

Bee Keeping at St Luke's Crosby



Hidden in the corner of the vicarage garden, amongst the apple and plum trees, are three honey bee hives. The bees can be easily heard on a warm June day, and if you're sensitive enough to the moment, you can smell the distinctive scent of the honey and propolis which emanates from the colonies. Hard to see, but 'visible' when you know how to take up the clues of buzzing and delicious smell. They are a happy lot, within the large site

of St.Luke's grounds with access to hundreds of Crosby's suburban oasis gardens and the open fields of nearby countryside. They are spoiled with so much forage. They thrive. They provide honey. They pollinate trees, plants and shrubs, gathering nectar and pollen and in return for an abundance of seed and a promise of new plants the following year. Sweet rewards for the welding of the links between generations of plants and food. Without pollination, the whole of nature could not groan as in the act of creation.

Groundforce are part of our church community of St.Luke's, Crosby. We tend God's Acre[s] and the team have worked this last decade to create a quiet and beautiful space in the heart of Crosby Village. Locals pop into the grounds for a quick stomp with the children and other animals, and shop workers grab a sandwich under the shade of the wisteria and rose arbour. It is a hidden jewel for the area, but although it is not very visible it is well-known and well-used. Groundforce have a regular crew of around 20 folk, some regulars in the church pews, some never entering church, but a

true community with similar aims and attitudes. Nurture, care, growing, tending, sowing, gathering fruit, making jams from our own produce and from nearby gardens.

The Groundforce bees yield their golden prize and we sell our honey to our local community. It is appreciated and we can't quite keep up with the demand. The proceeds of the honey and preserve sales are sent to our mission partner ARocha. Our partner is involved in nature conservation



throughout the world. Our bees, fields and gardens are part of a global link. Our Groundforce team helps enable ARocha's work and we are reminded of our global pursuit of protecting our earth. The Anglican Church's universal Fifth Mark of Mission 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.' EcoChurch is the cornerstone of our church's effort to live up to the challenge to sustain and renew creation. At St.Luke's, EcoChurch is headed up by Groundforce.

<https://www.arocha.org/en/a-rocha-kenya/>

Our local sister parish community All Saints with St Frideswyde, Crosby, have also recently taken up the batten of EcoChurch; looking at sustainable energy and heating the newly refurbished buildings, and planting a new orchard with a wildflower meadow. It was a great

pleasure to handover a colony of bees as a gift to their community and we hope that their colony provides as much pleasure for them as our bees have for St.Luke's.

Groundforce Bee Keeper. John Turner

Find out more about St Luke's Crosby and how they use the church grounds here:

<https://stlukecrosby.org.uk/groundforce/>

