

## Huyton St Gabriel's - an example of a 'greening church'

We have developed as a church by trying to be part of the solution to local concerns. Our links with local individuals and groups led us to set up *The Apple Trust*, running affordable nursery facilities on our premises.

We realised that we spent too much on heat and lighting and replaced our halogen spotlights with sodium lighting, cutting our lighting bill by over 80%. Our gas heating system is being replaced, which should use one third of the power. We wanted to move away from gas but it wasn't possible within the constraints of our building. In our nursery we are considering renewable energy, using solar and wind power. Our new family centre uses a low impact building method, with fewer resources required for construction and less energy in daily use.

We have recycling bins throughout the site, but usage could be greater so we will be improving the signs and running education sessions. We would also like to compost our garden waste.

We want the entrance to be welcoming so we have new paving to allow safe access to all and a neat lawn with borders. Our small garden of remembrance includes a sculpture created by a local drug rehabilitation centre and is well cared for, bringing young and old together in the upkeep. Remarkably we have received little or no vandalism, which we attribute to the open way we have worked with and for the local community. We recently planted bulbs in the area as part of a worship service and will revisit these in the spring.

We tried setting up a FairTrade stall but it was not well used. However, we have continued to serve FairTrade tea and coffee and encourage other people to use them too. Another development is the "*Veggie Van*", which we helped set up to provide fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices to local people, including the nursery.

We have made decisions to save energy and reduce waste because they made economic sense and because they are part of our wider ministry as a congregation. We have worked very hard to see what is appropriate to us - where we are and who we work with.

