-and-ecology-workshop-2023/>

Action resulting from retreats:

The subject of work will form one of our thought leadership pieces that will be published next year. Prayer and work coming soon...





Southern Dioceses Environment Network (SDEN)

As a part of the planning team for the SDEN, we have continued to work together to plan monthly Zoom meetings which cover updates from each diocese, guest speakers, reflections, and sharing of new environmental action resources. Attendees have found these meetings very helpful in both building community and giving ideas for action. The group is open to anyone who would like to attend. You can find more information, including how to join, on the Westminster Justice and Peace website [here](#).

Archdiocese of Liverpool

We were delighted to work with the Archdiocese of Liverpool on their on-year Care of Creation Plan (which was recently published and can be downloaded [here](#)).

Laudato Si' Movement

We provided training for this years cohort of Laudato Si' Animators from all around Europe. John Paul gave an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching and what our faith tells us about how we should behave.

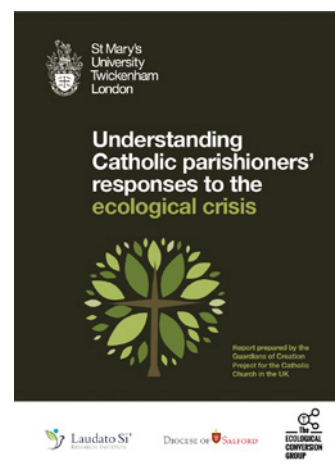


Welcome to week 2

Today our live speaker, John Paul de Quay, will tell us how our faith is connected with creation care and I encourage you to come and to ask questions about it! I believe we all have some about the Catholic Church and the faith aspect on environmental protection. Please, join us, get to know other course participants and learn something new with us! 🌱❤️

Guardians of Creation

We have continued on the advisory board of the Guardians of Creation Project, run by the diocese of Salford and St Mary's university. We have also been collaborating to address barriers and recommendations from the "understanding Catholic Parishioners' Responses to the Ecological Crises".



Read the report and other Guardians of Creation works on the St Mary's university website [here](#).

Jesuit Missions

John Paul was invited to talk on the Jesuit Missions Podcast to discuss action in combatting climate change, faith and the environment, and the goals for COP28. You can listen [here](#).

NEXT YEAR

Thought leadership

Thought leadership pieces that look at our moral imagination and try to help overcome barriers to action that are time or resource dependant, and also how our theological understanding of mission can also be a barrier.



The Church as an environment. The importance of place as an enabler of time well spent.



Prayer and work. What do we do with our time? Why do we have a lack of it?



Who am I? A look at the theology of creation and our continued role as co-creators.

Boarbank Hall.

After many online retreats, John Paul and Sr Margaret have been planning some in-person retreats. Watch out 2024.



Meanwhile, the apple trees that we delivered around Sussex and Surrey Parishes at the end of lockdown continue to bear fruit.



TESTIMONIALS

"Great to meet you last week at the COMECE conference. Thanks for your presentation – really hit the right points of creation, humanity and God. A trinity we don't hear enough of in Brussels policy making circles.

Thomas Kaye, Young Elected Politicians Team for the European Committee of the Regions.

"It's great to know something of your work, and to see how the journey into sustainability is synonymous with a journey into deeper Christian conversion. I hadn't recognised that connection as clearly until hearing your material - thank you."

Fr Matthew Roche-Saunders, Parish Priest for Our Lady of Martyrs, Aberystwyth

"The input Sr Margaret gave in her talk and that you then concretised in your material about journeyto2030, was actually about the Christological nature of creation - that all things have existence through Christ, and that therefore all creation points back through Christ to the Father. A right relationship with creation is a right re-ordering of our own being created in Christ, and how our worship belongs to Christ alone. I don't think I'd heard it explained like that before. It's easy and painful to hear caricatures of papal teaching in this area of environmental awareness, but to recognise that stewardship, sustainability and the environment remind us of the very roots of God's creation through Christ, is so much more attractive than simply to be reminded to recycle (which doesn't require following Jesus to think it's a good idea)...this whole area of 'Laudato Si' can be an opportunity to preach the kerygma and reorder the world back to its Creator God - amazing.

A priest.

"Building a Caring Community is an excellent resource we have used in our parish. Highly recommended!"

A workshop participant.

