



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Eco Diocese Working Group

Progress Report & Diocesan Environment Policy

This paper provides an update on progress towards the aim of achieving a Bronze Eco Diocese Award by 2025, proposes a new Diocesan Environment Policy for approval, and recommends that the Eco Diocese Working Group should continue as a formal Working Group of the Policy & Finance Committee, reporting to the Bishop of Southwark and the Diocesan Secretary, in order to continue work towards the Eco Diocese Award.

The Bishop of Kingston is proposing the motion:

“this Synod welcomes and approves the Diocesan Environment Policy as the next step on our journey in line with the Fifth Anglican Mark of Mission (to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth).”

Background

1. In July 2019, Diocesan Synod approved a motion to register as an Eco Diocese and work towards achieving the Bronze Eco Diocese Award by 2025, preferably earlier. This recognised the role of the Church in caring for creation as God’s gift, and the urgency of addressing the irreversible changes that we are causing to our planet by our lifestyles and choices.

Progress

2. A detailed progress report against the criteria is included at Annex B. In summary, good progress has been made against all criteria, with church registrations having more than doubled since 2019 and most Deaneries in a recent survey indicating a desire to become an Eco Deanery. The main outstanding action in order to achieve the Bronze Award as a Diocese is the approval of a new Environment Policy.
3. In addition to this work we have also established within the Diocese a Carbon Net Zero Steering Group which is developing an action plan to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with guidance offered by the Church of England’s Environment Team. In the first instance the approach is focusing on quick and affordable wins such as switching to renewable energy and reducing energy loss, whilst developing a longer-term approach.

Environment Policy

4. The current Diocesan Environment Policy is excellent but needs updating in response to the gathering pace of action to the climate emergency and the Southwark Vision which was developed since the current Policy was published in 2012. The Bronze Eco Diocese criteria include a Diocesan Environment Policy which has been agreed by Bishops Council and Diocesan Synod, and which includes points on travel, environmental maintenance of vicarages, and a commitment to reducing diocesan carbon emissions. The new draft policy at Annex A has been approved by the Eco Diocese Working Group and the Diocesan Council of Trustees.
5. The draft policy is rooted in the Bible, the Fifth Mark of Mission, and the Southwark Vision's imagery of a fruitful future. It is a high-level policy document which sets a direction of travel for the Diocese and should not need frequent updates. It is not an action plan but will be supported by internal action plans such as the work of the Carbon Net Zero Steering Group and the Eco Diocese Working Group.
6. Significant changes in this policy since the previous one are:
 - The inclusion of a target to achieve Carbon Net Zero in the Diocese. This target of 2035 is less ambitious than the Church of England's 2030 ambition, but it will still be very challenging especially in the current financial climate.
 - Firmer commitments to training and reference to Mission Action Planning which build stronger links across different Diocesan functions.
 - Specific reference to maintenance of vicarages.
 - Proposal for a network of Eco Champions, based in Deaneries. Work to make the Diocese environmentally-friendly and carbon neutral cannot be achieved by a few people in Trinity House, or even by the Eco Diocese Working Group. This is a vision that people need to be committed to at a local level, in schools, parishes and Deaneries, and we want to draw together a network of local champions to share best practice and support each other on our journey.

This is why we are submitting the draft Diocesan Environment Policy for Synod's approval.

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The Diocese of
Southwark

The Diocesan Environment Policy



God's creative and redemptive love embraces not just humankind, but all creation (Psalm 148, Colossians 1, Romans 8, I Corinthians 15, Revelation 21).

The Church is called to participate in God's mission of love and salvation, embracing all five of the Anglican Marks of Mission in a manner which thoroughly intertwines them all in the story of salvation of all things in Christ.

– *The Bishop of Kingston, the Rt Revd Dr Richard Cheetham*



Church commitments: caring for God's gift of creation

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good" – Genesis 1:31

As the Bishop of Kingston says in his introduction, the Bible calls us all to respond to God's love by caring for the creation which he has given to us. The Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion reflect this explicitly in the fifth mark, which calls us to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Church of England has demonstrated its commitment to this responsibility by voting at General Synod in February 2020 to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in carbon emissions and "urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target"¹

“
The Archbishop of Canterbury,
the Most Revd Justin Welby
Responding to climate change
is an essential part of our
responsibility to safeguard
God's creation
”

The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

"We have a duty to care for creation which amounts to treasuring and protecting the land that grows our food, the water that we drink and the air that we breathe. Currently those who suffer most from climate change are the poor and vulnerable, both in our own community of South London and East Surrey where air pollution is a serious issue, and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe where so many face food insecurity due to global warming. The future for life on our planet should we fail to rise to the challenges being presented to us are even more troubling.

