

Loving.  
Living.  
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 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Leeds

## Becoming an Eco Church

Resources and tips for your  
Eco Church Journey

**ECO**  **CHURCH**  
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

We all want to care better for God's creation and respond compassionately to the climate emergency. This booklet is designed for churches in the Diocese of Leeds to help you get ahead with your Eco Church Journey. A Rocha, a Christian conservation charity, run the Eco Church award scheme to support churches in their creation care and celebrate their successes in their area of mission and ministry.

## Eco Diocese

The Diocese of Leeds is working towards an Eco Diocese award under the A Rocha scheme. The diocese has already passed an environmental policy, has an environmental working group, is working ecumenically and with other faith groups on climate action, reviewed its investments and aims to communicate regularly on these pressing issues.

A wide range of churches across the Diocese of different traditions and contexts have achieved Bronze and Silver Eco Church awards. You can read their stories on the [Diocesan website](#)

“It becomes ever clearer that climate change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face. It’s our sacred duty to protect the natural world we’ve so generously been given, as well as our neighbours around the world who will be first and worst affected. Without swift decisive action the consequences of climate change will be devastating.”

Archbishop Justin Welby

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“The climate crisis is of such urgency that the whole Church needs to make it a priority. We ought to work to ensure every church is an eco-church, and that in every congregation every Christian is asking questions about how we can live more lightly.”

The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam  
Chair of the Church of England Environmental Working Group

# How to get started

## 1. Register on the Eco Church website

It's easy to register your church on the Eco Church website. Go to [Eco Church](#), click on the "Register now to get started" tab and follow the instructions. Registering costs nothing and does not commit you to complete the award, what it does do is give you the opportunity to view the Eco Church survey and "play" at entering your churches achievements.

## 2. Become a team

Any task can be hard work on your own. Changing the culture in your church can be challenging at times and having a small group who bring different skills and experiences, who pray together, support each other and can share the load can be vital for success.

## 3. Ask the PCC to pass a Parish Environment Policy

Putting a policy to the PCC gives them the opportunity to openly discuss the environmental crises and how your church will respond. Once a policy has been passed it can be a useful to assess other PCC decisions in the light of the Environment Policy. There is a model policy on the Environment Pages of the [Diocesan website](#) You can amend and adapt this to suit your church and it's context.

## 4. Appoint a Parish Environment Officer

It can be helpful to have a nominated person who ensures that environmental issues are championed. This should never mean that the rest of the congregation feel that they don't have to think about creation care! Please let Charlie Scott at the Diocese know who your Parish Environment Officer is, so that they can be kept informed about training opportunities, resources and supported by the Area Environment Champions.

## 5. Write a plan

Becoming a zero carbon church, having a wildlife churchyard, being single use plastic free are all big challenges! It is important to have a realistic plan that sets out what needs to be done, who will do it, who needs to be consulted and what it might cost. Make sure you start with an easily achievable task to get you underway.

# Who can help us?

Each of the five areas within the Diocese has an Area Environment Champion, who can help and advise you on your Eco Church journey. The Diocesan Environment Officer is also here to help.

Locally you may know of or can find, environmental enthusiasts or organisations who have expertise and experience that you can draw on. For example a climate action group, a local nature trust, a school, a plastic free group or a renewable heating or solar contractor. This is a great opportunity for your church to show your love and integrity in caring for creation and work alongside others in the community.

## Resources for the Eco Church Survey

The Eco Church website has lots of ideas under the five sections of the award survey on their [resources pages](#) and there are a multitude of resources online that can help you complete the Eco Church award. Below is only a selection that have been used by churches in the Diocese of Leeds.

