

**Environment Policy for the Diocese of Leicester**

We repent and lament our previous failures to acknowledge and act in response to the devastating effects of the climate emergency and accelerating environmental crises, and respond by affirming our need in heart, mind and body to slow down, live more simply and acknowledge:

* to be a follower of Jesus means working in partnership with God as stewards, caring for creation. We show our love for God's world as part of our Everyday Faith in discipleship, mission, justice and worship and with a desire to live justly, peacefully, joyfully, sustainably and creatively.
* The Church of England Synod voted in February 2020 to aim for net-zero emissions by 2030.
* The Diocese of Leicester synod voted in November 2019 to work to become an Eco Diocese, achieving bronze level status within two years.

**The Diocese of Leicester therefore commits to:**

* **Reduce carbon emissions, in support of the national church aim for net-zero by 2030, working within the scope definition agreed by the national church and, to this end, ensuring engagement by diocesan boards and committees with the areas of working identified in Appendix 1 to this policy.**
* **Encourage Parishes to apply for Eco Church status and to engage with the national church aim for net-zero by setting and reviewing annual targets for reductions, utilising the tools available from the national church for identifying their baseline carbon emissions and also the suggestions for parishes contained in Appendix 2.**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by means of an annual report to Bishop’s Council. The annual report will incorporate updates on the areas of working identified in the appendices and, where appropriate, amendments to the first two appendices to enable this policy to function as a working document.

**Appendix 1 – Guide to Areas of Working for Diocesan Boards and Committees**

**Sustainable travel for diocesan activities.**

* Develop a sustainable travel policy for all diocesan staff members
* Where meetings need to be held in person (rather than virtually) they will be arranged where possible at central locations to reduce travel and workload.
* Telephones, electronic communication, video-conferencing and home working will be used.
* Walking, cycling, public transport and car-sharing will be encouraged.
* Cycle facilities, including secure storage and washing facilities, and electric car charge points will increasingly be provided and promoted.
* We will continue to use, and recommend to others, rates of cycle, public transport and car mileage payments that encourage the use of more environmentally-friendly modes of travel.
* Flights will be avoided except where essential for missional/ministry aims; carbon offsetting will be used if flights are unavoidable.

**Parsonage Houses**

* Proven energy-saving technology (such as insulation, draught excluders, double/secondary glazing and smart meters) plus renewable energy technologies (such as photovoltaics, solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps) will be introduced where practicable and where there is specific budget allocation as part of developing a policy to support avoidance of new gas or oil installations;
* Motion-activated, energy-efficient, wildlife-sensitive lighting will be preferred;
* diocesan housing will be assessed on environmental grounds and from 2022 a programme of assessing energy performance will commence.

**Diocesan Board of Finance investment policy**

* Maximise observance of the national church ethical investment policy.
* Offsetting arrangements will be developed through the establishment of a ‘Green Growth Fund’ or donations to climate-friendly campaigns (i.e. Christian Aid, Tearfund or A Rocha).
* Review of banking arrangements in the light of diocesan environmental commitments

**Glebe Committee**

* Encourage, support and co-operate with the Committee’s tenants in delivering improved environmental management of the Glebe Estate where this does not conflict with other charitable objectives.
* Facilitate the Committee’s tenants in entering into Countryside Stewardship, Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes etc. through providing landlord’s consent to the scheme applications and, where required, consider granting longer tenancies where required for delivery of longer term agreements. As part of tenant’s Countryside Stewardship/ELMs schemes engage with tenant’s proposals for sensitively designed tree planting where this does not prejudice the agricultural operation of the land.
* Maximise opportunities for sites for renewable energy (solar, wind etc.) to be located on Glebe land and engage positively with renewable energy applications.

