

Operation EDEN

“The Widnes Experience”



Churches in Widnes are working together to improve their impact on the environment, looking at energy and water use and waste. The nine Anglican churches in the Widnes Deanery have looked at their buildings and identified where improvements could be made. Together with Operation EDEN and Groundwork Environmental Business Solutions they formulated action plans to reduce energy use.

Joyce Roberts, a church member and Operation EDEN volunteer, worked hard to promote the idea and ensure that each church was represented.

Following training events the next step was to get together as a group of churches and share strengths and weaknesses so that people could support each other. For examples, some churches had a strong group of volunteers; others had contacts with local builders; while others had already taken energy saving measures.

All this was done within the context of the Diocese of Liverpool Environmental Policy, which focuses on actions to improve environmental impact.

This approach would be easy to repeat in other groups of churches (or other faith communities) and provides a strong way for people to support each other and benefit from technical expertise.



Steps

- Training events held at 3 venues in Widnes
- Groups developed action plan for each church
- Deanery meeting to compare notes and identify ways that churches could support each other
- Follow-up training to strengthen skills and knowledge
- Reporting of results to Diocese to encourage other Deaneries to take part

Tried & tested energy-saving methods

Several churches have fitted energy saving light bulbs in place of standard filament bulbs. These can each save up over £50 over their lifetime. They are also longer lasting – a real advantage to churches that suffer a lot of vibrations by being near main roads. It is best to check which bulbs you require by buying a few first to test the brightness.

Another church installed an ‘EcoFlow’ device on the gas boiler. This has improved the efficiency of the boiler so the heating needs to be on less time to warm the church.



Low energy ‘compact fluorescent’ bulb

10 low cost / no cost ways of saving money

1. Put up signs reminding people to switch off lights & taps
2. Put signs by thermostats and central heating control explaining how they should be used
3. Check electricity bills frequently – see what is the best way to run the building
4. Manage the heating system better, e.g. switch heating off before the end of the service
5. Put draught excluders on outside doors and windows
6. Close curtains once it gets dark
7. Put heat reflectors behind radiators
8. Change a few frequently used bulbs to low energy bulbs
9. Fit “Save-a-flush” devices in toilet cisterns
10. Communicate what you are doing to church members and building users