### Worship and Teaching

- 1. Special Sundays relating to caring for God's earth (e.g. Creation Time, Environment Sunday, Rogation Sunday etc.) are celebrated in our church.** Service sheets from local churches available on the [Environment Worship Page](#) of the Diocesan website.
- 2. The hymns and songs (and liturgies if used) in our church services enable us to celebrate God's creation.** A bank of creation themes hymns and songs is available on the [Environment Worship Page](#) of the Diocesan website.
- 3. Our church prays for environmental issues.** The monthly intercession concerning climate change from [Pray and Fast for the Climate](#) can be used by the intercessors.
- 4. Caring for God's earth is preached in our church.** The preacher could use the week by week sermon hints provided at [Greening the Lectionary](#) or gain a theological insight from Grove Booklets such as [The Earth is the Lord's](#).
- 5. Our church hosts guest speakers from A Rocha UK or other Christian environmental organisations** (e.g. Christian Aid, Tearfund, Green Christian, The John Ray Initiative) to talk about environmental issues. Contact these organisations to invite a speaker.
- 6. Caring for God's earth features as a teaching theme in our church's youth work.** Contact the Diocesan [Children and Youth Team](#) or assistance.

**7. Caring for God's earth features as a teaching theme in our church's children's work.**

Contact the Diocesan [Children and Youth Team](#) or assistance.

**8. Caring for God's earth features as a focus of small group study in our church.** A range of small group studies are listed on the [Environment Worship Page](#) of the Diocesan website. You may like to use the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2020 Lent Book [Saying Yes to Life](#) by Ruth Valerio which focuses on our care for creation and can be used for small group study.

**9. Our church's communications (e.g. newsletters, service sheets, magazines, social media etc.) include items relating to the theme of caring for God's earth.** As well as including local environmental events, you could include a weekly [EcoTip](#) and a parish magazine article from the bimonthly [God's Green Fingers](#) environment e-news.

**10. The leadership have made a formal commitment to improving the environmental credentials of our church by endorsing the undertaking of work towards an Eco Church Award.** The model Parish Environment Policy can be amended and adapted to suit the needs and context of your church. It can be downloaded from the [Environment Pages](#) of the Diocesan Website.



## **Buildings**

**1. Is your church responsible for the premises in which it meets?**

**2. We have measured our energy use and calculated the carbon footprint of our church premises.** The 360° Carbon Calculator for Churches will be available on the [Climate Stewards](#) website from March 2020. Before then you can use the Diocese of Leeds Church Carbon Calculator developed available from the [Diocesan Environment Officer](#).

**3. We have set sufficient targets for reducing the carbon footprint of our church premises and achieving year on year improvements in energy efficiency.** How ambitious will you be in your target setting to become a net zero carbon emissions church? Most churches will need to have a 10% reduction year on year to reach zero by 2050. Guidance on [Energy efficiency measures](#) for churches is available from the Church Buildings Council.

**4. We offset the carbon footprint of our church premises for those things we can't reduce.** [Climate Stewards](#) is a Christian Carbon Offsetting Charity. There may be local community woodland planting projects that your church could support. Offset your church gas use with the carbon neutral gas provide by the [Green Journey](#).

**5. The electricity supplied to our church premises is generated from renewable resources and/or charged according to our supplier's 'green tariff'.** Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme set up by the Diocese in partnership with Green Energy Consulting to provide a number of energy services to churches including carbon neutral gas. Or use the Big Church Switch website to find a renewable electricity provider.

**6. The gas supplied to our church premises is generated from renewable sources and/or charged according to our supplier's 'green tariff'.** Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme set up by the Diocese in partnership with Green Energy Consulting to provide a number of energy services to churches including carbon neutral gas. Or switch to a partially biogas supply with an energy provider such as Good Energy.

**7. In terms of energy efficiency (an engineer should be able to determine this as part of the annual service) the main boiler on our church premises is rated.** Consult your regular boiler engineer. Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme to have an energy audit conducted. The Church Buildings Council provide advice on [Heating](#) systems and [Renewable Energy](#). Take the opportunity of any church building project to move away from fossil fuel heating and onto a renewable heating system (electric, air or ground source heat pumps or biomass).

**8. Our church premises are insulated as follows.** Take the opportunity of any reordering works to upgrade the insulation in the church.

