



The Parish of St Mary the Virgin
Ringmer
Registered Charity No 1131869

Environment Policy and Plan

We affirm these elements of our faith:

- God, through Christ, has created an awesome and majestic cosmos to bring Him praise and glory. We are just 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 Church of England's Fifth Mark of Mission, which is "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth" and to reach the Church of England's Carbon Zero by 2030 target.

Objective: We will take environmental concerns into account in all aspects of our church life, including our worship, teaching, our churchyards and church buildings, outreach, pastoral, children, youth and families work, training, hospitality, administration (including financial matters), and charitable giving.

- We recognise the climate and nature crises and the fundamental injustice these represent.
- We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship.
- We recognise the need to manage our land for nature.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We recognise that we need to take action locally, nationally and globally to tackle climate injustice.• We recognise that integrating creation care into our daily lives is an act of worship and obedience to God as we grow in discipleship. |
|---|

Plan of Action:

1. **We will take part in the Eco Church programme**, using it as a model to help us to deliver our objectives, working up to, and sustaining each standard achieved, until we reach and maintain the Gold level.

The 5 surveys of the programme comprehensively, step by step, will help us move towards reaching Carbon Zero by 2030 and be recognised as raising awareness of the issues relating to the climate challenge by our village community.

2. **An Action Plan** will be presented to the PCC each year by the Eco Church Team and progress and budget monitored with regular reports at every PCC meeting.
3. **The Eco Church Team** will consist of representatives from the PCC working groups and church members, and be reviewed annually. This will help embed environmental issues across the whole structure of church life. At meetings of their working groups each Eco Team member will promote an environmental focus in discussions. One of the Eco Church Team will be appointed as the leader, and be a member of the PPC to emphasise environmental issues.
4. **The Eco Church Team will contribute to the wider Diocesan environmental** activities when possible, for example, supporting the work of the Parish Environmental Support Network.
5. **Working through the Fabric and Finance groups, together with the Churchwardens**, we will continue to monitor and audit the environmental/energy impact of the church premises and property. In addition, we will aim for environmentally and ethically sound banking and investment of church funds. With them, we will 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.
6. **Members of our Eco Church congregation** will work with members of our wider church and community groups, to support their projects to improve the environment in any way.

Worship and Teaching

● Awareness

- All leadership team, staff, volunteers and church members will be made aware of this policy and it will be accessible on our website.
- This policy and action plan will be regularly reviewed at leadership meetings, communicated and embedded in work plans.

● Skilled and equipped

- We will ensure that our Eco Team members and Leadership Team members receive Carbon Literacy training.
- We will offer other church members the opportunity to complete Carbon Literacy training or other relevant topics as interest is shown.
- We will offer opportunities for more in-depth engagement with environmental issues through our sermon series and small-group studies.

Buildings and Energy

● Energy use (Church, Church Room, vicarage)

- We will assess our energy use annually, using Climate Stewards 360° carbon calculator measurement tool.
- We will set annual carbon reduction targets and review our progress annually.
- We will monitor our water use.
- We recognise that digital data has a footprint and we will encourage regular digital cleanups.
- We will encourage staff and key PCC members working from home, to consider their energy use and switching to a green tariff.

● Travel

- We are committed to minimising unnecessary travel and encouraging use of the least polluting means of transport.
- We will prioritise the use of public transport and bicycles over private cars for church business.
- We will consider the pros and cons of meeting in person versus online, e.g. for staff meetings.

● Fabric

- Through the Fabric Working Group meetings and quinquennial review, we will monitor the upkeep of the building, ensure repairs are undertaken promptly and continually review ways in which we can improve.

● Operations

- We will regularly review our heating and lighting usage and timings to ensure energy efficiency.

- **Procurement**

- We recognise that what we consume for church life (such as materials, products, equipment and consumables) have an impact on the environment. As a result, we have an Ethical Procurement Policy.

- **Lettings**

- Our Lettings policy includes the clause: *As an Eco Church we encourage all who use the premises to be as environmentally friendly as possible. You are more than welcome to use our plates and cutlery for your event, or to bring your own reusable items. If using disposable items (plates, cutlery, etc.), we encourage you to purchase biodegradable items that can be placed in a compost bin after use and to recycle as much as possible of food packaging materials.*

Land and Nature

- **Churchyard**

- We have a separate Land Management Plan which details our management of church land, and the land we take responsibility for.

Community and Global Engagement

- **Advocacy and action**

- We will raise awareness of, and encourage participation in, taking action as a means to loving our neighbour and caring for creation.

- We will seek ways to support and campaign on environmental issues as a whole church.

- We will collaborate with, and encourage awareness of, local environmental groups and other

churches to share resources and best practices.

- We will seek to provide opportunities for marginalised groups in our community to have access to nature.

- We will raise awareness about ethical finance.

- **Accreditation**

- We will be a Fairtrade Place of Worship.

- **Food and drink**

- We will opt for Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar when purchasing for the

- We will encourage the practical application of Green Christian's LOAF principles - local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded where possible.

- **Sustainable transport**

- We will encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport.

- **Waste**

- We are committed to reducing waste, re-using and recycling waste as far as practically possible.

- **Finance**

- We will avoid banking with banks most heavily invested in fossil fuels.

- We will not knowingly invest in or deal with companies or organisations whose activities

significantly conflict with our own environmental policy.

- ☐ We will actively seek to work with financial institutions that make a positive difference.
- Communication and promotion of Eco Church
- ☐ We will respond to enquiries and seek to promote Eco Church locally.
- ☐ We will participate in a range of events to promote Eco Church and care for the environment.

Lifestyle

● Sustainable lifestyle

- ☐ We will conduct 'Lifestyle' surveys of our church members to enable us to share practical life style actions that can be taken. Information will be shared via newsletters and the wider Village News magazine.
- ☐ Throughout the year we will share information, stories and examples of lifestyle actions and campaigns to encourage individual members of our congregations to take actions in their personal lives to care for God's creation.
- ☐ We will promote and encourage our church members to undertake personal auditing of individual and household carbon footprints.

Implementation and monitoring

- The Eco Team will report **progress and updates** from the previous year's Action Plan to the Leadership Team and present to the **PCC**
- The Leadership Team and PCC will **review the targets and develop** the Action Plan annually.
- The Leadership Team will ensure **communication** with the church membership of progress.
- This policy document will be **fully reviewed** every two years or earlier as needed considering developments.

Policy Agreed by PCC on Date Review after 2 years Date