



# Royston Parish Church Environmental Policy



## 1. Purpose and Scope

This Environmental Policy sets out Royston Parish Church's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions and to promoting sustainable living within the life of the church and the wider community. It provides a framework to guide decision-making, action and accountability across all areas of church activity.

## 2. Context

Royston Parish Church recognises the resolution passed by the General Synod of the Church of England on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 committing the Church to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In response, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) resolved that Royston Parish Church would work towards achieving net zero by 2030 and agreed to participate in the [Eco Church](#) scheme as a framework to support this commitment.

A "Sustainable Living Committee" has been established to guide, coordinate and support the church's collective progress towards net zero and wider sustainability.

## 3. Our Principles and Values

God created the world and everything in it. As Christians it is our responsibility to care for creation, using resources wisely so that climate change is mitigated, biodiversity protected or enhanced, finite resources conserved, and waste and pollution minimised. Seeking climate justice is part of Christian discipleship and practice.

## 4. Commitments and their Application

We apply our commitments across five key areas of action, as identified by the Eco Church scheme: Worship and Teaching; Buildings and Energy; Land and Nature; Community and Global Engagement; and Lifestyle.

### 4.1. Worship and Teaching

We communicate our biblical understanding of responsibility before God for all that is entrusted to us in creation. We seek to make clear the connections between environmental degradation, poverty and inequality. We strive to equip church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond faithfully and practically to these responsibilities.

#### Awareness

- This policy is owned by the PCC and will be communicated to the ministry leadership team, staff, volunteers and congregation, and will be publicly accessible, for example on the church website.
- We promote environmental awareness through our worship and teaching, including within liturgy, preaching, hymns and prayers; by observing Creationtide; by inviting external speakers where appropriate; and by sharing information and practical guidance through parish communications.
- The policy and its associated **Action Plan** are reviewed regularly by the Sustainable Living Committee, with progress communicated to the PCC and congregation and embedded in the life and practices of the church.

#### Skilled and Equipped

- We encourage the Ministry Leadership team, staff, members of the Sustainable Living Committee, and PCC members to undertake Carbon Literacy training to support informed and responsible decision-making.
- Subject to sufficient interest, we will offer further opportunities for church members to participate in Carbon Literacy training.

## 4.2. Buildings and Energy

We recognise the most significant part of our environmental impact arises from carbon emissions resulting from energy usage to light and heat the church. We are therefore committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions as far as practicable in pursuit of net zero carbon.

### Energy use (church building and church office)

- We assess and monitor our energy use annually, using the Climate Stewards 360° Carbon Calculator or an equivalent recognised measurement tool, with the aim of reducing it to net zero by reducing energy and resource use; replacing with low carbon and sustainable alternatives and offsetting unavoidable emissions as a last resort.
- An Energy Audit of the church has been commissioned through the Diocese, and we will review and seek to implement its recommendations where feasible.
- We are committed to only buying energy from renewable sources (working towards 100% renewable by 2030).
- We monitor our water, gas and electricity use and maximise efficiency of our usage.
- We encourage all church members to consider their energy use and to use green tariffs.
- When the existing gas boilers reach the end of their life, we will replace them with a more environmentally friendly alternative.

### Fabric

- Through the annual fabric review and quinquennial review, we monitor the upkeep of the building, ensure repairs are undertaken promptly and continually review ways in which we can improve.

### Operations

- We regularly review how we use the church facilities (heating protocol, lighting procedures, dishwasher usage, etc.) to ensure energy efficiency and communicate best practice.

### Climate resilience

- We seek to be an unofficial 'warm space' and 'cool space' during the winter and summer as the need arises.
- We will develop a Climate Resilience Plan

### Procurement

- We recognise that the decisions we make in what we consume for church life (such as materials, products, services, equipment and consumables) have an impact on the environment.
- Our procurement decisions minimise negative environmental impacts, where feasible, and aim to encourage positive action by suppliers and partners. Strong preference will be given to suppliers who take environmental responsibility seriously (e.g. Fairtrade/Rainforest Alliance, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), B Corp, etc). We seek to purchase appliances that are at least A-rated for Energy Efficiency.
- We aim to reduce use of paper. We aim to re-use paper (e.g. the non-printed side of previous printouts) where appropriate. We use recycled paper wherever feasible and otherwise use paper derived from sustainably managed forests.
- We aim to avoid the purchase of products and packaging that use non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials in the first instance (see [Just Money's ethical purchasing policy](#) for more information).

