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## ENVIRONMENT POLICY FOR THE DIOCESE

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *“The whole creation belongs to God. As human beings we are part of the whole and have a responsibility to love and care for what God has entrusted to us as temporary tenants of the planet. We are called to conserve its complex and fragile ecology, whilst recognising the need for responsible and sustainable development and the pursuit of social justice.”*

This statement by the Church of England National Institutions<sup>1</sup> reflects the four principles<sup>2</sup> on the environment adopted by the Lambeth Conference in 1998:

- i. The covenant of God’s love embraces not only human beings but all of creation;
- ii. Creation is everywhere filled with God’s sacred presence;
- iii. Human beings are the priests of creation, seeing God’s presence in it, and offering creation’s worship;
- iv. The Sabbath principle of “enoughness” is a challenge to us to rest from unnecessary consumption.

These principles lead us to a deeper awareness of the increasing strain which human activities are placing on the earth’s soil, water supplies, biological diversity, atmosphere and climate.

**1.2** As the Lambeth Declaration on Climate Change 2015<sup>3</sup> affirms, ‘The demands of justice as well as of creation require the nations of the world urgently to limit the global rise in average temperatures to a maximum of 2°C. We have a responsibility to act now, for ourselves, our neighbours and for future generations.’

**1.3** We believe that God: entrusts Creation to our care, calling us to be stewards of it; and requires us to care for Creation so that future generations can enjoy it and benefit from it. Hence we affirm that Christian mission includes caring for God’s earth and all Creation, and the Diocese affirms its commitment to the 5<sup>th</sup> Mark of Mission of the Church, which calls upon us to ‘strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.’

## **2 PURPOSE**

**2.1** This policy is an agreed, documented statement of the Diocese’s stance towards the environment in which it operates.

**2.2** It is the cornerstone of our intent, as a body of people committed to caring for God’s creation, reducing our impact upon the environment by minimising our use of the earth’s natural resources and by reducing our carbon footprint, improving recycling, minimising waste and improving efficiencies on the finite natural resources used in all of our operations.

**2.3** This policy is a statement of intent that strongly encourages each church, individual and synod to action that will lead to carbon emissions reductions at least in line with the national Church of England targets<sup>4</sup> of 80% by 2050, with an interim target of 42% by 2020 (from a 1990 base line<sup>5</sup>). As such it provides a basis upon which appropriate action may be undertaken. As well, it identifies key opportunities for environmental improvements which churches and individual church members might wish to consider and implement.

**2.4** The overall objective of this Policy is to promote environmental awareness and active engagement in assessing and reducing the environmental impact of all our

activities. It invites us to seek to implement ways in which any environmentally damaging impacts of these activities can be minimised or mitigated. The underlying principle is that of sustainability, whereby the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Recognition must be given to the global dimension of environmental issues, whereby the most damaging effects of environmental degradation are likely to be felt first and most severely by those who have little responsibility for the causes of the damage. We need to think globally and act locally.

## 2.5 Specifically, the objective is to:

- i) promote environmental awareness throughout the Diocese by the adoption of this Policy, its underlying principles and its objectives;
- ii) encourage the adoption of environment policies at Parish level;
- iii) ensure that Diocesan employees and office holders are familiar with and implement this Environment Policy and its objectives;
- iv) enable Diocesan activities to comply with all relevant environmental regulations<sup>6</sup>;
- v) encourage study of the scriptures, Christian tradition and environmental issues with subsequent theological and practical reflection, leading to regular thanksgiving for creation, confession of the sin that damages it and prayer for the natural world and for those involved in its use and care;
- vi) ensure the mission of the church locally and on a diocesan level includes proclamation on environmental concerns in line with the living out of the gospel in people's lives, and exercising the prophetic voice of the church in support of appropriate environmental action, such that the views of the church are heard and widely understood;
- vii) work towards becoming an 'Eco Diocese'<sup>7</sup> under the A Rocha Eco Diocese scheme;
- viii) encourage people to calculate their own carbon footprint<sup>8</sup> and take steps to reduce;
- ix) work towards becoming a carbon neutral<sup>9</sup> Diocese as rapidly as possible.

### **3 GUIDELINES**

**3.1** In order to help all members of the Diocese translate these basic principles into action, this Policy identifies the following Guidelines, related to specific aspects of the environment and related church activities. It is intended that these Guidelines be adopted by Diocesan bodies, and they are commended to PCCs and individuals as appropriate.

**3.2** “Shrinking the Footprint”<sup>4</sup> is the Church of England’s national environmental campaign. It reflects the scientific consensus that climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing humanity today. The Church of England is committed to a Carbon reduction target<sup>4</sup> of 80% by 2050 (in line with Government commitments), with an interim target of 42% by 2020 (from a 1990 baseline<sup>5</sup>). Good practice is already established in many churches around the country and ‘Shrinking the Footprint’ is uniquely placed to share news, tips and resources.

