

TAKING STEPS FOR GOD'S EARTH

Christ Church Downend Bristol

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION POLICY

Part of the Church of England's
National Environmental Campaign.



“Every person has within their power to help or harm the environment every day, no matter how old or young they are. Make a choice.”

Peter Littlewood Director of the Young People's Trust for the Environment and Nature Conservation

The Challenge facing the world

The industrial countries of the world have measured progress solely by material wealth. This encourages ever greater consumption of goods causing endless exploitation of the planet's natural resources, resulting in dangerous pollution of the land, sea and air.

Climate change is just one of these environmental crises caused by the release of CO₂ and methane into the atmosphere. It may be the most serious issue facing the nations of the world. All forms of life across the planet are threatened. Many species face extinction. Millions of people have and will suffer.

If remedial action is possible it will require radical changes at every level of life, from the behaviour of each individual through to international treaties.

The Challenge facing the church

The Bishop of London says, "The Church in the UK causes as much damage to the planet as one of the big supermarket chains. We are part of the problem"

Key fact on church's carbon footprint

Places of worship, clergy houses, schools and halls produced an estimated 1.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. This figure does not include travel on church related work. A further three million tonnes of carbon dioxide is generated by the homes and activities of regular church goers.

But care for God's creation, is deeply embedded in Christian tradition and the Bible. We must hand on unharmed this exquisitely beautiful, vastly intelligent, single-sourced yet wholly diverse creation to our children and grandchildren.

The **Archbishop of Canterbury** has challenged all Christians to examine and reduce their energy consumption in church buildings, homes and through personal lifestyles.

In response to this challenge the Diocese of Bristol has drawn up an environmental policy, with these aims:

- The Bristol Diocese recognises that we have disregarded the long term consequences of our actions.
- We need to renew our connection with the beauty and fragility of the environment.
- We understand that the vision of building communities of wholeness needs to be challenged to include a right relationship with the natural world.
- This Diocese is committed to seriously addressing the challenges that are outlined in this document.

Bishop Mike of Bristol says, "The Diocesan Environmental Policy gives churches the opportunity to work through how we might live differently, reduce the negative impact on the world around us and model something godly in our communities."

Key elements of Christian faith. The Biblical Vision:

The new environmental policy for the Diocese of Bristol affirms that:

We have been created by God as part of one great, interdependent living system with humankind being given special responsibility to care for the Earth, and all its creatures. We are inspired by the biblical vision of peace. We are empowered by Christ who through his death and resurrection reconciled all things in creation to himself, so making peace.

Core Commitment

The Bristol Diocese has set a target to **reduce carbon emissions**- both by church buildings and their related activities and through the lifestyles of every individual church member from young to old by a minimum of **10%** in each 3 year period.

Christ Church responds to this challenge

A small environmental action group called **EAGER** (Environmental Action Group for Energy Reduction) has been formed to examine the policy.

The Policy

The Diocese encourages parishes to include the issues (on the next page) in a written policy, with agreed actions. A summary of progress needs to be included in the annual report. Churches may tackle the issues in a rolling programme spread over three years.

All actions need to have targets, be challenging and be measurable.

The Policy Framework

This is a summary of issues to be included in the policy:

Reducing carbon emissions

Developing Awareness

Celebrating positive action

Encouraging individuals to make environmental concerns an integral part of their life

Purchasing sensitively

Highest eco standards in all new and refurbished buildings

Worship (incorporating environmental concerns)

Sustaining the natural environment

Social justice (locally and globally)

Socially responsible investments

Building partnerships (that support environmental & sustainable actions)

Other

The PCC has endorsed the recommendation of the Environmental Action Group, **EAGER**, to adopt the Policy.

The group agreed to gather suggestions from Home Groups for specific actions under each of the points in the policy framework.

Suggestions for Action from Christ Church members

This list is a starting point. Other ideas will always be welcomed.

- Reducing carbon emissions- both by church buildings and activities and through the lifestyles of individual members.