**Diocesan Advisory Committee development of policy and advice towards 2030 net carbon zero target**

* Encourage and empower parishes, their professional advisers and contractors, to prioritise and adopt appropriate environmental best practice in church buildings and churchyards
* Enable PCC’s to make environmentally informed decisions through appropriate scrutiny and advice before and during the faculty application process
* Implement national changes to the faculty rules and assist parishes in understanding and navigating these
* Through the Church Buildings Team, support parishes on their environmental journey by signposting environmental guidance, resources and good practice from the central Church Buildings Council and other National Bodies

 **Diocesan Operations and events at St. Martins House and diocesan events related to purchasing, use and disposal of resources in an environmentally friendly manner.**

* Develop an attitude of reduce, reuse, repair, rehome and recycle
* Maximise purchase of recycled, local and fair trade products where available and suitable.
* Develop Environmental criteria related to purchasing policy
* Develop practice for purchase of environmentally friendly cleaning products.
* Develop availability of clear recycling facilities in all Diocesan buildings,including composting facilities wherever possible.
* Phasing out of Single-use plastic.
* Develop policies for purchase and supply of food and drink that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximise opportunities to meet the LOAF principles (Locally-sourced, Organically-grown, Animal-friendly, Fairly-traded), drawing where possible upon the food recommendations of diocesan Glebe land farmers.
* avoiding over-catering, and sharing surplus to prevent food waste where possible.
* encouraging use of seasonal, nutritious foods which reduce waste5
* encourage increased focus upon Plant-based food when catering for Diocesan events.
* encourage Re-usable plates, mugs and cutlery wherever practicable.
* Adherence to the environmental responsibility and ethical sourcing principles of the Good Business Charter.

**Mission and Ministry Resources for environmental theology and justice for all.**

* Environmental ethics, climate justice and activism included in ministerial/lay development, training, worship resources, regular events and courses,
* Mission and ministry training to be informed by conversations with Link dioceses and mission partners in other places to develop understanding about climate breakdown and actions needed to help protect frontline communities and about the disproportionate impact of climate change on the most vulnerable communities, especially in the global South; also to learn from these conversations about our living more simply and sustainably.
* Encourage opportunities to collaborate with others who are seeking ways to live more simply and sustainably and who call for climate action and justice.

**Board of Education encouragements to Church Schools in relation to environmental policies and practices.**

* Promotion of ‘Eco-schools’, ‘walking buses’ and similar projects ;
* Encouragement of collaboration between church schools and churches on environmental projects and services.
* Encouragement for all church schools to work towards the national church aim for net-zero by setting and reviewing annual targets for reductions, utilising the tools available from the national church for identifying their baseline carbon emissions

**Appendix 2 – suggestions for parishes to reduce their carbon footprint**

**Deaneries and Parishes are encouraged to adopt the relevant aspects of this policy or develop their own.**

* Parishes and Fresh Expressions are encouraged to proclaim environmental care and respect for creation in their worship, preaching, teaching, practice, lifestyle, and in their management of church buildings, land and finances.
* churches are encouraged to set and review annual targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030;
* Churches are encouraged to register and progress to achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold ‘Eco-church’ award6.
* Churches are encouraged to share resources, expertise and funding to help each other and to collaborate with others in the community and globally.
* Parishes & Fresh expressions are encouraged to develop and share ideas for worship, mission and action in and with respect for creation and the world’s most vulnerable communities to bring healing, appreciation and reconnection; regularly include environmental concerns in worship; and keep Creationtide.

**Church Buildings**

* Churches are encouraged to install motion-activated, energy-efficient, wildlife-sensitive lighting and minimise floodlighting through use only when it is fully dark and until 11pm at the latest.
* Churches can ensure with advice and support of Diocesan Advisory Committee and Church Buildings Team that any new building developments maximise insulation and energy efficiency, and renewable energy including rejection of any new gas or oil heating installations.

**Churchyards**

* Churches are encouraged to develop wildlife habitats and biodiversity in their churchyards in ways that do not conflict with pastoral needs of visitors. Churches can maintain and develop planted trees in their churchyards with advice from the DAC and local councils to minimise long-term maintenance implications.

**Useful Contacts:**

* Diocesan Environmental Officer Rev. Andrew Quigley revdaquigley@gmail.com 01162544113
* [www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk)

**Appendix 3 - Theological Background**

The fifth mark of Anglican mission calls us “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life on earth" and the fourth mark call us “to seek to transform unjust structures of society”.

