

## THE PCC OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN EWELL

### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

“The whole creation belongs to God. As human beings we are part of the whole and have a responsibility to love and care for what God has entrusted to us as temporary tenants of the planet. We are called to conserve its complex and fragile ecology, whilst recognising the need for responsible and sustainable development and the pursuit of social justice.” — Church of England National Institutions

#### 1. Introduction and Objectives

In February 2020, the General Synod of the Church of England voted to adopt the ambitious target of 2030 for net zero carbon. Following a widespread consultation with parishes, dioceses, cathedrals, and the wider Church, plans to achieve this were drawn up by members of the Environment Working Group.

In July 2022 General Synod passed a motion to endorse these plans, which are laid out in detail in the document “Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030”. We must all think how we can be part of this journey, both as St Mary’s church and as individuals.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/net-zero-carbon-routemap>

This Environmental Policy outlines our parish vision and the reasons behind the objectives, targets and actions we are taking or will take in the future. This supports the four principles on the environment adopted by the Lambeth Conference in 1998:

- The covenant of God’s love embraces not only human beings but all of creation;
- Creation is everywhere filled with God’s sacred presence;
- Human beings are the priests of creation, seeing God’s presence in it, and offering creation’s worship;
- The Sabbath principle of ‘enoughness’ is a challenge to us to rest from unnecessary consumption.

In line with the Church of England objectives, we aim to reduce our carbon footprint as much as we practically can. We will endeavour to safeguard and nurture God’s creation and increase our community and global engagement. We will always balance our activities with the needs of our church members and the wider community.

This is a living document but our aims and objectives should rarely change. The various areas we plan to address and some of the mechanisms to be used are outlined below. The lists of these are not exhaustive and are intended to illustrate what might be possible for us and the decisions that we have taken already. The policy will be supplemented with detailed plans and reports for the different areas where we can fulfill these commitments as they develop over time. Where possible, these will have realistic timelines and completion targets.

We acknowledge that the problems that our world faces can seem overwhelming but that the small steps our church and each of us take as individuals are worthwhile and will make a difference.

## **2. ECO Group and ECO church**

St. Mary's has an active ECO Group which, in consultation with the PCC plans, monitors and organises our activities to further the objectives of this policy. The group provides regular reports to the PCC. The chairman of the group is either a member of the PCC, or attends the PCC by invitation when appropriate.

St. Mary's is registered with A Rocha as an "ECO church" in line with diocesan recommendations. The A Rocha "ECO church" scheme gives clear advice which we use to further our objectives. Registered churches can be recognized as bronze, silver or gold depending on their ECO-related actions and activities. We aim to steadily progress through these levels, achieving the bronze level within one year.

As an ECO church we recognize that there is a degree of financial commitment and we will endeavour to provide financial support for the work that we need to do.

## **3. Buildings**

We will endeavour to monitor our carbon footprint and the use of gas and electricity on our premises and to reduce our footprint by our choice and use of these resources.

Whenever possible we will use fair traded, sustainable and environmentally friendly products in our buildings.

## **4. Use of Water resources**

We will use this valuable resource wisely in our buildings and churchyards.

## **Congregation**

We will encourage our congregation to consider ways in which they can reduce the environmental impact of their lifestyle choices.

We will encourage members to carry out a personal lifestyle audit.

## **5. Our Churchyards**

We will endeavour to maintain our churchyards in a way which balances the pastoral needs of visitors whilst recognising the value of providing wild places in an urban environment.

We are committed to continue developing the use of the churchyards by children and local groups.

By thoughtful siting of benches, we will encourage church members and our local community to enjoy our churchyards.

## **6. Banking and Investments**

We will endeavour where financially sound to bank and invest with ethical financial service providers.

## **7. Worship**

We will aim to facilitate our worship bearing in mind the environmental impact.

We will hold an Annual Service dedicated to environmental issues. We will have a guest speaker at these services.

We will run annual study groups considering environmental issues, which will be open to all.

Environmental concerns will feature regularly in our hymns and prayers.

When possible our children's teaching will include environmental issues.

We will inform our congregation of the work we are doing and how they can help.

## **8. Information and Events**

We will hold an annual event to encourage our local Community to think about how they can contribute to caring for our environment and all of God's creatures.

We will publish an Eco Tip and articles in Ewell Parish News for our congregation and the local community to read and encourage people to make choices in their daily lives that help the environment.

We will have information about our work, and the wildlife they might see, posted in our Churchyards to encourage visitors to look at the work we have done.

## **9. Partners and Third Parties**

We will inform everyone who uses our buildings of our aims and encourage them to care for our premises in an environmentally friendly way.

We will endeavour to work together with local faith communities, NESCOL, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and others to utilise their skills and resources where possible for the benefit of all.

This Environmental Policy was agreed and adopted by the Parochial Church Council on 17 January 2023. It is due for review by January 2026.