This is a quote from one home group. **“If people see the church building is making an effort and setting an example hopefully this will encourage people in their own lives to do the same.”**

- Developing awareness
 - a) displays in church e.g. Climate Change and Plastic Bag Pollution
 - b) use Parish Link magazine to:
 - show the policy and its proposals for action.
 - make people aware of what is happening.
 - give reports of events, actions and successes.
 - c) top tips in pew sheets, or leaflets in the pew.
 - d) have a workshop during church week-end at Lee Abbey in June 2009.
- Celebrating positive action e.g. walk, cycle or car share to church on some Sundays.
- Encourage individuals to make environmental concerns and choices an integrated part of their life and work.

Some Home Groups to pilot a six-week Bible study course, PLANET WISE. Looks at what the Bible says about caring for Earth. Bible based practical action should follow on from this.

- Purchasing - review what type of paper is used in office, the church and Haven House. Encourage future purchases of stationery, paper, toilet paper, to be from recycled sources, and cleaning and washing up products to be eco - friendly products.
- Seeking - the highest achievable environmental

standards in any refurbished buildings.

- **Worshiping** - incorporate environmental concerns and prayers. Provide resources to clergy and people involved with services. Start planning for Environment Sunday X XX 2009
- **Sustaining** - your own natural environment.
- **Tree planting** - local churches could spearhead campaign to get Downend to reduce its plastic and plastic bag usage after "Car Reduction Sundays" are established C.A.P. 2 (Christians Against Plastic!)
- **Supporting** - social justice both locally and globally. Christ Church already does this through its many mission partners.
- **Investing** - ethically. Treasurer and clergy could examine to ensure banking and investments are with environmental and socially responsible companies.
- **Building** - partnerships with existing environmental groups. e.g. Christian Aid, A Rocha, Friends of the Earth.

And now for Action...

While all parts of the framework are important **EAGER** would like to initially concentrate on three:

Reducing carbon emissions.

Developing awareness.

Celebrating positive action.

Taking Steps for God's Earth - proposed action plan for ENERGY REDUCTION IN THE CHURCH.

Aim:

Reduce carbon emissions of church buildings.

Action plan:

a) Invite an energy advisor to do an energy check on Christ Church, and North Street Hall, including the office. Then draw up an energy efficiency plan for each of these buildings and include them in the plans for the re-ordering of Christ Church.

b) Monitor bills for gas, electricity and water over a period of 6 months and implement measures to reduce consumption e.g. by changing light bulbs to the latest energy efficient ones and keeping a check on their use and switching off when not needed

c) Review our energy suppliers and change to one with green credentials.

d) Apply for 100% grants for the installing green renewable energy systems. N.B. Energy efficiency plans have to be in place as a pre-condition to these applications.

Taking steps for God's Earth - proposed action plan for regular CAR REDUCTION SUNDAYS.

Aim:

Reduce carbon emissions generated by people coming to church by car.

The idea of holding car reduction days and developing a green travel plan for the church was proposed by several home groups. If successful the model would like to be used by the Environmental Officer in other churches in the Diocese.

Doing something together is always more encouraging than "going it alone at home". Doing something together as a church community would be fun, make us fitter, and we may develop or deepen our friendships. It would save money, petrol, pollution, and in a stroke could have a significant effect on CO₂ levels in the area.

Walking to church:

People who are on the same route could knock on doors of fellow worshippers then walk and talk together until they arrive at church. A real social activity which they could come to look forward to!

Cycling to church: (Bristol is the cycling city of Britain!)

Get a cycle rack installed at church.

Make people aware that this facility is available.

Encourage and monitor its use.

If popular install some more!

Cycle storage possibilities:

- Near the front door of church.
- Near the back door of church near the bins.
- In the recesses of the side wall of the church.
- Many bikes could be locked to the railings adjacent to the car park and churchyard.
- Use one car space in car park for a cycle rack which could hold up to 10 bikes. This could be used by church goers, parents at the Infants school, Christ Church Medical Centre and people popping into the Traidcraft shop or some activity taking place

in North Street Hall.

Use of public transport.

Investigate what buses may be available and publicise them so people are able to make a choice.

Car sharing.

For people who are unable for whatever reason to participate in any of the above methods of getting to church, try to build on the present car sharing scheme and establish a culture of offering lifts to others so all seats in the cars are full thus contributing to reduction of car use and reduction of CO₂ levels.

Car Reduction Sundays – the future:

After the first of these days has taken place, promote the idea of continuing them on a regular monthly basis.

For further information see

www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org

Geoff Payne

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Nov 10th 2008

