



St Andrew's Church Bedford

Environmental Policy and Action Plan

January 2026

1. Policy Statements

- a. We recognise the climate and nature crises and the fundamental injustice these represent.
- b. We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship.
- c. We recognise the urgent need to reduce our carbon emissions.
- d. We recognise the need to manage our land for nature.
- e. We recognise that we need to take action locally, nationally and globally to tackle climate injustice.
- f. We recognise that integrating creation care into our daily lives is an act of worship and obedience to God as we grow in discipleship.

2. Denominational Commitment

As a member of the Church of England, we recognise the commitment to achieving net zero by 2030 made by General Synod in February 2020.

In line with the Church of England's commitment, at our meeting in July 2023 St Andrew's PCC committed to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

3. Our Principles and Values

a. God created the world and everything in it.

*'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And God saw everything that was made, and, behold, it was very good.'
(Genesis 1:1,31)*

God has created an awesome and majestic cosmos which bring praise and glory. Humanity is just one part of this created order. Jesus has redeemed the whole earth through his death and resurrection; humanity and the whole created order are in need of salvation. As stewards of the Earth, we have a special responsibility to care for creation so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.

b. Our church is committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment.

*The Kingdom of heaven is like this: once there was a man who was about to leave home on a trip;
he called his servants and put them in charge of his estate.
(Matthew 25:14)*

As Christians it is our responsibility to care for creation, using God given resources wisely to reduce climate change, protect biodiversity, conserve finite resources, and minimised waste and pollution.

c. Seeking climate justice is part of Christian discipleship and practice.

*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:8)*

Following Christ's teachings means loving our global neighbours and caring for creation. The climate crisis both reflects and feeds off inequality, exploitation and greed. The communities who are suffering the most from its effects, particularly in the Global South, are those who have done the least to cause it. We aim to act in solidarity with those across the world who are suffering disproportionately in this crisis.

4. Our Commitments

a. Worship and Teaching

We will communicate our theological understanding of responsibility to God for all that is entrusted to us through creation, making the links between poverty, wealth and environmental degradation. We will strive to equip leadership, staff, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.

b. Buildings and Energy

We will seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as much as we can, including from heating, aiming to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. We will also reduce the wider environmental impact of the use of our buildings, including water use and waste.

c. Land and Nature

We will respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action, collaboration and campaigning, including managing our own land to increase biodiversity.

d. Community and Global Engagement

We will promote justice for people and nature. We will highlight and raise awareness that the climate and nature crises disproportionately impact those who have least, and our responsibility to them and the places they live.

e. Lifestyle

We recognise that we have an impact on the world through our choices as individuals and a community, through our use of money and resources. We will strive to support our church family and wider community in bringing about positive change and care for God's Earth. We will seek to encourage our community in Church and beyond, to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice. Our church promotes ethical and environmentally aware consumption by individuals and households.

5. Application

We are committed to applying these principles in the following areas:

a. Worship and Teaching

i. Skilling and equipping

- We will ensure staff and volunteers receive carbon literacy training as appropriate.
- We will offer other church members the opportunity to complete Carbon Literacy training or other relevant topics which emerge.
- We will offer opportunities for more in-depth engagement with environmental issues through sermons and small-group studies.

b. Buildings and Energy

i. Energy Use (Church and Centre)

- We will assess our energy use annually, using the Church of England Energy Footprint Tool.
- We will set annual carbon reduction targets and review our progress annually.
- We will monitor our water use.
- We recognise that digital data has a footprint and we will encourage regular digital cleanups.
- We will maintain our solar panels in order to maximise our on-site green electricity generation.
- We will consider offsetting our carbon footprint to achieve net zero by 2030.

ii. Travel

- We are committed to minimising unnecessary travel and encouraging use of the least polluting means of transport. For example, we offer hybrid access by Zoom to morning and evening prayer, PCC meetings and study groups.
- We will prioritise the use of public transport and bicycles over private cars for church business. For example, we have increased the number and security of bike racks on the Church grounds, and our website prioritises public transport.
- We will continue to consider the pros and cons of meeting in person versus online, for example for PCC meetings and study groups.

iii. Fabric

- Through the work of the Church and Centre Maintenance Committee (CCMC) and our quinquennial review, we will monitor the upkeep of the building, ensure repairs are undertaken promptly and continually review ways in which we can improve our efficiency.

iv. Operations

- We will regularly review our operations plan (heating protocol, lighting procedures, etc.) to ensure energy efficiency.
- We will use the 'Tado' system to heat the Church as efficiently as possible.

v. Procurement

- We recognise that the decisions we make in what we consume for church life (such as materials, products, equipment and consumables) have an impact on the environment.
- We have a separate Ethical Procurement Policy (appendix 4) which sets out that our procurement decisions will minimise negative environmental impacts, where feasible, and will aim to encourage

positive action by suppliers and partners. Strong preference will be given to suppliers who take environmental responsibility seriously.

