

Submission to ECI regarding the Presentation to KMC of their *Awareness Award*

Maureen Rowan -ECI Presentation

- Maureen presented Knock Methodist Church Belfast with their *ECI 'Awareness Award'* and confirmed that Knock was now the third Methodist Church in the North of Ireland to receive this first stage award.
- Knock's Sustainability Team acknowledged their pleasure and gratitude towards her invaluable assistance and the award itself. They also commended her tireless work in helping to create and drive the new recommendations that the Committee for Social Responsibility (CSR) have made for all Methodist church's in Ireland. These guidelines are largely based upon the ECI recommendations for the steps needed towards the three levels of accreditation
- They also gave credit to ECI and Karen Nicholson for her ever-willing assistance
- Maureen helped us recognise that our faith in God was essential as the source of our motivation. The fact that we are surrounded physically by the goodness of God is a constant reminder.
- She made us aware of the strong links that now exist between Irish Methodism and ECI and how cooperation was essential in our shared goal of a sustainable earth
- She also focussed on Knock's next step in achieving the *Endeavour Award*. Based upon ECI/MCI guidelines
- She gave a short PowerPoint presentation to the Creation Care Network attendees and highlighted the four main areas of church life that need to be considered when implementing sustainable practices:

Spiritual-Practical- Community and Global

- She highlighted eight minimal measures a church can consider, as set out in the Methodist Church in Ireland Environmental Policy:

ONE: Manage Resources through 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'

TWO: Save Energy throughout Church Premises

THREE: Maintain Buildings for Energy Efficiency and Long-Term Sustainability

FOUR: Conserve Water

FIVE: Purchase Ethically and with Environmental Awareness

SIX: Use Land which is External to Church or Manse to Benefit Wildlife and Sustain Biodiversity

SEVEN: Reduce Fossil Fuel Use in Church-Related Travel

EIGHT: Support Community and Global Environmental and Biodiversity Initiatives.

- Having finished her presentation she then used her home church as an example but highlighted that because each church has a unique geographical location it required imagination to see possibilities for ECO improvements.
- Her example was taken from her own home church, Methodist Centenary ECO congregation in Dublin:
- In developing the four dimensions of environmental good practice required by Eco Congregation Ireland, it had been noticed that there was a gap in the extent to which the church participated in local community environmental initiatives
- An opportunity to contribute to a local initiative arose when a community group began working on a patch of neglected land and had permission to turn it into a garden. Maureen's church was aware that there were a group of male asylum seekers who lived nearby and made an approach. The men welcomed the chance to work alongside members of the church and the local community. This resulted in the forming of positive relationships with all involved. The garden blossomed and is a blessing to all the local communities. The project also helped prevent animosity arising in the area and may have prevented some of the ugly scenes we have seen in Dublin towards immigrants