Harrogate Deanery Parish Environment Officers' Meet up

The Parish Environment Officers (PEOs) of the Harrogate Deanery enjoy friendly meetups over tea and cake, three times a year.

"Around ten of us gather and, after a time of Biblical reflection, we share creation care 'good news stories' from our parishes, and also spend a moment seeking the wisdom of the group on things like heating," explains Deborah, Harrogate Deanery Environment Champion.

"There is a generous sharing of ideas and expertise, which means we come away encouraged and energised for action! "

Often new directions are sparked off within the group as people hear each other's projects; sometimes these are directly replicated in people's own churches afterwards. They can be anything from a 'favourite tree' photo competition to a churchwide electric bus trip to the Allerton Waste Recovery Park.

"One thing I particularly appreciate", comments PEO Madeline, "is meeting likeminded people who are all focusing on the same goals. It's easy otherwise to feel like quite a lone voice."

The group also tries to ensure members are learning and growing as eco mission encouragers, keeping up to date with advances in climate knowledge.

A different church is chosen as the venue each time; it is interesting for PEOs to see fellow PEOs' churches and observe the church's unique strengths and challenges, often particularly in the thorny area of heating.

Eco Church action is surging forward in the Harrogate Deanery, with several Bronzes, Silvers and a Gold Award. It is clear that Eco Church continues to provide one of the most useful and varied resources to aid church environment teams as they encourage their churches in, not just the 5th, but all five Marks of Mission.

If you would like to consider becoming a Parish Environmental Officer for your parish, please speak to your local Eco Mission Enabler or Environment Champion, or email Rosalind at rosalind.cooper@leeds.anglican.org