- We will use recycled paper wherever feasible and otherwise use paper derived from sustainably managed forests. We will avoid the purchase of products and packaging that use non-recyclable and nonbiodegradable materials.

vi. Lettings

- Our Lettings policy includes the clause: *As an Eco Church we encourage all who use the premises to be as environmentally friendly as possible. You are more than welcome to use our plates and cutlery for your event for a small fee, or to bring your own reusable items. If using disposable items (plates, cutlery, etc.), we encourage you to purchase biodegradable items that can be placed in a compost bin after use and to recycle as much as possible of food packaging materials.*

c. Land and Nature

i. Church Grounds

- We have a separate Land Management Plan which details our management of church grounds (appendix 3.)
- Promoting biodiversity around St Andrew's
- Encouraging wildlife in the vicinity
- Avoiding toxic materials
- Reflecting the Diocesan Land Management Strategy

d. Community and Global Engagement

i Advocacy and action

- We will encourage taking action as a means of loving our neighbour and caring for creation.
- We will seek ways to support and campaign on environmental issues as a whole church.
- We will collaborate with, and encourage awareness of, local environmental groups and other churches to share resources and best practices, for example through 'Eco Connect' events.
- We will seek to provide opportunities for marginalised groups in our community to have access to nature.
- We will raise awareness about ethical finance.

ii Accreditation

- We are a Fairtrade Church and a Real Living Wage employer.

iii Food and drink

- We opt for Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar when purchasing for the church (see more detail in Ethical Purchasing Policy, appendix 4).
- We will encourage the practical application of LOAF principles - local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded where possible.

iv. Sustainable transport

- We will encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport (see bii above.)

v. Waste

- We are committed to reducing waste, re-using and recycling waste as far as practically possible.
- We will compost food waste produced by Church and community groups using the Church Centre.

vi. Finance

- We are committed that a portion of our charitable giving will go toward charities that care for the environment or to support those who are adversely affected by climate change.
- We will avoid banking with banks most heavily invested in fossil fuels, and seek to work with financial institutions that make a positive difference.
- We will not knowingly invest in or deal with companies or organisations whose activities significantly conflict with our own environmental policy.

vii. Communication and promotion of Eco Church

- We will respond to enquiries and seek to promote Eco Church locally.
- We will participate in denominational and other events to promote Eco Church and care for the environment.

e. Lifestyle

i Sustainable lifestyle

- We will introduce 'Lifestyle' surveys of our church members to enable us to share practical lifestyle actions that can be taken. Information will be shared via newsletters and social media.
- Throughout the year we will share information, stories and examples of lifestyle action to encourage individual members of our congregations to take actions in their personal lives to care for God's creation.
- We will promote and encourage our church members to undertake personal auditing of individual and household carbon footprints.

6. Implementation and monitoring

- Staff, members of the Ministry Team, PCC members and key volunteers will be made aware of this policy, and it will be accessible on our website.
- The Creation Care group will report progress and updates from the Action Plan to the PCC.
- The PCC will review the targets and revise the Action Plan annually.
- The Creation Care group, with support from the Church office, will ensure communication with the church family.
- This policy and action plan will be reviewed every two years at Creation Care and PCC meetings, and will be communicated and embedded in our wider Mission Action Plans.

Date policy approved: 20th January 2026

Date of next review: January 2028

Chair of Creation Care Group: Ian Smith

Membership of Creation Care Team: Dermot Collins, Rev'd Canon Lucy Davis, Viki Evans, Andrew Love, Alex Nash, Tim Retout, Alistair Sutcliffe



Appendix One:
Annual Reporting (summary table)

	Year 1 2025	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
KwH electricity used				
KwH gas used				
Annual mileage / fuel claimed for				
Annual bicycle / public transport claimed for				
Annual carbon footprint (result of Church of England Energy Footprint Tool)				
Water usage				



Appendix Two:

Environmental Action Plan

Category	Objectives	Tasks	Person(s) Responsible	Date to achieve
Worship and Teaching				
Buildings and Energy	To work towards becoming net zero Carbon by 2030	Develop a 'boiler funeral plan' so that when we need to replace the gas boilers we have already put stages in place for a heat pump		
Land and Nature	Enhancements to land management	Install log pile in care park area Install water butt(s)		
Community and Global Action				
Lifestyle		Increase congregational engagement by a weekly 'drip feed' of ideas via the e newsletter		



Appendix Three:

Land Management Plan

St Andrew's has responsibility for a relatively small area of land, much of which borders the road. We aim to encourage wildlife within the constraints of the location and area we have available.

