

DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Document Overview

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to state the commitment of the Diocese of Coventry to sound, sustainable care of God's creation
Confidentiality	This document is not confidential
Document owner	Diocesan Secretary
Status note	Adopted by Diocesan Synod 15 March 2025
Distribution	No restrictions on distribution – the policy is to be shared widely across the diocese
Required action	
Proposed next step	

Version History

Version	Date	Status Note
1.0	2009	Adopted by the Coventry Diocesan Synod on 14 November 2009.
2.0	2019	Adopted by Bishop's Council 17 February 2020
3.0	2025	Bishop's Council reviewed 3 Feb 2025 and recommended to synod, Diocesan Synod adopted 15 Mar 2025.

Environment Policy

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” Psalm 24:1.

Purpose and Theological Basis

As members of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England and the Diocese of Coventry are committed to the Five Marks of Mission¹, as adopted by General Synod in 1996. The fifth Mark of Mission is: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”* Genesis 2:15. Yet humans have contributed or allowed the UK to become one of the most nature depleted countries on earth², due to a significant reduction in biodiversity since 1970. As Christians it is our duty to care for the earth and all living in and on it – God’s creation. On a global scale the effects of climate change are being felt, more so for those who have not contributed to the causes, we must act to ensure that God’s creation is not only sustained but repaired and improved for generations to come. This is not just a matter of biblical instruction; social injustice is at play as the poorest and most vulnerable communities are experiencing the worst impacts of climate change.

In February 2020 General Synod voted for the whole of the Church of England to work to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The vote recognised that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation and a fundamental injustice. In February 2024 General Synod added a number of measures to promote biodiversity across the Church of England estate³. We are in a position to take steps towards reconciliation; reducing and repairing the damage inflicted on creation by the actions of humankind⁴.

[Our Shared Future](#), the Diocesan Strategy approved by Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Synod in November 2022 includes a workstream focused on the environment: **“Renewing the Environment - caring for creation, both locally and globally.”**

Scope

This policy sets out aims and challenges for the churches, people and structures of the Diocese of Coventry. The policy is directly applicable to diocesan structures and bodies including Diocesan Synod, Diocesan Board of Finance Committees and staff and volunteers. It is hoped that the policy aims will also be adopted across other structures/organisations not directly under Diocesan Board of Finance control/influence, including PCCs, church members, Church of England schools, Coventry Cathedral and chaplaincies. It is recognised that everyone has a part to play in moving towards sustainable creation care.

Policy Aims

The Diocese of Coventry, in response to the environmental challenges facing creation, will:

1. Affirm the diocesan strategy; Renewing the Environment - caring for creation, both locally and globally.
2. Support the work of the Net Zero Steering Group, implement our Net Zero Action Plan for the Diocese. Including supporting churches to reduce their carbon footprint and reach Net Zero targets.
3. Take environmental concerns fully into account in our mission, worship, study, education, training, pastoral, administrative and other programmes and projects.
 - a. Monitor the environmental impact of our policies and plans, accepting that additional costs may be incurred in any resulting revisions.
 - b. Ensure that all diocesan funds are invested in line with ethical principles consistent with good environmental, social and corporate governance. [*Diocesan Synod approved a motion to divest from fossil fuels in November 2022*].
 - c. Ensure environmental training is included in standard diocesan training for both lay and ordained ministry with opportunities for training and development for other staff and volunteers.
4. Ensure that diocesan staff work in line with the Diocesan Office Environment Policy, and commit to regular review and update of the Office Policy and action plan.
5. Encourage and support our Diocesan Environment Group to:
 - a. Raise environmental concerns, awareness and opportunities through the communication structures of the diocese, and on behalf of the church with other partner organisations.
 - b. Work with partner church groups locally and internationally to raise mutual awareness in regard to climate change and species loss mitigation and resilience measures.
 - c. Support and promote the work of local, national and international environmental agencies⁵.
6. Encourage and support the Diocesan Board of Education to produce their own environmental policy.
7. Lead by example and promote locally sourced foods and produce and simpler lifestyles. Ask all members of the Diocese of Coventry to consider their personal impact on the environment in their daily lives, and to bring about change as a mission imperative.
8. Promote biodiversity improvements and climate resilience across our Glebe land holdings. This will include:
 - a. Mapping our holdings to understand their value and potential for biodiversity and climate action and, where appropriate, to facilitate collaboration with neighbouring land owners in larger landscape management schemes as we identify land of priority habitats.
 - b. Aiming to deliver the land-related milestones within the 'Church of England's Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030', and monitor the gains for nature and climate.
 - c. Encouraging the use of our land to raise awareness and appreciation of the natural world, and identifying partnership opportunities to deliver outcomes for nature and climate.
9. Ask all churches to join the Eco Church Scheme⁶ and submit Energy Footprint Tool results.
10. Maintain a network of Deanery Environmental Representatives to inspire, support and advise local parish churches, promoting an appreciation for and a greater sense of responsibility towards the environment.
11. Endeavour to achieve the Eco Diocese Silver award by the end of 2026.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The **Bishops of Coventry and Warwick** will show leadership and commitment to the principles and aims of the Environment Policy, aided by their appointed senior lead on environmental matters.

Diocesan Synod will review and approve the Environment Policy, in line with the overall diocesan strategy, ensuring commitment to the environment is embedded across diocesan structures.

The **Diocesan Secretary** will ensure that the Environment Policy is regularly brought to diocesan synod for review and approval, and that diocesan staff work in line with the Office Environment Policy

The **Diocesan Environment Group** will inspire, encourage and challenge the people, churches and structures of the diocese to live out the principles and aims of the Environment Policy. Details of their membership and work will be outlined in the DEG terms of reference.

The **Net Zero Steering Group** will oversee the implementation of the approved net zero action plan.

Policy Review

This Policy will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the Diocesan Environment Group, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, in line with standard diocesan governance procedures.

¹ www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission

² [State of Nature Report 2023](#)

³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/general-synod-backs-action-tackle-biodiversity-crisis>.

⁴ www.unep.org/facts-about-climate-emergency

⁵ In particular, the work of A Rocha UK (<https://arocha.org.uk/>), Operation Noah (<https://operationnoah.org/>) and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (<https://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/>)

⁶ <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/how-eco-church-works/>