

South Leith Parish Church

South Leith Parish Church in Henderson Street, Edinburgh has been given an award for being an eco-congregation.

They have been working hard to cut carbon emissions from the church and associated buildings, as well as undertaking other activities to reduce the carbon footprint of the church and its members.

South Leith is an active organisation. They have a lot going on in this church other than just run-of-the-mill worship on a Sunday. The Halls adjoining offer the facilities to host many different activities including computer classes. They also have the Perc-u-Up cafe open every day Monday to Friday around lunchtime.

The Vision for Leith charity is in overall charge of some of the ancillary matters. One of the things they have become involved with is The Caring Memories project. This offers an opportunity to preserve photographs in a book intended as a reference point for older people suffering from memory loss. It is intended as a talking point for them not only with their relatives but also perhaps with those who may eventually care for them and who would otherwise have no idea of the patient's past. The Scottish Government has been involved in the funding of these projects too.

On Sunday 21 February 2010 South Leith Parish in Edinburgh, Scotland, was presented with an Eco-Congregation Award following an extensive campaign to cut their carbon footprint.

The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) congregation has helped with a number of environmental activities for young people in the local community, and have put in place "eco procedures" in their own buildings.

They are the first church to receive the newly designed Eco-

Congregation Award plaque, which has been made by Greyfriars Recycling of Wood (GROW).

GROW, part of the Greyfriars Church Community Centre based in the Grassmarket, is an emerging social enterprise that seeks to create new employment opportunities for the long-term homeless with addiction and mental health problems.

It brings together homeless service users and volunteers from the local community as they produce high quality saleable goods made from recycled wood – most of which is old church pews.

The quality of goods produced demonstrates the ability of people who are generally devalued and the process of making things of beauty and value from what has been discarded as worthless is itself a message to the wider community.

Adrian Shaw, the Church of Scotland's climate change officer, said: "Eco-congregations share the vision of re-using scarce resources and the beautiful plaques made by GROW help us put that into effect."