

St John & St Stephen's Church

Environmental Policy



The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it (Psalm 24:1)

Vision and values

As a Caring, Open and Engaged church, our mission priorities include Caring for Creation. This includes prayer, action and education within our own congregation, through engagement with our wider communities, and through communication with local and national politicians. Our strategy for this is guided by the EcoChurch framework. (As set out by the global Christian Conservation organisation A Rocha ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)

As a church we are committed to encouraging individual and group efforts to fulfil the EcoChurch gold criteria.

Implementation

- Using our limited resources of land as effectively as possible for encouraging biodiversity and an appreciation of the natural world. This includes sensitive planting and pruning, leaving branches and plant matter for insects behind the wall of the front garden, bird feeders in the courtyard garden and exploring further opportunities for more planting.
- Following the Church of England and Diocese of Oxford's strategies for a net zero church. We are committed to reducing our carbon emissions. To this end, our gas and electricity usage are regularly measured and this information is brought to the PCC and the wider church on at least an annual basis. We are endeavouring to keep our energy use below a target set in 2018.
- Having commissioned an energy audit in 2020 and now implemented the recommendations where finance and other practicalities permitted, we will keep this under review.
- Limiting the use of the floodlight on the church cross to a maximum of four hours in winter nights and closer to two hours in the summer, as judged by our site manager.
- Committing to ensure best practice in sustainable building design, construction and operation in the event of the need to undertake a building/refurbishment project, eg by adopting BREEAM standard.
- Offsetting our carbon emissions through annual donations to the World Land Trust, recognising that zero emissions will not be possible.
- By endeavouring to reduce our water usage. To this end our water use in the café is regularly monitored and we have just installed a water butt. Noting the increased use of water since the courtyard garden was installed, we aim to find savings that will at least bring our use back down to earlier levels.
- As floral foam is both a pollutant and a single use, non-compostable plastic, We prioritise its complete elimination within our church, encouraging our floral creators/decorators to use alternative methods for display.
- Using seasonal flowers and foliage grown locally or nationally where possible.

This policy will be kept under review by the Eco-Church Group who will assist the PCC in implementing and developing this policy.

Agreed by the PCC 18th September 2023

To be reviewed September 2026