



Diocese of Peterborough Environmental Policy

Policy summary

Climate change and the loss of biodiversity are two of the greatest threats facing humankind. These are a Christian concern, representing a failure in our stewardship of God's world, and a failure in our duty of care for each other, because across the world the people who have done least to cause climate change and the depletion of nature are often those most affected. In recognition that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice, the Church of England's General Synod committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

This policy is the Diocese of Peterborough's response. It commits us to transition to net zero by 2030, and identifies roles and responsibilities from all parts of the diocese, including our central administration, parishes, schools and laity. It also highlights sources of information and support for this challenging journey. We will track progress annually within the Diocese and report every three years to General Synod.

Contents

Policy summary	1
Approval and review	3
Revision History.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Purpose.....	6
3. Diocesan Central Administration.....	6
4. Parishes	8
5. Reporting and Evaluation.....	9
6. Ownership and Review.....	9

Approval and review

Approved by	Diocesan Synod
Policy owner	Andrew Roberts Bishop John
Policy author	Joanna Ormston
Date	20 th March 2021
Review date	January 2022

Revision History

Version No	Published	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
DRAFT FINAL			Amendment to policy summary
DRAFT FINAL v1.0		09/02/2021	

1. Introduction

1.1 “Climate change and pollution are huge problems, now and for the future. Much of this comes from our burning carbon (coal, gas, oil or wood) as fuel on a huge scale, some from our liking for plastics and synthetic polyesters for their cheapness and convenience. As Christians, we should have a great concern for our stewardship of God’s world, and this will affect our individual lifestyles (food, clothes, travel, home energy, and so on). As church members we face tough questions around church buildings, church halls, church schools. Without sidelining Jesus – who must always be at the centre of our lives and our proclamation – we do need to take these responsibilities seriously.”

-Bishop Donald, 2021.

The Church of England’s Environment Working Group (set up by General Synod in 2014) issued a Call for Action in November 2019. This was in response to the release of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report¹. The group reported to General Synod in February 2020.

The paper that was produced for General Synod by the group stated that ‘The recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that humanity has 11 years to take emergency action in order to prevent global heating greater than 1.5°C. Above this, the risks to humanity of floods, droughts, extreme heat and poverty become much greater, impacting on hundreds of millions more people.’². The paper then continues to point to the UN report (The IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) which links the climate emergency with a separate bio-diversity emergency. This reports that when looking at the assessed animal and plant groups, it suggest that ‘around 1 million species already face extinction...’^{3 4}.

General Synod recognised the magnitude of the joint climate and biodiversity crises and the urgency for action. It also recognised that the people around the world who have done least to cause these crises are also those most affected. Therefore, the following final motion was approved:

That this Synod, recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation, and a fundamental injustice, and following the call of the Anglican Communion in ACC Resolutions A17.05 and A17.06;

¹ [Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC](#)

² [GS 2159 Climate Emergency and Carbon Reduction Target.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

³ [ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers_en.pdf](#)

⁴ [Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’ Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’ \(unenvironment.org\)](#)

- (a) *call upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, BMOs [Bishop Mission Orders], education institutions, dioceses, cathedrals, and the NCIs [National Church Institutions], to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target;*
- (b) *request reports on progress from the Environment Working Group and the NCI's every three years beginning in 2022 and;*
- (c) *call on each Diocesan Synod, and cathedral Chapter, to address progress toward net zero emissions every three years.*

It is essential that, as the Church of England, we remain united on our approach to this climate emergency. It is also important that we work collaboratively with other Christian denominations, faith groups, organisations and volunteer groups where we share a common agenda around environmental issues. It is our duty as a Diocese to respond appropriately to our call to care for God's creation.

