

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. Psalm 24: 1-2

St Peter's PCC, Staff Team and congregation have continued to care for our environment in response to the climate crisis and our call to care for God's Creation. We are pleased to have recently submitted our application for an A Rocha Silver Eco Church Award. It is 4 years since we first adopted an environment policy. Environmental considerations have become part of our culture as a church. They are considered regularly in worship, church activities, and the management of our facilities.

Some of the activities and progress over the last year include:

Worship and Teaching –As well as a regular creation care focus in prayer and worship we enjoyed an Environmentally focused Harvest service, with Kathy Tedd speaking about the Tear Fund Rubbish campaign. The Eco Group shared ideas for Green Advent and Lent, as well as the weekly eco tips in the newsletter- please keep sending in your suggestions to share!

Buildings – We have calculated our carbon footprint, taking into account the energy we generate via our solar panels. We have committed to attempting to reduce our emissions to zero by 2030 in line with the Church of England's national target. Improvements this year include installing insulation in the first floor of the tower. A grant funded LED lighting throughout much of the building, and water saving devices were added to toilets that don't have a dual flush.

Land -We joined in the Churches Count on Nature, and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Creature Count at both Fernhill and the church grounds in June 2023. A Fernhill group has recently been established reporting to the Building and Land Sub Group of the PCC to enable improved working together between all the groups using the facility and the church. Initial mapping has been undertaken and a Land Management Plan developed. We were grateful for advice from members of the congregation with expertise in conservation and environmental management on mowing, invasive plant management, and improving biodiversity. We are appreciative of the ongoing work done by the Scouts, Bowls and Tennis Clubs to look after the land and facilities sustainably. We have an environmental 'to do' list for the church garden /car park area as well when we have the weather and person-power to progress it. If you are interested in helping with this – please let us know!

Community and Global Engagement - Our regular support continues for charities that campaign and support communities affected by climate change such as Tear Fund and Christian Aid as well as participating in the Big Plastic Count and Earth Hour this year. St Peter's is committed to being a Fair-Trade church, and a Community Ally for Plastic Free Shipley. Our church checklist for reducing single use plastics has been adapted and shared for wider use by Plastic Free Shipley. We also shared some experience with another local church to help them get started on their eco church journey. Our Welcome Space café uses local businesses where possible and makes good use of donated food that may otherwise be thrown away.

Lifestyle – So many useful tips are shared in our newsletter – please do keep sharing them and encouraging each other to make whatever small changes you can manage. We are looking at some more recycling facilities for harder to recycle items. We may need support to implement /manage these! There is a battery and stamp collection point on the hall lounge table.

The future As well as focusing on further improvements to work towards the Church of England target to be Carbon Net Zero by 2030 we need to maintain the positive things we are already doing,

so we have set up an annual planner to help us plan ahead and keep on target. The Eco Group's input to the Buildings and Land Group continues as well as regular reports to PCC.

If anyone would like more detail on anything or has an interest or expertise in any of the areas please do get in touch.

This is really a huge team effort involving so many of the church staff not least Jenni Reid, Katharine Leech, and Martin Fawley; group and worship leads; PCC; Buildings and Land group; Fernhill Group; and the whole congregation. Thank you to everyone for your support, interest, prayers, and commitment over the year. Particular thanks go to those who have implemented changes, managed projects, applied for grants, met to give advice, helped us plan, and to those who have made changes at home however small or large.

We hope to update you on the application for Silver Eco Award shortly!

Jackie Loach and Gemma Richards

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