

Diocese of Newcastle Environmental Policy

(November 2020)

Introduction

As Christ's disciples, we share a welcome duty of stewardship towards all of God's Creation. This is particularly expressed in the fifth Mark of Mission (see section 2, below). Our relationship with the natural environment is integral to our relationship with God. Furthermore, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of social justice and so is central to what it means to be a Christian. Care for the environment should therefore be a central component of our Christian practice.

Yet humanity's actions have caused dangerous global heating and catastrophic loss of biodiversity. A climate emergency has been declared. We must urgently reduce our carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030. We must promote biodiversity in every way we can.

This Policy is, therefore, framed in the context of the current climate crisis and ecological crisis. It sits within our Diocesan strategy of growing church bringing hope and is informed by our values of being *generous, engaged and open* with God and with one another.

Our mission and the environment

Our mission to share the good news of Our Lord Jesus Christ across the Diocese is summarised in the five Marks of Mission:

- i. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
- ii. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- iii. To respond to human need by loving service
- iv. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- v. To strive to safeguard the integrity of Creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Environmental Policy Aims

Seen through an environmental lens, it becomes clear what our mission actions across the whole Diocese need to include:

- a) Frequently emphasise God's love for Creation through our liturgy, theology and training.
- b) Understand and minimise the impact of our activities, land and buildings on the environment (particularly the climate and biodiversity).
- c) Establish an Environment Working Group, to work with the Bishop's Advisor on the Environment and to achieve these Policy Aims; with agreed membership, accountability and resources.
- d) Agree an Action Plan to inform Diocesan Strategy, to be developed through the Environment Working Group.
- e) Empower our parishes and support them to engage with the Aims of this Policy and the Objectives of the Environment Working Group.
- f) Work with local and national partners to further our Policy Aims and Objectives.
- g) Engage with local communities to minimise environmental impact, build resilience and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- h) Challenge and encourage businesses and all levels of government to meet the IPCC's carbon reduction target.

Review

This policy was passed in 2019 and updated in November 2020. It will be reviewed every three years by the Diocesan Synod.

Environmental policy review schedule:

Policy reviewed	Date of Review:	Synod Co-chair	Synod Co-chair
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