1.2 As a Diocese, our response is driven by all five of the marks of mission.

- i. **To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom** – Celebrate the gift of creation and understand that God is reconciling all things to himself (all parts of his creation).
- ii. **To teach, baptise and nurture new believers** – Include helping them recognise God's creation, nurturing them in their awe and wonder. Bring God's great love for the whole of creation to attention. Incorporate wider environmental concerns and promote care and stewardship of creation into the theological and liturgical life of the Diocese. Encourage all who worship to engage in these issues for themselves.
- iii. **To respond to human need by loving service** – Encourage engagement in the community, with care for the land and its creatures; as well as responding to and improving the environment in which people live.
- iv. **To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation** – The climate and biodiversity crises are one of those unjust structures that we are called to transform. Those who will be affected first and worst will be those with the least resources to fight it and those who have contributed to it the least. We must therefore seek to do our part in transforming this unjust structure and tackle the source of it within the climate and biodiversity crises.
- v. **To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth** – The Diocese recognises its own environmental impacts (including church buildings and churchyards, the cathedral, education centres, offices, housing, schools and glebe land). We will therefore seek to reduce our carbon footprint, address land management, improve environmental performance and educate across all areas of impact; thereby reducing our environmental impact and increasing our contribution to the sustainability, biodiversity and local ecology.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy is an agreed, documented statement of the Diocese's commitment towards living more sustainably and reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030. It was agreed at Diocesan Synod on 20th March 2021.
- 2.2 This policy is the cornerstone of our intent, as a body of people committed to caring for God's creation. Our commitment is to reduce our impact upon the environment by minimising our use of the earth's natural resources. We are also committed to reducing our carbon footprint, improving recycling, minimising waste and improving efficiencies on the finite natural resources used in all of our operations. At the same time, we will act positively to restore nature across the Church's churchyards and land holdings.
- 2.3 This policy is a statement of intent that strongly encourages each church, school, individual, synod and the Diocesan central administration to take action. Our aim is to help restore nature and lead to carbon emission reductions resulting in the Diocese of Peterborough reaching net zero emissions by 2030; as in line with the motion passed at General Synod in 2020.
- 2.4 This policy invites all individuals within the Diocese of Peterborough to reduce the environmental impact of our activities. It invites us to live sustainably in a way in which the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is also essential to recognise the global dimension of environmental issues. In particular that 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. These are also the countries who have the least resources to respond.

3. Diocesan Central Administration

The Diocese Central Administration (including The Bishops' Office, The Diocesan Office, Bouverie Court) commits to:

- i. promoting environmental awareness throughout the Diocese by the adoption of this policy, its underlying principles and its objectives;
- ii. bringing God's great love for the whole of creation to attention within worship. Also incorporating wider environmental concerns and promoting care and stewardship of creation into the theological and liturgical life of the Diocese; while encouraging all who worship to engage in issues for themselves;
- iii. ensuring that all employees and volunteers at the Diocesan Office, the Bishops' Office and Bouverie Court are familiar with and implement this Environment Policy and its objectives;
- iv. having a named Environment Officer and ensure its governance structures:
 - a. encourages environmental action

- b. monitors Diocesan progress
 - c. monitors changes in environmental practice and law
 - d. looks for opportunities for whole Diocese learning and celebration of best practice;
- v. signing up to become an 'Eco Diocese' under the A Rocha Eco Diocese scheme. The Diocese aims to reach the Bronze award within 2 years, with the end goal of working towards the highest level of award;
- vi. providing examples, materials and encouragement for parishes, schools and offices to help them engage with broader aspects of their environmental and ethical practice;
- vii. helping parish environment champions/representatives in completing the parish returns online energy footprint tool;
- viii. including the climate and biodiversity crises, as well as our duty to care for creation, within the training of:
 - a. curates
 - b. clergy
 - c. lay ministers
 - d. children, youth and family's workers;
- ix. understanding how the Diocesan buildings, land, offices, travel and other activities impact upon the environment and devise a strategy which will strive to minimise their impact on climate change and help to restore nature;
- x. entering into dialogue with our agents and tenants across the glebe estate to encourage them to undertake practices beneficial to nature, and ensure that environmental considerations are a factor in agreeing any new tenancies or renewals;
- xi. including discussion of the environmental issues and our call to action as part of work within the:
 - a. Bishops' Office
 - b. Archdeacons' Offices
 - c. Diocesan Secretary and Assistant Diocesan Secretary's office
 - d. Mission and Development Team
 - e. Vocation and Formation Team
 - f. Children and Youth Team
 - g. Stewardship Team
 - h. Diocesan Education Team
 - i. Houses and Glebe Team
 - j. DAC Team
 - k. Accounts Team
- xii. taking into consideration the environmental footprint and environmental best practice during decision making between central administration and the Diocesan IT Company (Coopsys);
- xiii. working closely with the Diocesan Environmental Officer and the Diocesan Managing Agents (Carter Jonas) in order to move forwards in our commitment to become net carbon zero by 2030;
- xiv. to specifically discuss and consider matters of the climate and nature crises within the Diocesan Meetings and Committees including:
 - a. Diocesan Synod
 - b. Bishop's Council
 - c. Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (as well as both Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees)

