

# LIVING SIMPLY CAMPAIGN

## FINAL REPORT Year 2016 – 2017

CAFOD encourages parishes to put their faith into action by taking up the challenge of Live Simply

LIVESIMPLY involves Parish communities working to live 1) with a simpler life style. 2) in Solidarity with the poor and 3) Sustainably. The latter is a major element of Pope Francis' recent Encyclical letter LAUDATO SI' which inspires us to reflect on how we care for the earth and all creation.

Parishes that can demonstrate a commitment to these three objectives are given a CAFOD Live Simply Award

Last autumn, our parish took up the challenge, and the LiveSimply steering group (Steve Stevens, Jadzia Stevens, Anne Dodd and Angela Waterhouse) have been organizing a number of monthly activities, supported by Fr Jamie and by Fr Phil and a large number of parishioners as shown by our analysis of the final survey regarding involvement in the year. We received answers from 98 families and 83 individuals i.e. 181 returns in total.

## OUR ACTIONS

### Living Simply

In Dec 53% of parishioners pledged to have a simpler Christmas. The parish "Called & Gifted Group" collected unwanted clothes and together with donations raised £1,107 enough to give 90 children in Africa one meal a day for one year. This is being done through 'Mary's Meals.' This enterprise was supported by 85% of the congregation.

We promoted waste reduction and we had great success in January recycling 1.2KG of stamps, 5kg ink cartridges and 133 pairs of spectacles and 42 mobile phones. These collections raised money for Vision aid, Wateraid, Diabetes Research and British Heart Foundation.

In May we sent 2 van loads tools to be renovated and then sent to Africa via Workaid. 30% of Parishioner supported this enterprise. In July one third of parishioners supported a Car-Less Sunday by walking, bicycling or car sharing to Church.

## Living in Solidarity with the Poor

We enhanced our usual contribution to the local Food Bank (55%) and organised 'Cook & Share (20%)'. The parish supported a very successful Garden Produce Sunday in August with a "bring and buy" sale of fruit, vegetables and flowers from people's gardens or allotments. £361 was raised for Fr Tom to help his work with poor and destitute in India.

The Parish for a number of years has had a Covenant with Poor, which involves supporting amongst other things Fairtrade, and we enhanced this activity this year with a Fairtrade stand outside church and a Fairtrade competition for children.

## Living Sustainably

In Sept of 2016 we started a Wild Flower Meadow in the church grounds to encourage butterflies, bees and other Pollinators. We also installed two nest boxes and a "bee hotel". The latter kindly donated by an anonymous donor

To sustain the culture of trees for food in Africa the parish collected funds during Lents for the International Tree Foundation a small charity based in Oxford. The £3750 sent to them is being used in Bamenda in the Cameroons to plant 20,000 fruit trees and to train mainly women in agroforestry, to enhance food production and generally improve living conditions. This supplements the other work done by the parish and diocese in Bamenda

In June we undertook a Creation Prayer walk from our church with prayer and meditation stops at Abbey Meadows and gardens in St Nicholas and St Ethelwolds. Two further stops were made, one at the Margaret Brown Garden near St Helen's and then onto the Play area in Lambrick Way. The walk ended at Stonehill House where we had reflections, prayers and meditated on creation with a power point slide presentation.

Our appeal to try to reduce plastic use i.e. The Plastic Challenge was taken up by almost half (48%) the parishioners in our survey.

Analysis of the 181 returned survey forms shows that of the 12 major activities initiated by Live simply half were supported by almost 50% of the Parish and a further 4 actions supported by at least 30% of parishioners. These are very encouraging figures when you consider that work, family commitments and age make some action impossible or very difficult.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

This has been a very thought provoking and instructive year. It is only part of our faith journey, which will continue, into the future as shown by the continued support for the Parish Covenant with the Poor that we recommitted to in the final liturgy of our Live simply year.

We raised some funds to help good causes but our main objectives have been to make each parish member examine their life in relationship to those around them and understand the impact we have on world and the environment. We hope to have strengthened the community spirit of the Parish and raised awareness of the needs of others. We also hope to have increased the commitment of each parishioner to accept Pope Francis' invitation in Laudato Si' to "work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us".

We have submitted a detailed report of our activities to CAFOD. Copies of which some of you may have seen our submission will be assessed on Tuesday next in a meeting in the presbytery. We hope to gain a Live Simply Award. Less than 30 parishes out of over 2000 in England and Wales have achieved this. If we gain the Award it will say a great deal about the Parish and hopefully encourage everyone in the parish to reach out to others and to be sensitive to our changing environment and continue to put their Faith into Action as promoted by CAFOD