**9. Our church premises are double-glazed as follows.** Take the opportunity of any window repair work or a reordering project to consider improving the thermal capacity of the church windows.



**10. The lighting in our main church premises uses energy-efficient light bulbs as follows.**

Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme to have an energy audit conducted. Switching to LED lights is often a simple way to reduce carbon emission and cut energy bills. Replacing light bulbs can pay for itself within a year or two in a well-used church. The Church Building Council provide advice on [Lighting](#) Schemes.

**11. We have a policy designed to limit the amount of energy consumed by floodlighting and/or security lighting around our church premises.**



**12. The water supply to our church premises is metered.**

**13. Rainwater collection facilities are installed and used on our church premises (e.g. 'grey water' systems, water butts etc.).**

**14. The toilet cisterns on our church premises are fitted with dual-flush buttons or other water-saving devices.** Take the opportunity of any building works to ensure that the most energy and water efficient systems are installed whenever possible.

**15. We have installed a composting/waterless toilet (see, for example, [eco-toilets.co.uk](http://eco-toilets.co.uk)) on our church premises.** Rural churches may find this a particularly good solution. Advice is available on the [Gloucester Churches Environmental Network](#)

**16. Recycled toilet paper is provided on our church premises.**

**17. The cleaning products used around our church premises are environmentally-friendly.**

**18. The disposables (e.g. paper cups and plates etc.) used on our church premises are...**

**19. We are reducing our paper usage (e.g. through double-sided copying/printing etc.).**

**20. Our church administration uses recycled paper.**

**21. In the event of the need to undertake a building/refurbishment project, our church would insist that it adhere to BREEAM (or similar) standard to ensure best practice in sustainable building design, construction and operation.** Take the opportunity of any building works to ensure that the most energy and water efficient systems are installed whenever possible. The Church Buildings Council provide advice on [Heating](#) systems, [Lighting](#) and [Renewable Energy](#). [The Green Building Store](#) has a range of resources and suggestions.

**23. Recycling facilities are available on our church premises.**

**24. Our church has given due consideration to the possibilities of generating renewable energy on our premises (e.g. air or ground source heat pump, solar PV panels, wind turbine, etc.).** The Church Buildings Council provide advice on Heating systems and Renewable Energy.

**25. Our church generates renewable energy on/for our premises (e.g. from air or ground source heat pump, solar PV panels; solar hot water; wind turbine etc.).**

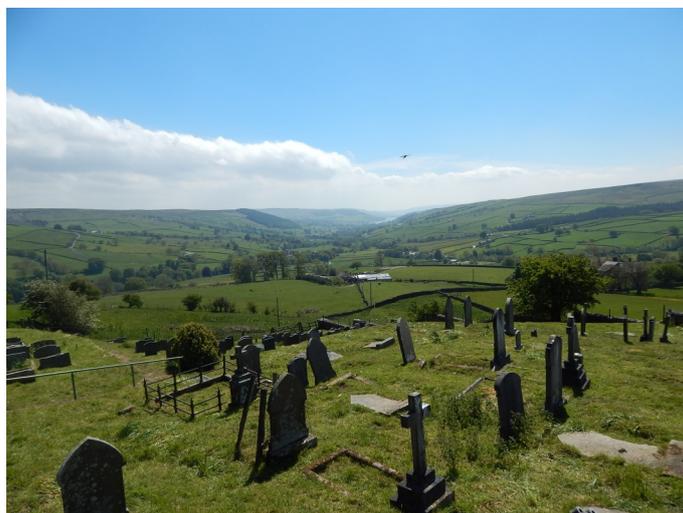
## Land

**1. Does your church have influence over any land? (e.g. churchyard, community nature reserve).** There are resources for churchyard management on the [Environment Churchyard Page](#) of the Diocesan website

