

Proposed Chichester Diocese Environmental Policy

In view of the current context in which environmental sustainability and addressing climate change is having increased emphasis in society as a whole and within the Church of England, it is recommended that the Diocese of Chichester updates its previous Environmental Policy that was approved by Diocesan Synod in November 2013.

The proposed new policy (attached) was drafted taking into account recent developments with regards to Net Zero Carbon and Arocha's eco awards schemes. Interestingly, in their feedback on the current policy in November 2013, Deaneries said that *'want specifics on what it means in practice.'*¹

One of the objectives in the proposed new policy is for us to become a bronze Eco Diocese as soon as practically possible, mirroring the 'Eco Church' journey we are encouraging parishes to take. One of the criteria for the bronze Eco Diocese award is that a Diocese *'manages its diocesan investments in line with the ethical policies of the Church of England or Church in Wales national investing bodies, including on climate change, guided by the recommendations of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.'* While it is now common practice for Church of England entities to divest from fossil fuel companies, the EIAG's Climate Change Policy still allows for investment and engagement, which is Chichester's approach. The DBF Finance Director has concluded that Chichester DBF's ethical investment policy is in line with EIAG's policies and accordingly, no change in the DBF investment policy is required to meet the bronze Eco Diocese criteria.

It is recommended that Bishop's Council approves the proposed new Environmental Policy.

¹ See https://cofechichester.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2019/05/141108_Environmental_Paper.pdf

Chichester Diocese Environmental Policy

The Diocese exists to know, love and follow Jesus in East and West Sussex.

Our purpose as an Anglican church is expressed in the “Five Marks of Mission”.

Our Environmental Policy is based on the Fifth Mark of Mission: *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*

However, we recognise that all five marks are interrelated and that by caring for the environment, we are also sharing the good news, nurturing disciples, helping the needy, and challenging and transforming injustice.

We acknowledge that God is in communion with all life, and that all life exists in an intimate, mutually supporting relationship sustained by and reflective of God’s love.

We recognise that we are living in a time of climate and environmental crisis which affects the whole of God’s creation. The time for action is now.

We wish to turn to Jesus for inspiration to be a medium for change. We understand the need to seek ways to translate our commitment into actions that demonstrate our love and care for the earth which in Christ accompanies us in our active hope in His approaching kingdom.

The five marks of mission lead us:

- 1) **To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom:** to celebrate the gift of Creation and show its spiritual and practical value to all.
- 2) **To teach, baptise and nurture new believers:** to promote care of our environment as an intrinsic part of our approach to Christian life. We acknowledge and seek forgiveness for our part in causing the degradation and destruction of our common home. For each congregation, school community, and individual in the diocese to have access to resources for prayer, reflection and practical action that enable them to respond well to the climate and ecological crises.
- 3) **To respond to human need by loving service:** We will listen to and work with our communities, acknowledging that the environmental crisis directly affects health, well-being and quality of life.
- 4) **To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation** by seeking to value the ‘free’ nature of environmental resources and challenge the economic structures that take advantage of this at Creation’s expense.

At the heart of our commitment is a recognition of the injustice that climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately impact those people living in poverty and vulnerable situations whilst they are generally the group that has had the smallest contribution to the root cause of the problem.

- 5) **To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth:** We will embed principles of sustainability across all our operations, investments, buildings, schools and land.

Objectives

The Diocese commits itself to bring God's great love for the whole of Creation by incorporating wider environmental concerns into theological and liturgical life, activities and action. Specifically, we aim:

- 1) To play a full part in pursuing General Synod's call to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In this regard, at its meeting in November 2023, our Diocesan Synod agreed to support the milestones outlined within the national Routemap to Net Zero Carbon and seek to meet those as far as possible within the context of the Chichester Diocese, and endorsed the Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Action Plan as a positive direction of travel.
- 2) To encourage each element of the church (church, cathedral, school, diocesan office) to embed principles of sustainability
- 3) To encourage each part of the diocese to use the Eco-Church award scheme as a pathway to progress with creation care.

Action Plan

The key elements of our response are:

Objective 1

- ~ Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager will lead the diocesan initiatives to reduce carbon emission across the diocese, including schools, diocesan property and offices, clergy housing and travel.
- ~ Energy footprint tool (EFT) – influencing parishes to gain a high EFT submission rate, thereby enabling better understanding of energy consumption and carbon footprints which will help inform next steps to reduce carbon emissions.

Objective 2

- ~ Providing examples, materials and encouragement to Parish Churches; (Facebook page, enews, environment pages on the diocesan website) to engage with broader aspects of their environmental and ethical practice.
- ~ Providing training so that everyone has access to resources to enable them to understand the climate emergency and ecological crisis, and where to look for help and support for themselves and those affected by climate anxiety.
- ~ Following the General Synod resolution in February 2024, the Cathedral and the DBF to create a simple land management plan, with reference to the guidance and examples from Caring for Gods Acre, and all parishes to be encouraged to do the same.
- ~ Encouraging parishes to record the biodiversity of their green spaces, through taking part in Churches Count on Nature each year.

- ~ Partner with other faith based and secular organisations to increase our impact.

In all the above, we will endeavour to focus particularly on young people, ensuring their voices are heard on these issues.

Objective 3

- ~ Eco Church - appointing Parish and Deanery Eco Church Champions, supported by the Diocesan Environmental Officer (DEO) and Parish Environment Support Network, to enable congregations to move through the Arocha Eco Church Award Scheme.
- ~ Eco Diocese – Aiming to become a Bronze Eco Diocese as soon as practically possible, and over the medium to long term aim to be aligned with goals of the National Church of England regarding the environment.

Accountability

The Diocesan Secretary will be responsible for implementation and monitoring in the Diocesan Office and through the administrative activities of the Diocese.

Incumbents, Churchwardens and PCCs are encouraged to take responsibility for implementation at Parish level, having appointed an Eco Church Champion, supported by the Deanery Eco Church Champion (who liaises with the Diocesan Environment Officer).

The Parsonages Board (with the relevant incumbent) will be responsible for implementing the elements of this policy relevant to clergy housing and other properties owned by the Diocesan Board.

The Diocesan Board of Education will monitor the work of the Schools Team and hold them accountable for implementing the elements of this policy relevant to our Church of England schools

The Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Programme Manager will produce an annual report on progress towards NZC to Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, and also report to the National Church Office as required under the conditions of grant agreements with the Archbishop's Council.

Recommended Review Date

November 2027