**3.3** Accordingly, our churches are encouraged to audit their individual environmental impacts as the first step in identifying measures to reduce those impacts, with a specific focus to:

#### **3.3.1 Energy**

- i) carry out a systematic energy audit<sup>10</sup> of their buildings and follow the strategies outlined below for reducing their carbon footprint;
- ii) seek to achieve ‘Eco-Church’<sup>11</sup> status under the A Rocha Eco Church scheme;
- iii) ensure that energy is used efficiently and that their buildings minimise carbon emissions through the use of energy-saving technologies and by identifying and using renewable sources of energy as appropriate for heating, lighting etc. Inspecting architects or surveyors should be able to assist parishes with this;
- iv) help members of their congregation to make adjustments in the carbon emissions associated with their lifestyles by supporting them in a personal audit and in finding appropriate strategies;

- v) involve their children and young people in activities focusing on care for the environment;
- vi) engage their local political representatives, urging them to support policies that take effective steps towards realising the commitment to a minimum 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050;
- vii) support campaigns and popular action around climate change issues as appropriate;
- viii) as appropriate support or initiate local community enterprises that reduce energy consumption or transition to renewable energy generation.

### **3.3.2 Materials, resources and procurement**

- i) aim to purchase goods which minimise the production of material waste;
- ii) take care in the use of all materials and resources to avoid profligacy and minimise wastefulness;
- iii) maximise the proportion of sustainable materials used, and to use recycled materials when this is a viable option;
- iv) encourage the purchase of local, environment-friendly, fairly-traded seasonal goods and produce;
- v) consider the carbon emissions of food production for any church catering;
- vi) offer electronic communication as an alternative to paper for those who are suitably equipped.

### **3.3.3 Water**

- i) use water carefully and efficiently, seeking the minimisation of wasteful use;
- ii) adopt water-saving methods where practical and appropriate;
- iii) avoid pollutants entering the drainage system and soil.

### **3.3.4 Buildings, land and the natural environment**

- i) build-in maximum energy and water efficiencies into new buildings and whenever possible upgrade the existing housing stock;

- ii) use sustainable building supplies whenever possible and take into account the 'whole life' costs of materials when repairing, altering and rebuilding premises;
- iii) be sensitive to local culture and encourage the use local sources for materials and services whenever possible;
- iv) be sensitive to the impact of church activities on the local environment
- v) take appropriate opportunities to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment and protect habitats for wildlife and biodiversity;
- vi) carefully consider the use and sale of church-owned land and buildings taking into account how this can contribute to sustainability and encourage an enjoyment of Nature.

### **3.3.5 Travel**

- i) make every effort to reduce the use of car transport by avoidance of unnecessary travel and make more use of electronic communication systems;
- ii) encourage the use of electric cars (in conjunction with renewably generated electricity), more energy efficient vehicles and forms of transport, and encourage car sharing where possible;
- iii) encourage adoption of ways of working within church structures that reduces the need for travel, particularly by car, and encourage use of public transport and travel by bicycle and on foot;
- iv) support the expansion of good quality public transport and the provision of improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians;
- v) encourage careful consideration of the environmental impact of all journeys made by air and sea.

### **3.3.6 Waste**

- i) minimise waste production in all areas of activity;
- ii) encourage investment in longer life goods;
- iii) encourage the re-use, repair and recycling of materials, including the composting of organic matter;
- iv) recycle as much waste as is practicable and dispose of residual waste in a safe and socially responsible way.

### **3.3.7 Finance**

- i) strive towards any church investments being managed ethically and in line with the ethical policies of the Church of England national investing bodies, in particular investments impacting climate change should be guided by the recommendations of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group;
- ii) apply the same principles in selecting a bank account.

### **3.3.8 Carbon emissions mitigation**

- i) be more aware of the church's carbon emissions, from energy use, travel etc and develop simple ways of calculating<sup>5</sup> and monitoring these emissions;
- ii) acknowledging that some carbon emissions are currently unavoidable, offset these emissions, developing and benefiting from good practice in carbon offsetting schemes<sup>12</sup>.

## **4 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

All responsible bodies within the Diocese are invited to give due consideration to this Environment Policy and its Guidelines. A number of individuals, office holders and committees will have responsibilities for implementation and monitoring of effectiveness.

The Diocesan Secretaries will be responsible for implementation and monitoring within the Diocesan Office and throughout the administrative activities of the Diocese.