### 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, 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"*.

### Flowers

- We encourage the use of seasonal, locally sourced flowers and foliage – or artificial flowers, and to avoid single use non-biodegradable floral foam.

### 4.3. Land and Nature

We respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action, collaboration and campaigning.

#### Churchyard

- We have a separate [Land Management Policy](#) which details our management of church land.

### 4.4. Community and Global Engagement

We highlight and raise awareness that the climate and nature crises affect the poorest first and worst so our responsibility is to them and the places they live, wherever they are in the world, to promote justice for people and nature.

#### Advocacy and action

- We raise awareness and encourage participation in taking action to love our neighbour and care for creation.
- We seek ways to support and campaign on environmental issues as a whole church.
- We collaborate with, and encourage awareness of, local environmental groups and other churches to share resources and best practices (e.g. Royston Town Council Climate and Biodiversity working party, the Royston Environmental Group and the Methodist Church CANDO group).
- We seek to provide opportunities for marginalised groups in our community to have access to nature.
- We raise awareness about ethical finance.
- We organise or participate in community clean-up projects (such as litter picks).
- All toilets on our premises are twinned under the Toilet Twinning Scheme.
- We organise or participate in regular local walks encouraging people to enjoy God's earth.
- Through our engagement with Mission Partners, we participate in global environmental campaigns.

#### Food and drink

- We buy ethically traded products (e.g. Fairtrade Place or Rainforest Alliance) from local shops for our supplies of tea and coffee. For sugar, we either buy Fairtrade Sugar or low food miles sugar produced in the UK.
- We encourage the practical application of [Green Christian's LOAF principles](#) - local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded where possible.
- We encourage members to participate in periodic sustainability initiatives such as a Lenten carbon fast of Veganuary.
- We offer vegetarian or vegan alternatives at Social Events (e.g. Harvest Supper).
- We minimise food waste through planning quantities and by donating any leftovers.
- We advocate for non-dairy milk options.

#### Sustainable Travel

- We encourage people to consider their mode of transport for each journey and to aim to travel in an appropriate way that is environmentally friendly (e.g. walk, cycle, public transport or hold a meeting by zoom instead).
- We encourage lift sharing to church events.

#### Waste

- We are committed to working towards Zero Waste by practising and promoting the principle of "5R": Refuse, Reduce, Re-use/Repair, Recycle, Rot (compost).

#### Finance

- We are committed that a portion of our charitable giving goes toward charities that care for the environment or to support those who are adversely affected by climate change.
- We avoid banking with banks most heavily invested in fossil fuels.

- We do not knowingly invest in or deal with companies or organisations whose activities significantly conflict with our own environmental policy.

**Communication and promotion of Eco Church**

- We respond to enquiries and seek to promote Eco Church.

**4.5. Lifestyle**

We recognise that we have an impact on the world through the choices available to us and our use of money and resources. We strive to support our church family and wider community in bringing about positive change and care for God’s Earth. We seek to encourage our church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice. Our church has a strategy or plan to promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households, as follows:

**Sustainable lifestyle**

- We promote and encourage our church members to undertake personal auditing of individual and household carbon footprints
- We conduct ‘Lifestyle’ surveys of our church members to enable us to calculate our church’s Carbon Footprint and instruct us on our action plan.
- We 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.

**5. Implementation and monitoring**

7. Implementation

Delivery of this policy is supported by a rolling Action Plan, which sets out specific priorities, responsibilities, and measurable targets.

The Sustainable Living Committee reports **progress and updates** from the Action Plan to the PCC, and annual updates (including a summary of resource usage) to the wider church membership at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This policy document will be **fully reviewed** every three years or earlier as needed considering developments.

**6. Approvals**

Date policy updated:	<i>24 March 2026</i>
Date of next review:	<i>24 March 2029</i>
Name of Sustainable Living Committee chair:	<i>Clare Davies</i>