"Our efforts to protect the environment will look different in our many diverse churches, schools and parish communities, but we are called to a common purpose to safeguard the future of the Earth, the generous gift of creation given to us by God. Together we can make a difference for the better and that I believe is what we are being called to do. I commend this policy to the Diocese and encourage everyone in the specifics of your local context to commit to appropriate actions."



¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/general-synod-sets-2030-net-zero-carbon-target>.

A fruitful future in Southwark

The Southwark Vision 2017-25 is for a Diocese which is Christ-centred and outward-focused in all that we do. It outlines a fruitful future which includes a shared commitment to the integrity of creation.

Christ is the centre of creation. “He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (John 1:3). Any Christian response to climate change and the environment must start with him in whom “all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible” (Colossians 1:16). We must set out on our journey alongside Jesus, following his instruction to his disciples to tread lightly, to “carry no purse, no bag, no sandals” (Luke 10:4).

The earth is the shared home of all humankind, given to us for our shelter and sustenance as we seek to bring God’s Kingdom alive on earth as it is in heaven. Our focus outward is on honouring and protecting this earth in accordance with the environmental principles set out below.



Principles

The Diocese of Southwark is committed to a direction of travel which values and honours the earth and all its biodiversity as part of God’s Kingdom, and which seeks to safeguard this for future generations. This means that we will seek to adhere to three core principles in everything we do:

1. treading lightly on the earth, being always mindful of the environment and the care of creation in our decision-making and action;
2. remembering that the earth is a gift of God to be shared with all humankind, and so take only what we need, ensuring enough for all;
3. valuing the earth that shelters and sustains us and speaking up for the voiceless: those suffering the worst effects of climate change and the earth itself.

Commitments

Every parish, school and individual will seek to embody these principles in different ways, working together as a diverse fellowship to make God’s Kingdom present on earth as it is in Heaven. Some congregations are working to achieve Eco-Church awards, contributing to the Southwark Diocese target of becoming an Eco-Diocese by 2025, and all parishes and places of worship are encouraged to join the Eco-Church movement. Others speak out against climate injustice, or have individuals who are knowledgeable and passionate about sustainable lifestyle choices.

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education will build on their schools’ work in addressing these principles within their curriculum offer. It will also ensure that there is relevant training to encourage schools and their local church congregation to work together to secure Eco-Church Awards and to maximise their own commitment and response to this Diocesan pledge.

In this policy we recognise that there will be some areas of work where the Diocese can make its own decisions and set its own policies, and other areas where we are encouraging, helping and enabling others. This is in keeping with the Diocesan approach of Lead, Enable, Serve.

Diocesan commitments

As a Diocese, we are committed to:

- embedding care for creation in our worship and ministerial training, and encouraging all parishes to include reference to the Fifth Mark of Mission in their Mission Action Planning
- encouraging all parishes, schools and places of worship to embrace environmental themes in their worship pattern throughout the liturgical year
- where we have direct influence, taking environmental impact (emissions, waste and sustainability) and use of resources into account in our work, decision-making, travel, projects and programmes, and encouraging parishes and schools to embed this in their preaching, worship, decision-making, travel, and buildings maintenance
- subject to resources, developing a plan to maintain our vicarages to be as environmentally friendly and low-carbon as possible
- developing structures to support a greener future, including how to enable deaneries to provide local environmental support to parishes, for example through a network of Deanery Environmental Champions
- campaigning for wider change, raising our voices to influence policy-makers in local and national government
- measuring and reducing our carbon emissions, working with Archdeacons, parishes, schools and deaneries, to achieve carbon net zero before the Government target of 2050. While the national Church has set a target of 2030, we in Southwark, taking into account all other pressures, are aiming for 2035 and will review this ambition in 2025
- achieving the A Rocha Bronze Eco Diocese award by 2025, and thereafter working towards Silver and Gold Awards, and as part of this supporting and encouraging all our parishes to achieve Eco Church awards
- collaborating with a wide range of colleagues, both lay and ordained, to inspire and encourage all individuals in the Diocese to adapt their ways of living to minimise their impact on the environment, providing resources to support all church members to make care for creation central to how they choose to live.