- d. Diocesan Advisory Committee
- e. Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)
- f. Houses Committee
- g. Glebe and Trust Committee
- h. Finance and Admin Committee
- i. The Audit Committee
- j. Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)
- xv. training and informing all employees, office holders and volunteers of the climate and biodiversity crises. This will include what is expected of each individual to think sustainably and help reduce the carbon footprint of the Diocese to net zero by 2030;
- xvi. encouraging schools and having open communication from the DBE regarding:
 - a. their duty to reduce their carbon footprint in line with the Church of England General Synod 2020 commitment and to act in a sustainable manor;
 - b. inspiring the pupils and staff to look at ways they could individually help the environment, including by enhancing nature within school grounds;
 - c. communicating with the DBE administrator and the DBF communications officer to share good news and practice;
 - d. working alongside their Parish church and the Diocesan Children and Youth team to help create good work in the community, to raise awareness and help protect God's creation;
- xvii. work in partnership with other faith groups, organisations and voluntary groups where a common agenda around environmental issues is shared.

4. Parishes

Parishes within the Diocese of Peterborough are encouraged to:

- i. adopt an environment policy on a parish level;
- ii. become an 'Eco Church' under the A Rocha Eco Church scheme and work towards the highest level of award;
- iii. appoint at least one volunteer as an 'environment champion' / 'environment representative' per parish or deanery. This person will oversee and drive forward the Church's progression to becoming net carbon zero by 2030 - as well as coordinating with any relevant members of the clergy, lay ministers, children and family's workers, PCC members;
- iv. with help from the Diocesan central administration, calculate each church's carbon footprint using the parish returns online energy footprint tool and take steps to reduce it;
- v. take positive actions to restore nature in churchyards and other parish land;
- vi. promote its environment champion / environment representative to communicate with the DBF communications officer to help share good practice;
- vii. include matters of climate change and environmental care in preaching as well as children and youth work;
- viii. include discussions of God's love for creation, our duty of care for all of creation and climate change issues in schools' work;
- ix. seek to use caring for the environment and the local area as a foundation for missional outreach within the local communities;

- x. work collaboratively with other local Christian denominations, faith groups, organisations and voluntary groups where the common agenda regarding environmental issues is shared.

5. Reporting and Evaluation

5.1 Multiple tools will be used to measure the Diocesan progress including but not limited to:

- i. parish returns online energy footprint tool
- ii. archdeacons' articles of enquiry
- iii. Eco Diocese reporting tools
- iv. Eco Church reporting tools

5.2 The central diocesan administration will measure the progress of the central teams through the usual governance structure.

5.3 Reports will be given to Diocesan Synod every year to enable a full report to be created for General Synod every 3 years.

6. Ownership and Review

6.1 The responsibility for this policy lies with The Bishop of Brixworth and the Diocesan Secretary who will ensure the policy is reviewed each year.

6.2 Any significant changes or amendments will be brought as an agenda item to Diocesan Synod for approval.