



FLAX BOURTON CHURCH ENVIRONMENTAL & NET ZERO POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

Policy statements

- We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship as affirmed in the fifth mark of mission - *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth*
- We recognise the climate and biodiversity crises and the fundamental injustice these represent.
- We are committed to managing our land for nature, whilst respecting the sacred nature of the burial and interment sites.
- We strive to take action locally, nationally and globally to tackle climate injustice.
- We understand that integrating creation care into our daily lives is an act of worship and obedience to God as we grow in discipleship.

Denominational commitment

As a member of the Church of England, we recognise the commitment to Net Zero Carbon made by the General Synod in July 2022 and in line with our denomination's commitment to net zero, we are committed to reducing our carbon footprint to zero by 2030.

Our principles and values

*What does the Lord require of you?
To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)*

As a church we are committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment.

Following the teachings of Jesus means loving our global neighbours and caring for creation. It is our responsibility to use 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. The climate crisis both reflects and feeds off inequality, exploitation and greed - often the communities who are suffering the most from its effects are those who have done the least to cause it.

We will aim to act in accordance with this understanding, making changes to improve our sustainability and to show solidarity with those across the world who are suffering in this crisis.

Our Commitments

Worship and Teaching

We will communicate our biblical 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 endeavour to equip the mission team, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.

Buildings and Energy

We recognise the most important environmental impact we can achieve will be an ongoing reduction of our carbon emissions, working toward net zero carbon.

Land and Nature

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

Community and Global Engagement

We will emphasize that the climate and nature crises hit the poorest first and hardest, making it our responsibility to stand with them and protect the places they call home, wherever they are in the world, to advance justice for both people and nature.

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 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 church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice.

We endeavour to promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households and model an example in our Eco-Pledge.

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FLAX BOURTON CHURCH ECO-PLEDGE

We will endeavour to ensure that...

- Our floral arrangements are foam free and any artificial flowers are reused. Flowers are locally grown, seasonal or Fairtrade.
- Our Communion Wine is Organic and Fair-Trade.
- Our candles are non-fossil fuel based-usually beeswax or soya.
- We recycle all our waste.
- The food we use at church events is 'LOAF'-locally sourced, organic, animal-friendly, fair trade.
- The cleaning products we use are Eco-friendly
- We avoid the use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and weedkillers.
- We measure and off-set our carbon footprint each year.
- Our fuel tariff is Green
- The mowing regime in our churchyard favours biodiversity

Proud to be an Eco-Church

Long Ashton, Barrow Gurney and Flax Bourton Family of Churches

Application

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

Worship and Teaching

- All mission team, staff, volunteers and church members will be made aware of this policy which will be regularly reviewed
- We will offer opportunities for more in-depth engagement with environmental issues through sermons and talks, small-group studies and discussions, local workshops and Diocesan training days.

Buildings and Energy

Energy Use

- We will assess our energy use annually, using Climate Stewards 360° carbon calculator measurement tool.
- We will set annual carbon reduction targets and review our progress annually.
- We will monitor our water use.
- We are committed to offset our carbon footprint with Climate Stewards.

Travel

- We are committed to minimising unnecessary travel and encouraging use of the least polluting means of transport.
- We will prioritise the use of public transport and bicycles over private cars for church business.
- We will consider the pros and cons of meeting in person versus online.

Fabric

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

Operations

- We will regularly review our heating and lighting plans to ensure energy efficiency.

Climate resilience

- We will seek to be a '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, equipment and consumables) have an impact on the environment.

- We will develop a separate Ethical Procurement Policy 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 endeavour to avoid the purchase of products and packaging that use non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials

Lettings

- Our Lettings policy includes the clause: *We try to maintain practices in and around the building that do not harm the environment, so we ask you please to use products that are ecologically friendly. Please would you also take away all your rubbish and dispose of it responsibly, recycling wherever possible.*

Land and Nature

Churchyard

- We have a Land Management Policy which details our management of the churchyard.

Community and Global Engagement

Advocacy and action

- We will raise awareness of, and encourage participation in, taking action as a means to 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.
- We will seek to provide opportunities for everyone in our community to have access to nature.
- We will raise awareness about ethical finance.

Accreditation

- We will seek to maintain our designation as a Fairtrade Place of Worship.

Food and drink

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

Sustainable transport

- We will encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport.

Waste

- We are committed to reducing waste, re-using and recycling waste as far as practically possible.

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 work towards banking with a bank that does not invest in fossil fuels.
- We will not knowingly invest in or deal with companies or organisations whose activities significantly conflict with our own environmental policy.
- We will actively seek to work with financial institutions that make a positive difference.

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.

Lifestyle

● Sustainable lifestyle

- We will work towards conducting an annual 'Lifestyle' survey 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.

Implementation and monitoring

- The Eco Team will report progress and updates from the Action Plan to the PCC.
- The Eco-team will review the targets and revise the Action Plan at least annually, reporting outcome to the PCC and congregation where appropriate.
- This policy document will be reviewed every two years or earlier as necessary

Annual Reporting (summary table)

	2023	2024	2025	2026
KwH electricity used	1190	874		
KwH of gas used	15092	11838		
Annual carbon footprint (result of 360°carbon) Ttl annual emissions kgCo2		515		
Water usage	11	9		

Action Plan

We have a 'Going for Gold' Action Plan which is updated at every Eco-Team Meeting (please see separate document)

Date policy updated: May 2025

Date of next review: May 2026