

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

(Updated March 2019)



1 Why are we concerned?

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today and will impact on every aspect of human life and on the natural environment. In 2009 the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, said that we must all recognise that 'there is no way of manipulating our environment that is without cost or consequence' and that 'ecological questions are increasingly being defined as issues of justice'.

At the Lambeth Conference (2008) a statement from concerned bishops called on all Anglicans living in the developed world to adapt their lifestyles with the aim of halving their personal footprint and in so doing contributing to national and international targets.

2 Our Commitment

We believe that care for God's creation is fundamental to Christian faith and action. As stewards of God's gift, we recognise that each of us has a responsibility to ensure that this remains a sustainable world and that we have a responsibility to respond to the social injustice visited on many of the world's poorest people as a result of climate change.

To this end we affirm the 5th Mark of Mission agreed at the 1988 Lambeth Conference which asks all churches to '**strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of earth**' as central to our work and mission.

3 Our Objectives

- 3.1 To establish a culture which has caring for creation as an important part of normal Christian discipleship and has it adopted throughout all aspects of both parish and diocesan operations
- 3.2 To make a special focus on caring for creation annually at Creationtide
- 3.3 For the diocese to model this to the parishes in the way it operates

4 Our Strategy

- 4.1 To have a rolling multi-year plan to achieve the strategic aims (see section 5 below) which will help to achieve our objectives
- 4.2 To have a Diocesan Environment Group which will work to make the strategic aims a reality in diocesan life
- 4.3 For the diocese to support the Diocesan Environment Group to achieve the strategic aims.

Our Strategic Aims for 2021

- 1) Encourage and facilitate parishes to exhibit significantly more of the 5th mark of mission and in particular by engaging with A Rocha UK's **Eco Church scheme** – at least 20% of parishes by end of 2020 (achieved 12 % by November 2018) with more than 10% having awards (5% at November 2018). Make a good offer to Deanery synods to speak at them.

- 2) Encourage and facilitate the Diocese to achieve **Eco Diocese** silver by end of 2020 (bronze November 2018) – this will require 20% of parishes engaged with Eco Church (and 10% to have awards) and to fulfil a number of other diocesan criteria.
- 3) Assist a widespread take-up of parishes using **green energy** supply across the diocese – finding a method of recording and achieving at least 20% of parishes by end of 2020.
- 4) Encourage parishes to adopt **Creationtide (September 1st to October 4th)** as a special time of focus on teaching about God the Creator and our responsibilities as Christians to care for creation. This to include wide involvement by congregation members in seasonal activities, eg EcoChurch Southwest Carbonfast, say approx. 5% of worshipping community.
- 5) Resource and encourage a large **network of ‘green champions/Eco Church promoters’** who are recognised by their local parish and prepared to help their church engage with caring for God’s creation. Support by way of training, regular news, materials and story sharing - say at least 70 people.
- 6) **Resource senior clergy and staff so that they can speak out** regularly and in particular in Creationtide about the need to engage in caring for God’s creation as a part of our normal discipleship with a strong emphasis on climate change and global warming as a major issue of our time.
- 7) **Link CoE schools and their local parishes** to teach the distinctly Christian reasons for caring for creation as part of the curriculum as well as part of a Creationtide focus.
- 8) **Encourage parishes to engage with their wider community on these issues** e.g. where they exist Transition Towns, clean-up activities, and community energy schemes
- 9) Encourage members of congregations to **conduct carbon footprint reviews** (e.g. www.climatestewards.net) and to make sustained efforts to reduce carbon footprints.
- 10) **Support and encourage Ministry and Lay training** in the diocese to include ‘caring for God’s creation’ modules and courses to improve theological understanding by clergy and LLMs.
- 11) **Support the diocesan departments in their efforts to include creation care and best environmental policies, practice and initiatives** in their functions: i.e. Churches, Vicarages, Finance, DAC, energy buying, energy generation, synods, support for creation care, office practices, travel, communications, linkage with community groups, employment practices
- 12) **Support the diocesan departments in giving the best environmental advice to parishes** –e.g. DAC to include environmental review as part of any proposal review, energy saving, energy buying & generation.
- 13) Support parishes with resources which would facilitate **green weddings and funerals** e.g. Fairtrade gold.