As part of the preparation for World Youth Day, we were asked to reflect on a few different topics with our pilgrims in the run up to the pilgrimage. JP very kindly delivered the session on Integral ecology. It was an incredibly interesting and eye opening talk which helped us to really understand the interconnected nature of everything. One participant commented that his presentation really helped her to understand this subject in a whole new way. As the Youth Adviser for the Diocese, I continue to call on JP's expertise in this subject, in particular I am consulting with him as I write reflections for the upcoming Jubilee year looking at the themes of Care for Creation, food poverty, modern slavery, managing debt, forgiveness, and rest & worship.

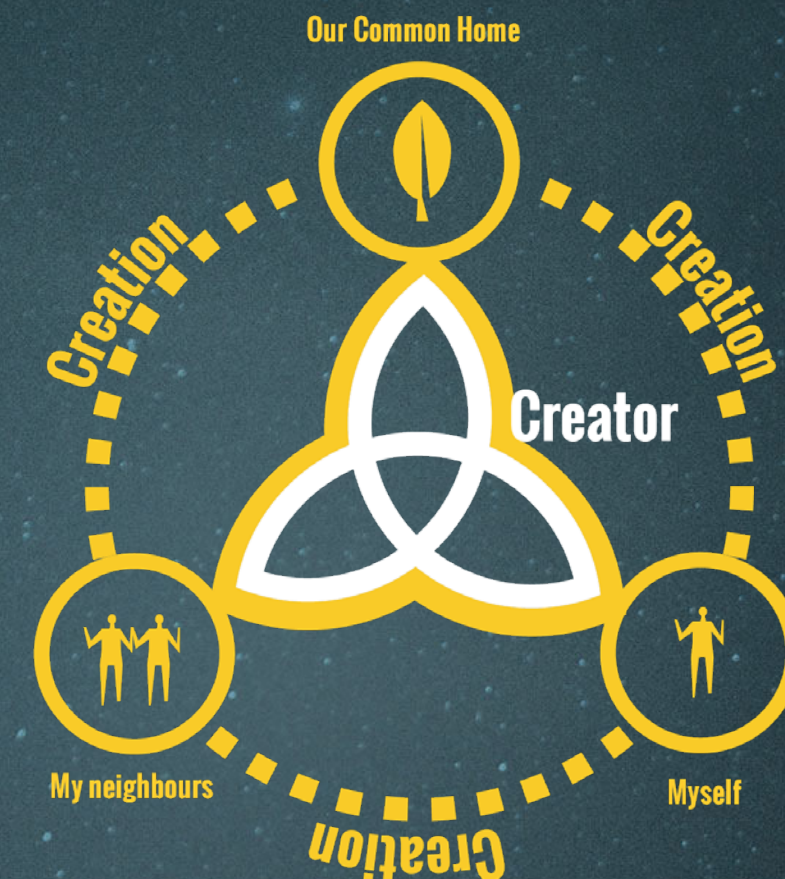
Lizzie Wakeling, Youth Advisor, Arundel and Brighton

The Ecological Conversion Group have been integral in providing support and resources for our current environment plan for the Archdiocese. We hope to work with them further as we develop our thinking and actions.

Pablo Guidi, Catholic Social Action Coordinator,, Archdiocese of Liverpool



Thank you to all of our friends, trustees, colleagues, partners and supporters for making this great work happen.



"The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfilment. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity."

Pope Francis, referencing St Thomas Aquinas, Laudato Si' 240



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

THE ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION GROUP

No (if any)

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2023

To

31/03/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
GRANTS	10 680		-	10 680	59 111
DONATIONS	19	-	-	19	100
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2 992	-	-	2 992	12 245
LOANS	-	-	-	-	1 000
INTEREST ON BANK ACCOUNT	274	-	-	274	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	13 965	-	-	13 965	72 456
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	13 965	-	-	13 965	72 456
A3 Payments					
SALARIES	32 140	-	-	32 140	22 123
TRAVEL COSTS	1 012	-	-	1 012	322
POSTAGE	107	-	-	107	40
COMPUTER EXPENSES	4 742	-	-	4 742	557
WORKSHOPS MATERIALS	52	-	-	52	244
PRINTING	-	-	-	-	1 865
ACCOMODATION	-	-	-	-	135
REPAYMENT OF LOANS	1 000	-	-	1 000	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	39 054	-	-	39 054	25 286
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	39 054	-	-	39 054	25 286
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 25 089	-	-	- 25 089	47 170
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	- 25 089	-	-	- 25 089	47 170

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	NATWEST	21 209	-	-
	PAYPAL	872	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	22 081	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	