

Net zero conference gave hope for future

WE hosted our first Net Zero Carbon conference in our cathedral, in collaboration with Guildford and Chichester dioceses.

More than 100 people gathered to learn and be inspired by various speakers and leaders. The conference delegates, who came from across all three dioceses, included clergy and members of parish and community eco groups, and people involved with Eco Church in their parishes.

The theme of the conference was 'Hope in the face of climate change' and looked not only at how we can reduce our parishes' carbon footprints but also why we should see creation care as a central part of our churches' mission and ministry.

Bishop Jonathan was joined by the Rt Rev Paul Davies, Bishop of Dorking and the Rt Rev Will Hazelwood, Bishop of Lewes, to discuss their journeys toward understanding the effects of climate change and the importance of creation care.

They agreed it is something vital within the message of salvation to the world and not a fringe idea. Bishop Jonathan also reflected on the Five Marks of Mission, which include caring for our environment.

Andy Atkins and Polly Eaton from A Rocha shared about Eco Church and how we can take responsibility



Above: discussions as part of our net zero conference; left: the presentation of our Bronze Eco Church Award

carbon emissions, caring for our environment and pursuing more environmentally ethical lifestyles. .

Bishop Jonathan said, "I have been inspired by the enthusiasm, commitment and imagination, demonstrated at our first net zero carbon conference.

"The challenge before us is significant, but I am encouraged by the steps being taken by so many within the dioceses of Chichester, Portsmouth and Guildford. As we face the challenge and share good practice, we are already benefiting from addressing issues together rather than apart."

for and nurture the land we've been given responsibility for. Richard Abraham, former chief operating officer of Portsmouth Cathedral, talked about their ten-year journey to reduce the cathedral's carbon footprint by 50 per cent on a shoe-string budget, and Sara Collins made us aware of the Nature Premium project that aims to give all school children access to nature.

During the day, Andy Atkins, the chief executive of A Rocha, presented Bishop Jonathan with a Bronze Eco Diocese award, to recognise the achievements across our diocese towards reducing

It is hoped that this conference can become an annual event, moving locations between the three dioceses each year. Find out more on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/environment