

Diocese of Lichfield
Environmental Policy
March 2019



*“the earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it”
(Psalm 24:1).*



Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad

Theological Foundations

We believe that “the earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it” (*Ps 24:1*). God has set humans firmly within this creation (*Gen 2:15*), and God’s people are marked by the way they act with compassion and justice towards their fellow creatures (*Pr 12:10; Dt 20:19*). As we are increasingly aware, humanity is not living up to this vocation and so we live in a time of great environmental crisis.

This policy sets out some of the ways in which we as a diocese aim to follow Christ in caring for the world he has made. In our diocesan vision, “we pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as people of hope.” We are guided in particular by the Fifth Anglican Mark of Mission, “to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” Our concern for God’s creation takes us beyond a response to the environmental challenges facing our world today, it leads to the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As we grow deeper in our love for Jesus, we learn to love our neighbour all the more. This applies to the whole of creation as much as to our human neighbour. The everyday choices, habits, actions and decisions that we make as Christians, and as churches, have far-reaching impacts on others in our world.

This affects our lives as individuals as well as our life together and calls us back to the original human vocation to be stewards of God’s good creation. Some may have particular vocations in this area, which we should celebrate. However all followers of Jesus are called to love, pray, and care for the world around us.

As the church reaches out in love and care to the world, it will enable people to make connections between spirituality seen in God’s big book of creation and the story of Jesus proclaimed in the little book of scripture. Such care for creation is in harmony with St Chad, who witnessed through the simplicity of his humble lifestyle and whose awe of the natural world expressed the depth of his spirituality.

As we look at some of the practical steps we can take as a diocese, we want to celebrate the many ways in which churches and individual Christians across the

Practical Steps

As a Diocese we will...

- Work towards EcoDiocese accreditation through the A Rocha scheme.
- Produce and promote Creationtide resources, and encourage churches to engage with the season which runs from September 1st to October 4th
- Build up a team of environmental officers, including a Diocesan Environmental Officer, Deputy Diocesan Environmental Officer, DAC Sustainability Advisor, Churchyard Environmental Advisor and a support network of Environmental Champions across the diocese.
- Form and develop relationships with other organisations—including Caring for God's Acre, the Mother's Union, local academic institutions, and our ecumenical and other faith partners—to demonstrate the wider significance of environmental action.
- Highlight individuals who are caring for the environment in different ways through the CHAD Living videos.
- Aim to reduce our carbon footprint—In line with the Church of England's aims—by 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050, and put systems in place to measure and track this.
- Take environmental sustainability into consideration in the maintenance of diocesan property, including clergy housing.
- Encourage and facilitate car-sharing and the use of public transport for diocesan events and activities.
- Embed environmental issues within clergy and lay training curricula.
- Manage our diocesan investments ethically, in line with the ethical investment policies of the Church of England
- Explore the option of a Natural Burial Ground within the diocese.

We will encourage, support and resource parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and fresh expressions to...

- Register and work towards EcoChurch accreditation.
- Participate in the season of Creationtide.
- Take practical steps towards environmental sustainability, supported by a diocesan small grants scheme.
- Celebrate environmental care through the Churchyard Awards Scheme.
- Measure, record, and reduce their energy use and carbon emissions.
- Feed back, through deanery & diocesan synods, ways in which this policy is being implemented.

Further Resources

Caring for God's Acre <http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk>

Caring for God's Acre works nationally, and particularly within Lichfield Diocese, to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds.

A Rocha www.arocha.org.uk

A Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world.

EcoChurch ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth.

Shrinking the Footprint www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint

The C of E's national environmental programme which exists to enable the whole Church to address—in faith, practice and mission—the issue of climate change.

Green Energy www.parishbuying.org.uk

Parish Buying uses the bulk buying power of the church to negotiate competitive prices with a wide range of different suppliers. 100% of the electricity supplied through Parish Buying is green, all from UK based renewable sources.

Creationtide creationtide.com

Resources for the ecumenical season of Creationtide which runs from September 1st—October 4th and has a particular focus on helping churches pray for, and act on behalf of, God's creation.

John Ray Initiative www.jri.org.uk

An educational charity with a vision to bring together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment in a way that can be widely communicated and lead to effective action.

Operation Noah www.operationnoah.org

A Christian charity working with the church to inspire action on climate change.

Baked Alaska www.ridinglights.org/bakedalaska