Incumbents, Churchwardens and PCCs are encouraged to take responsibility for implementation at Parish level, and it is recommended that each Parish nominates an individual as their environmental champion who will also act as a point of contact with the Diocesan Environment Officer.

The Parsonages Board in conjunction with the relevant incumbent will be responsible for implementation for clergy housing and other properties owned by the Diocesan Board.

Guidance on and monitoring of implementation will be the responsibility of Diocesan Board, the Archdeacons, the Diocesan Advisory Committee, Parsonages Board, the Diocesan Education Committee, the Director of Mission and Ministry and the Diocesan Environment Officer as appropriate, with an emphasis on the adoption of best environmental practice, and the sharing of best practice ideas throughout the Diocese.

The carbon footprint of the Diocese will be calculated annually as accurately as possible<sup>5</sup> by the Diocesan Environment Officer and reported to the Diocesan Synod. Reduction targets, and strategies to assist parishes to meet these, will be set over 5 year periods to ensure that the Diocese is at least in line with the national Church of England target of 80% CO<sub>2</sub> reductions by 2050. The Diocese will work with the national church and other initiatives to support and resource parishes.

This Environment Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, and at least every three years, by the Diocesan Environment Group and Diocesan Environment Officer in conjunction with others as appropriate.

## **5 USEFUL RESOURCES**

Diocese of Leeds Environment webpages [www.leeds.anglican.org/environment](http://www.leeds.anglican.org/environment)

Shrinking the Footprint, Church Care [www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/about-shrinking-the-footprint](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/about-shrinking-the-footprint)

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland environment webpage  
<https://ctbi.org.uk/environment-links#ecochurch>

Pray and Fast for the Climate [www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/](http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/)

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

Green Christian [www.greenchristian.org.uk/](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/)

Climate Stewards [www.climatestewards.org/](http://www.climatestewards.org/)

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

Caring for God's Acre, churchyard care [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/)

## FOOTNOTES

1. The Ethical Investment Advisory Group, Environmental Statement 2004  
[www.churchofengland.org/media/36537/environment.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/36537/environment.pdf)
2. These four principles are explored more fully in "Sharing God's Planet - a Christian vision for a sustainable future". A report from the Mission and Public Affairs Council 2005 [www.churchofengland.org/media/1258771/g1558.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1258771/g1558.pdf)
3. The Lambeth Declaration 2015 on Climate Change is a UK multi-faith call for urgent action to transition to a low carbon economy to ensure that global average temperatures are kept below a 2°C rise. Faith Communities are urged to respond proactively. The full text can be found at [www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2015/06/archbishop-of-canterbury-join-faith-leaders-in-call-for-urgent-action-to-tackle-climate-change.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2015/06/archbishop-of-canterbury-join-faith-leaders-in-call-for-urgent-action-to-tackle-climate-change.aspx)
4. The Church of England General Synod agreed to align with national government carbon reduction targets following a Synod debate 2005 on the Sharing God's Planet report. The Shrinking the Footprint campaign was established in 2006 to implement this. More information about the National Church of England campaign to reduce carbon emissions can be found at [www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/about-shrinking-the-footprint](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/about-shrinking-the-footprint)
5. CIBSE data is used by the Church of England as a guide to carbon emissions for the church nationally in 1990 in the absence of any carbon emissions data collected by the church at that time. For the Diocese of Leeds emissions from energy consumption data can be extrapolated for 2013 from Archdeacons Questionnaire returns in the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds. More data on energy consumption is now available from a significant proportion of parishes through the Green Journey scheme. The Diocesan Environment Group has commissioned the development of a carbon calculator online tool which will enable parishes to more accurately assess their carbon emissions from a wider range of the churches actions.
6. Currently, UK emissions reporting regulations do not apply to charities nor does the EU Industrial Emissions Directive.
7. Eco Diocese is an award scheme run by A Rocha. Details of the requirements can be found here <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/eco-diocese/>
8. There are a variety of carbon footprint calculators for individuals available on line, for example Climate Stewards (a Christian carbon offsetting charity) [www.climatestewards.org/](http://www.climatestewards.org/) and WWF <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>

9. Carbon neutral means balancing the greenhouse gases emitted with those that are absorbed, for example through sequestration of carbon dioxide by trees. For this to be achieved within the Diocese a wide range of actions would be needed, notably reducing fossil fuel consumption.
10. Eco Church is an award scheme run by A Rocha. Details of the requirements can be found here <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>
11. Energy surveys are currently available as a complementary service through the Green Journey or another energy consultant can be employed. Alternatively the Eco Church check list can be used as a form of audit.
12. There are a variety of carbon offsetting schemes, an example of a Christian carbon offsetting charity is Climate Stewards [www.climatestewards.org/](http://www.climatestewards.org/)