



after monthly services focussed on the environment – and found its

The parishes of Seaview, St Helens, Brading and Yaverland – which form the benefice of Haven Churches – found making small changes to services had a wider impact on the congregation.

The Revd Alison Morley said it began with adding the environment to the agenda of PCC meetings, using the Christian environment charity [A Rocha](#)'s guidance.

"I want the whole parish involved," she explained. "It's very important not to alienate people, but to bring people with us."

As parishioners embraced the services, actions like digging a pond in the church yard, planting trees, and calculating individual carbon footprints quickly followed.

"People are more excited by Church. They're getting their teeth into it," Revd Morley explained.

"We've had people return who perhaps are a bit more science-focussed, coming back to church services.

"This is about leaving church with a Sunday dinner table conversation. Young families, too, are helping on our projects. They're coming for our one-off services like Harvest Festival and then staying to help tree planting."



Schools have also looked to the Church after the eco-focus developed. The church team is working with non-Church of England schools on their environment curriculum. One project sees Reception pupils sowing oak seeds which are nurtured by the church before being planted when they leave Primary school.

It's not just the young who are welcoming of the environment focus.

"My older congregants are serious eco-warriors to begin with," she quipped.

"They've been doing this forever – we may call it upcycling and preloved, but they've already done it. Coffee mornings where we bring homemade jam and drink out of chipped mugs is truly eco-warrior stuff.



radical act of subversion, but they think I'm being funny."

The simple changes that started in PCC meetings are now a community lifestyle with hall rentals being replaced by a locally sourced, Fairtrade market in one of the church halls which also benefit Christian Aid.

After lockdown eases, the churches will be innovating further – including running what is termed “week-long services.”

Planting a tree on Saturday afternoons, religious conversations in the marketplace and worship throughout the week are now to become the new normal.

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