*O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.*

*May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works.*

— Psalm 104: 24, 31



The Diocese of Southwark

Loving God
Walking with Jesus
Led by the Spirit

Luke 24:13-35

Luke 24:13-35

Luke 24:13-35



The Diocese of
Southwark



Eco Diocese Working Group

Eco Diocese Criteria & Progress Summaries

Since Diocesan Synod voted unanimously to work towards becoming an Eco Diocese in July 2019, strong progress has been made towards achieving the Bronze Award. In a recent Deanery Survey almost every response signalled the intention to become an Eco Deanery. The number of churches registered with the Eco Church scheme has more than doubled, as have the number achieving awards, and all the Bronze Eco Diocese Award criteria have been met subject to approval of the Environment Policy at Synod.

	July 2019	July 2021
Registered	45	108
Bronze Award	7	19
Silver Award	3	6
Gold Award	0	0

We therefore recommend that the Eco Diocese Working Group should continue as a formal Working Group of the Policy & Finance Committee, reporting to the Bishop of Southwark and the Diocesan Secretary, in order to continue work towards the next levels of the Eco Diocese Award scheme. The headings below are the criteria for the Eco-Diocese Bronze Award.

Register Intent & Commission a Group

1. The first steps towards Eco Diocese entailed formally registering with the Eco Church scheme at the A Rocha website. A working group was then established according to the governance structures of the Diocese, chaired by the Bishop of Kingston and reporting to the Bishop of Southwark and the Diocesan Secretary. The group has met three or four times a year since its establishment and is administered by the Diocesan Secretary's office.

Write an Environment Policy

2. A new environment policy has been approved by the Eco Diocese Working Group and the Diocesan Council of Trustees for submission to Synod.

Gain the Appropriate Levels of Local Church Registrations And Awards For Eco Church

3. The diocese has achieved the required targets to become a Bronze Eco Diocese. The targets for Bronze are that 10% of churches have registered and 5% of churches have achieved awards; Southwark has 24% registered and 7% with awards.

Achieve the Relevant Eco Church Award Level In Relation To Diocesan Offices

4. Trinity House has been registered as a building on the A Rocha Eco Church scheme and following a series of cost-free housekeeping adjustments (such as switching to eco-friendly cleaning products, committing to paper-saving etc.), has achieved sufficient points to earn the Bronze Award.

Embed Environmental Issues within The Curricula Of Its Ongoing Ministerial Education

5. The Director of Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education, Wendy Robins, has attended the Eco Diocese Working Group and works in collaboration with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team to embed environmental issues within the education scheme at the Diocese. In May, a training session on environmental matters was delivered to a group of curates, and a recent training programme with clergy from our link Diocese Zimbabwe revealed the potential to connect local clergy with those experiencing climate change abroad. In recent months, Zoom webinars, open to all, have been given on 'Eco Church' and 'Creation Care for Individuals'. Multiple events are being programmed for the new academic year for ordinands, clergy and lay people, including one led by the Bishop of Kingston.

Manage Diocesan Investments Ethically

6. Anthony Demby, recently retired as Director of Finance for Southwark Diocese, addressed the Eco Diocese Working Group in the meeting of April 2021. He advised the group that Diocesan investments were, and have been for some time, in line with the Ethical Investment Advisory Group's policies.

Work With Other Dioceses and/or Faith Groups

7. Members of the JPIC Team work with other Dioceses in various ways. Nicola Thomas, Head of JPIC, regularly meets with her counterpart at London Diocese. As a result of the connection with London Diocese, Laura Baggaley and Nelly Misenga have been able to pilot a 'Fair Energy Campaign' event in Southwark, building on work from a collaboration between London and Citizens UK. Laura Baggaley and Sue Mallinson both attend workshop and information events with other DEOs through the national network of Diocesan Environment Officers.

8. The interfaith environmental network, Faith for the Climate, is based in Southwark and the Board of Trustees is chaired by Giles Goddard, a member of our environment group. Interfaith events, such as London Climate Action Week workshops, are promoted to Southwark churches. Southwark Diocese also supports the ecumenical network, Churches Together In South London, and the Bishop of Woolwich recently chaired their 'Big Gathering: churches together for the climate'.

Establish the Habit Of Recording And Celebrating Individual Environmental Initiatives

9. Southwark Diocese regularly celebrates environmental achievements, through stories in The Bridge newspaper, through online blogs and via social media. We have initiated a new hashtag, #EcoSouthwark, and encourage churches to share their stories through tweets, emails and Facebook. The communications team also keep the Diocese up to date on forthcoming environmental events via Noticeboard and the E-bulletin, and the JPIC team post eco events and blogs, and contribute information and stories to periodic mailings (e.g. an environment section is regularly included in the Mission Newsletter).