

Parish Environmental Policy model template for Churches in the Diocese

This model is intended to be a starting point for helping to shape a policy which is appropriate for the particular context of a local church. As such, it should be amended and extended by churches to take account of their particular circumstances as well as the Diocesan policy. One method of implementing your church's version of this policy would be to follow the Eco Church programme.

We affirm these elements of our faith:

- Through Christ, God has created an awesome and majestic cosmos to bring Him praise and glory. We are but one part of His created order.
- Jesus has redeemed the whole earth through His death and resurrection
- We have a special responsibility to care for the Earth so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.

Aim:

As a local church, we aim to take the practical steps necessary to realise the Fifth Mark of Mission, which is "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth".

Objective:

We will take environmental concerns into account in all aspects of our church life, including our worship, teaching, mission, pastoral, youth and children's work, training, administration, and charitable giving.

Suggested Actions *[Please adapt the following list of suggestions as appropriate to the context of your local church]*

1. Worship, Teaching & Mission, Youth & Children's Work

We will include the importance of care for creation in our worship, teaching and mission, and our work with children and young people.

2. Parish Environmental Champion

We will appoint an Environmental Champion to lead our programme, and encourage him or her to bring relevant environmental issues and concerns forward to the PCC on a regular basis.

3. Eco Church

We will participate in the Eco Church programme.

4. Energy Audit

We will undertake an environmental and energy audit of the church premises and property, identify the most significant issues and impacts which should be addressed and make and implement plans and programmes to tackle them, recognising that some additional costs may be incurred to minimise environmental impacts. (See ideas for inspiration below).

5. Tackling our Energy Use & Carbon Footprint

We will seek to reduce our energy use and our greenhouse gas emissions of the electricity and gas used in church premises by:

- Switching to "green" energy suppliers e.g. Parish Buying (renewably generated electricity and biogas)

- Using thermostats for temperature control
- Fitting LED light bulbs
- Turning off lights, appliances and computers when not in use
- Limiting the use of floodlighting [if applicable]
- Improving insulation wherever practicable
- Replacing old, inefficient boilers where practicable and investigating renewable heating alternatives

6. Transport

We will encourage our staff and congregation wherever possible to use forms of transport to work, meetings etc. which have minimum or reduced environmental impact – e.g. walk, cycle, public transport, car sharing, electric/ hydrogen vehicles.

7. Food

We will serve food, where possible:

- Choosing local produce
- If our church purchases red meat or dairy products we will aim for local produce to reduce its carbon footprint

8. Recycling and Unnecessary waste

We will seek ways to reduce material consumption and the impact of our activities on the environment by wherever possible:

- Using email rather than sending hard copies
- Using recycled paper
- Reusing/ repairing items
- Using low environmental impact cleaning materials

8. Water use

We will avoid using water unnecessarily, install water meters where appropriate, check for leakages, fit water minimising systems to taps and cisterns wherever practicable.

9. Churchyard

We will assess our land and property for wildlife and manage them to conserve biodiversity.

10. Sustainable lifestyle

We will encourage individual members of our congregations to take actions in their personal lives to complement and supplement these actions of the church community.

11. Community outreach

We will work with others in our local community to identify environmental issues which should be addressed in our area and help develop actions to tackle them.

12. Charitable Giving

We will consider directing some of our charitable giving to charities which are working to care for the environment or to support those who are adversely affected by climate change.

Signed:

Dated:

This policy will be reviewed every three years in light of developments. Next review date:

Useful Resources

Diocese of Newcastle Environment webpages <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/environment/>

Eco Church, A Rocha <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Church of England National Environment Programme
<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change>

Links and Christian Organisations

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland environment <https://ctbi.org.uk/environment-churches-and-christian-organisations/>

Operation Noah <http://operationnoah.org/>

Green Christian www.greenchristian.org.uk/

Christian Aid <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Tearfund <https://www.tearfund.org/>

Buildings & Land

Church Care <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare>

Caring for God's Acre, churchyard care www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/

Climate Change

Pray and Fast for the Climate www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/

Climate Emergency Toolkit for churches <https://www.climateemergencytoolkit.com/>

Climate Stewards www.climatestewards.org