God is the creator and sustainer of the Earth. As part of creation, we are called to care for the planet in the image of God and in relationship with God, enabling all that has been made to flourish (Genesis 1:28). As well as people being made to have relationship with God, the Psalms repeatedly reveal how creatures glorify their Creator (Psalm 148). God remains creator and sustainer of the Earth (Psalm 24:1-2) and gives clear laws on how to care for the environment: Sabbath rest for the land and animals; leaving food and resources for poor people and wild animals (Exodus 23:10-12 & Leviticus 25:1-7). The mission to care is reinforced in the covenant made between God, the descendants of Noah and all the creatures of the earth (Genesis 9).

We know that creation is groaning, waiting for God’s people to be revealed (Romans 8:19). Christ’s work of salvation is for all creation – both people and planet (Colossians 1:15-20). In union with Christ, we are transformed by the Spirit to live out the purpose for which we were created: caring for creation so that it flourishes. As we work with God, the Spirit opens our eyes to reality, to see this marvellous world with its changing seasons, the miracle of new life and growth, as well as the ways we are damaging it. Jesus’s life and teachings challenge us to be counter-cultural by living simply, loving our neighbour, and reconnecting with God through caring for all creation as part of our Everyday Faith.

The resurrection of Jesus gives a vital and distinctive Christian quality to our environmental concern, strikingly different to overwhelming narratives of decline and disaster: hope. We therefore work not in our own strength against seemingly insurmountable power in government and business, but empowered by the creator, sustainer and redeemer of all.

Our mission to safeguard creation can be seen as part of our worship, as we follow Jesus’s teachings in discipleship. It is also reflected in our desire for justice for all as encapsulated in Jesus’s summary of the law: in loving God with all our heart, soul and mind, we show respect and care for the creation God has fashioned; in loving our local and global neighbours, we recognise and work to reduce the unfair impact the climate and ecological crisis has on less privileged groups by safeguarding the environment in which we all live through our unselfish use of resources. We also recognise that safeguarding creation is a mission which draws people closer to God as well as enabling all of creation to give glory to their creator.

**Vision for Life on Earth**

Our dream is for clean air, soil and water; health-giving reconnection with nature; thriving businesses, employment and investment in renewable energy, sustainable food and resource production; energy efficient homes, buildings and travel; creative, sustainable and communal design encouraging appreciation and care for one another and the precious gifts of our planet.

We are a part of the natural world, not apart from it, and our fate is intimately connected to it. The human population is now at unprecedented levels, and this, combined with our technologies, means that our ability to bless or harm the environment is immense. Industrial processes applied to the production of food and retrieval of resources have accelerated our consumption of resources far beyond the capacity of the biosphere to replenish itself. From the local effects of urban sprawl and intensive farming, to the global effects of pollution and massive species extinctions, human activities are now affecting the natural world at every scale and in every place. Destruction of the natural environment is harmful given its vital roles: preserving climatic stability, providing wildlife habitats and natural resources, reducing flood risk, cleaning our water and air and refreshing and renewing our souls so they sing and rejoice in awe and wonder at the beauty and splendour of creation.

There is now a well-established scientific consensus that our use of fossil fuels in transport, heating, and electricity production, has resulted in the massive release of ‘greenhouse gases’, including CO2. This increases the atmosphere’s absorption of the sun’s heat which alters the climate, threatening human, animal and plant life. The abrupt release of greenhouse gases in the last hundred years, which had been stored up in fossil fuels over millions of years, is the major contributor to the climate crisis. Sea level rise; more extreme weather (floods, droughts, heat-waves); and disease epidemics are some of the outcomes. In the human sphere, death through so-called ‘natural’ disasters, famine, disease, and war over increasingly scarce resources is dramatically exacerbated by this phenomenon. Our ethical concern for the loss of so much of the irreplaceable richness of God’s creation, as well as the immense human and environmental suffering climate change brings, should be profound and urgent. The sheer scale of the environment and all the problems it encompasses means it is a complex and difficult issue, but our calling is to creatively care, pray and act in love. This should be recognised as an act of obedience, worship, discipleship, justice and mission as stewards helping to create God’s vision of abundant and flourishing life on earth.