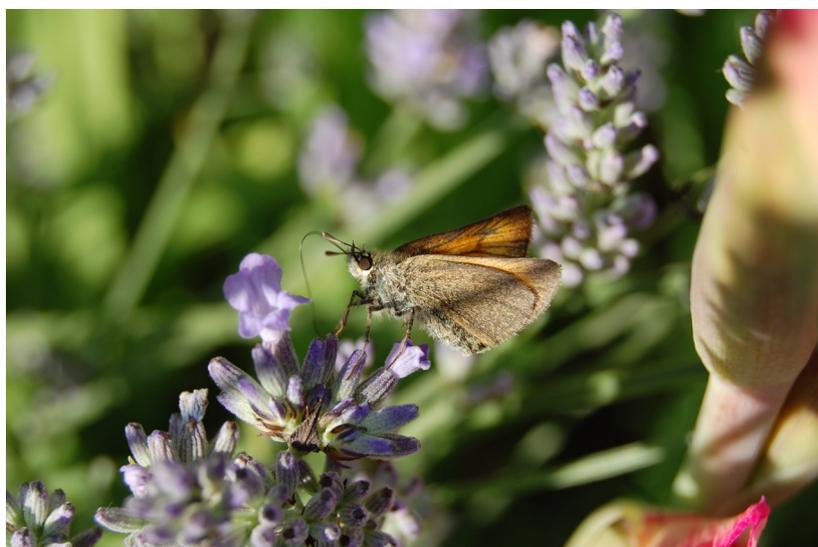
**2. The land at our church is managed for the encouragement of native wildlife (birds, animals and plants).** The Church Buildings Council provides advice on [Biodiversity](#) and [Caring for God's Acre](#) have a resources for churchyard management

**3. We encourage native wildlife on our church land through provision of the following:**

**4. Stocked wildlife feeding stations are present on our church land (e.g. bird feeders, bird tables).**



5. Our church land contains a pond or wetland area that is good for wildlife.
6. We grow plants on our land that benefit birds, bees, butterflies etc.
7. Our church maintains an area of land for native wildflowers.
8. Our church has researched and established a mowing regime appropriate to the conservation of the grassland and wildlife present.
9. Our church avoids the use of harmful chemicals (pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers) in the management of our land (excluding paths and driveways).
10. Our church participates in responsible native tree planting schemes in accordance with guidance from environment professionals. The Church Buildings Council provides advice on [Trees](#)
11. Our church undertakes wildlife (birds, animals and plants) surveys on our land.



12. Our church participates in a scheme, other than Eco Church, designed to promote conservation on church land (e.g. 'Living Churchyards').
13. We grow fruit and vegetables on our land (including in planters, window boxes etc. as well as in a community garden/allotment).
14. Composting facilities are available on our church land.
15. Our church actively encourages members to use church land for recreation/contemplation (e.g. picnics, prayer etc.).
16. Our church actively encourages members of the local community to use the church land for recreation/contemplation . Information about Forest Church can be found on the [Environment Worship Page](#) of the Diocesan website. Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme or another provider to install an electric car charging point.
17. Our church has established a management plan for the land for which we are responsible.

## Community and Global Engagement

**1. Our church organises events providing an opportunity for local people to engage with local leaders on local environmental issues (e.g. local MPs, AMs or council leaders).**

[Hope for the Future](#) provide resources and training for churches in advocacy work with politicians.

**2. Our church (either alone or as part of a local network) engages with our local MP, AM, local council or Public Service Board on environmental matters.** [Hope for the Future](#) provide resources and training for churches in advocacy work with politicians.

**3. Our church arranges for local environmentalists to speak in our services.**

**4. Our church (either alone or as part of a local network) works with local sustainability movements like Transition Towns.**

**5. Our church (either alone or as part of a local network) organises environmental awareness-raising events (e.g. film evenings, Fairtrade events etc.).**

**6. Our church is involved with local conservation work (e.g.. at an A Rocha UK Partner in Action or RSPB/Wildlife Trusts nature reserve).**

**7. At least some of our church members (either alone or as part of a local network) have organised and/or participated in a community clean-up project (e.g. local litter-pick).**

**8. Our church (either alone or as part of a local network) hosts a green fair, showcasing local produce and highlighting local environmental issues.**