The aims of the policy:

- To promote Biodiversity around St Andrew's
- To encourage wildlife in the vicinity
- To encourage the use of non-toxic materials
- To reflect the Diocesan Land Management Strategy

Land management plan:

- Grass areas are mown regularly, except during "No mow May". Grass cuttings are collected and composted.
- Dedicated rewilding area is left for the benefit of wildlife (see diagram 1 below); this area is cut back once per year at the end of the growing season, but is otherwise untended. Wildflower seeds are sown in this area to encourage variety of plants.
- Birdlife is encouraged and supported through the installation of Swift boxes and other bird boxes.
- We participate in "No mow May" when there is no mowing of grass areas, to encourage insect life.
- We have bug "hotels" to provide suitable environment for insects
- We do not use artificial weed killers or fertilisers
- We use our own compost generated from garden and kitchen waste, if additional compost is required then peat-free is used.

We encourage congregation members to undertake wildlife events e.g Big Garden Bird Watch, Butterfly count on the church land.

Future plans:

- To install additional birdboxes
- To install other wildlife encouraging features as appropriate e.g additional bug hotels, wetland trough, log pile
- To provide food for birds throughout the year
- To allow 'untidy' areas for Autumn and Winter
- To install water butts and use the water for flower arrangers for watering displays
- To develop the Patio Area as a wildlife friendly area

Diagram 1: plan of church maintained land





Appendix Four:

Ethical Procurement Policy

1. Context

The overarching biblical principles and values guiding this policy are:

- God created the world and everything in it.
- St Andrew's Church is committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment.
- Seeking climate justice is part of Christian discipleship and practice.

Ethical purchasing is part of the responsible stewardship of our resources and how we work for a fairer, more sustainable world

2. Scope

This policy applies to the workings of the Church Office and the Church Centre. We encourage those involved in wider church activities to engage within the guidelines of this policy.

3. General Principles

Through our purchasing decisions we strive to:

- Reduce our environmental impact and carbon emissions
- Support businesses that have a positive impact on society and the environment
- Support our local economy
- Uphold fair wages and working conditions
- Champion tax justice
- Improve animal welfare
- Pursue peace and protect human rights

4. Caring for the earth / Responding to the climate crisis (purchasing principles)

a. food

b. cleaning/bathroom supplies/consumables

c. building maintenance and running costs

d. IT/electronics (copier)

We have a silver Eco Church award and are working towards Gold status. in effort to do this through our purchasing, we adhere to the following guidelines

- We buy electricity from renewable sources.
- We buy LED bulbs wherever possible.
- We use 100% recycled toilet paper.
- We use environmentally friendly cleaning products. We buy products in large and/or refillable containers to reduce our plastic use.
- We take steps to reduce our use of single-use plastic.
- We use 100% recycled paper in our church office.
- We use only peat-free compost.
- We strive to source seasonal flowers and avoid buying floral foam ('oasis') for flower arranging.

- When purchasing fixtures and furnishings, we will consider the environmental impact in our decision making. For example, buying refurbished furniture.
- When buying IT equipment (laptops, desktop computers, projectors etc) or phones we look for refurbished, second-hand items. If buying new, we look for TCO certified products.ⁱ
- We keep products and appliances in use for as long as possible, seeking to repair rather than replace.
- We provide facilities for recycling and think carefully about how we dispose of anything that we no longer need.
- We are a part of the Redbox recycling scheme which ensures our copier toners are recycled.

5. Food and Consumables

- We use Fairtrade products wherever possible (at least tea, coffee and sugar) and share this information with our church members.
- We will encourage the practical application of LOAF principles – local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded where possible.

6. Financial implications

We recognise that changes to our purchasing may lead to increased costs in some areas. This may mean we need to reduce expenditure elsewhere.

7. Wider engagement

- We encourage members of our congregation to consider their own buying habits through sermons, blogs, weekly newsletter and special events.
 - We encourage our wider community to join us in making more ethical purchasing decisions through community events and communication of our policies through our room hire agreement.
 - We look to work with companies who commit to paying the real living wage, and have accreditation demonstrating our principles and values e.g. through accreditations such as fair trade and b-corp. We ask questions of new suppliers and contact companies when we switch services with reasons for leaving.
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