

# **Greenbank Parish Church wins eco-congregation award**

**The latest environmental award has been made to Greenbank Parish Church which now has an Eco-Congregation Scotland gold award.**

This has been awarded to Greenbank for the ways that the congregation has been involved in sustainable practical work, including their move to invite guests to preach on Sunday about a variety of eco topics to encourage discussion and action. In addition, the church now has a hydrogen enabled boiler, and congregation member Karen Young collected 217 bags of rubbish from the roadside during lockdown. Mrs Young also created a nature garden in the Blue Zone at COP26 for the World Leaders' Summit. Parts of the garden will be displayed at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.



Karen Young

The church on Braidburn Terrace has Fairtrade status and has run a stall for 10 years which sells teas, coffees and a wide variety of other products to help producers make a sustainable

living.

Fairtrade commitments are linked to the congregation's concerns for church partners across the world.

Assessors noted that the Eco-Group highlighted the impact of climate change on the world's poorer nations, explaining the challenges faced by small-scale, low income farmers in particular, during the Fairtrade Foundation's 2021 'Virtual' Fairtrade Fortnight.

Those attending were encouraged to read a document produced by Fair Trade called "A Climate of Crisis: Farmers, Our Food and the Fight for Justice".

Assessors also noted that church members participated in the Kilombero Rice Challenge in support of African rice producers to market their product.

Alison Muirson another member of the Greenbank congregation works with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society and was part of the collaboration with the City of Edinburgh Council and the National Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland who completed the £8 million renovation of Saughton Park.





David Jack

David Jack, a member of the church's Eco Group, said: "We are delighted to have been recognised for our efforts to make a difference in the fight against climate change.

"The crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our age and the consequences are severe for those in low income parts of the world who have done the least to cause it.

"We all have a small but crucial part to play to try and prevent or minimise the devastating effects of climate change on our brothers and sisters."

Recalling the beginnings of the congregation's journey, Mr Jack said: "A small number of participants built up the range of activity from early Fairtrade commitments to modest green initiatives in the church grounds, awareness raising on lifestyle choices and climate change, and a number of one-off events.

“The momentum grew rapidly to the point where the whole ethos of the congregation is now characterised by eco principles – travel, ethical purchasing, greener energy use, organic and vegetarian food consumption and other themes.

“The starting point for most of Greenbank’s action now is ‘how do we ensure that this initiative demonstrates our commitment to Care for Creation?’”

Judith Macleod, Eco-congregation Scotland programme co-ordinator, said: “We really were very impressed with the Greenbank Eco-group and feel they thoroughly deserve the gold rather than the silver that they applied for.”