**9. Our church organises events providing an opportunity for local people to get out and enjoy God's earth in our local area (e.g. walks, cycle rides etc.).**



**10. Our church either provides or supports a local car-share scheme (this includes members sharing lifts to church).**

**11. Users of our church premises are encouraged to minimise resource use (e.g. people are trained in reducing energy use, notices about turning off lights are displayed etc.).**

**12. Our church actively promotes Eco Church to other local churches.**

- 13. Our church has committed to pray for a specific overseas environmental project (for Welsh churches this might be through Wales4Africa). Find out about environmental needs and projects in our [Overseas Link Dioceses](#).**
- 14. Our church participates in regular sustainability initiatives (e.g. Carbon Fast, WWF's annual Earth Hour event).**
- 15. Our church participates in campaigns concerning national environmental issues.**
- 16. Our church participates in campaigns concerning global environmental issues.**
- 17. Our church participates in the Tearfund/Cord 'Toilet Twinning' scheme as follows.**
- 18. Our church keeps the congregation informed about the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on Christian communities elsewhere in the world.**
- 19. Our church financially supports an environmental charity.**
- 20. Our church is registered with the Fairtrade Foundation as a Fairtrade Church. Contact the Diocesan [Fairtrade Champion](#)**
- 21. Wherever possible, Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods are used at church services and events.**
- 22. Any meals provided by the church use food that is locally grown. Use the LOAF principles set out by [Green Christian](#): Local, Organic, Animal Friendly, Fairtrade.**



- 23. Any meals provided by the church use organic ingredients.**
- 24. Any meals provided by the church use food that is animal-friendly.**
- 25. Any meals provided by the church use Fairtrade ingredients.**
- 26. Any meals provided by the church include a vegetarian and /or vegan option.**
- 27. Our church takes steps to reduce food waste (e.g. through composting all waste, minimising leftovers at church meals, partnering with a local food waste scheme), and we encourage our members to do likewise.**

# Lifestyle

- 1. Our church has appointed an individual or group to champion the cause of our church community becoming more environmentally sustainable.** Set up an eco team and appoint a Parish Environment Officer/ Rep. please Let [Church House](#) know who this is.
- 2. Walking and cycling to church services and events is promoted in our church.**
- 3. The reduction of car use is encouraged in our church.** Consider using the [Green Journey](#) scheme or another provider to install an electric car charging point.
- 4. The members of our church receive encouragement to undertake a personal carbon footprint audit.** [Climate Stewards](#) is a Christian Carbon Offsetting charity, which has a personal carbon calculator on their website.
- 5. Our church encourages members to reduce their personal energy consumption.** You could include a weekly [EcoTip](#) and a parish magazine article from the bimonthly [God's Green Fingers](#) environment e-news.
- 6. Our church encourages members to limit their waste by adhering to the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle.**
- 7. Our church hosts activities and/or events that facilitate the recycling and/or reuse of goods (e.g. clothes swap events or 'give and take' schemes).**
- 8. Our church operates a communal Christmas and/or Easter card scheme among the congregation.**
- 9. Personal use and consumption of Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods is promoted in our church.** Contact the Diocesan [Fairtrade Champion](#)
- 10. Our church encourages members to use food at home that is LOAF (Locally grown, Organic, Animal friendly, Fairtrade).** Resources available on LOAF principles at [Green Christian](#)
- 11. Our church runs or partners with other organisations in running a food cooperative that enables members to bulk buy ethically sourced produce at wholesale prices.**
- 12. The ethical investment of personal savings is encouraged at our church.**
- 13. Our church funds are ethically invested (e.g. current account and/or investments).**
- 14. Practical lifestyle tips and advice on caring for God's earth are included in our church newsletters/on our church website.** You could include a weekly [EcoTip](#) and a parish magazine article from the bimonthly [God's Green Fingers](#) environment e-news.
- 15. As part of our life together, the members of our church undertake an environmental lifestyle audit.** You could use the Climate Stewards Duplo [carbon challenge](#).

