



1.1 This policy is an agreed, documented statement of the Mersey Synod's stance towards the environment in which it operates. It draws on the Environmental Policy of the United Reformed Church, adopted by resolution of the General Assembly in 2016, which was updated by Mission Council in May 2019¹.

1.2 It is the cornerstone of our intent, as a body of people committed to caring for God's creation, to reduce our carbon footprint, minimise waste



- 3.10 Communicate with other churches in the local community (e.g. through Churches Together groups) to share information and activities relating to climate change and the environment.
 - 3.11 Identify and work with others in the local community who are involved in climate action and environmental initiatives e.g. councils, schools, low carbon and transition town groups, plastic-free and tree planting initiatives.
 - 3.12 Support international environmental and climate justice programmes e.g. Christian Aid and Tear Fund.
 - 3.13 Encourage church members and adherents to reduce their personal carbon footprints and to manage their resources more efficiently at home and in their travels.
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- 4.1 Appoint a Green Apostle to lead and coordinate the development and implementation of this Policy. This individual will report to the Mission & Discipleship Committee but also liaise with other Synod Committees (e.g. Resources and Pastoral) and the URC's Environmental Task Group¹¹ as required to achieve our Objectives.
 - 4.2 Inform the churches on where they can obtain resources



to achieve Silver and Gold awards will be reviewed at the first annual review- see section 5).

4.4 Encourage and help individual churches to participate in the national Eco Church initiative¹⁴ (A Rocha) and to implement action plans based on the results of the initial survey. This includes encouraging local churches to measure, record and reduce energy/water use and carbon emissions. A Rocha provides a wide range of resources to help with the development and implementation of action plans. Eco Congregation in Scotland¹⁵ operates a similar initiative and also provides a wealth of resources to help with implementation.

4.5

4.12 Help local churches to engage with their wider communities on these issues, e.g. where they exist through transition towns, low carbon communities, plastic free and tree planting initiatives.

4.13 Provide information to churches on national Christian organisations and initiatives which are involved in the climate change and action agenda e.g. Green Christian¹⁷ , Operation Noah¹⁸ and Christian Climate Action¹⁹.

4.14 Provide information to churches on international and national developments on climate change and carbon reduction measures and technologies which are relevant to the churches.

Monitoring of this Policy will be undertaken by:

- Reporting on progress towards achieving Eco Synod status (annual report to Synod in March after annual returns are received)
- Reporting on progress with Eco Church registrations and awards (annual)
- Collating and sharing data on carbon footprint measurements and reduction targets set by individual churches
- Providing examples of best practice/case studies
- Producing an annual report to the Mission and Discipleship Committee on the progress achieved and future plans and initiatives

This Policy will be subject to an annual review by the Mission and Discipleship Committee and any recommendations for revision will be submitted to the Synod.

Richard Pearce

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¹⁷ <https://greenchristian.org.uk/>

¹⁸ <https://operationnoah.org/>

¹⁹ <https://christianclimateaction.org/>



At the 2016 General Assembly, the United Reformed Church (URC) commended the Eco Church award scheme within the context of its new Environmental Policy.

The URC has since worked with A Rocha UK to develop Eco Synod as a tool by which Synods can encourage local churches to engage in wider creation care.

The Eco Synod Award is a development of Eco Church whereby a URC Synod can register its interest in and work towards an award. The two awards are designed to



8. Worked with other denominations and/or faith groups to encourage greater environmental action, including promoting Eco Church as a helpful tool

9. Established the habit of recording and celebrating individual environmental initiatives

*Note: Based on recent data, 6 churches in the Mersey Synod (i.e. 7.4%) have registered for Eco Church but none have achieved any awards (). This compares with about 15% of all URC churches in England & Wales being registered for Eco Church and 4% achieving awards (mainly Bronze).



Big Energy Saving Week (usually third week in January): Aimed mainly at domestic consumers: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/blog/big-energy-saving-week-2020>

Earth Hour (March 27th 2021 8.30 to 9.30pm) A time to switch off your lights at home for an hour and a list of 20+ things you can do for a memorable (and impactful) on-the-night experience all from comfort of your home: <https://www.earthhour.org/>

Earth Day (April 22nd every year): The theme for Earth Day 2020 was climate action. The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary: <https://www.earthday.org/>

World Environment Day (June 5th): <https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/>

Plastic Free July: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/get-involved/what-you-can-do/>

Climate Sunday (Churches Together Britain and Ireland): <http://climatesunday.org/>

Season of Creation: The Season of Creation is a time to slow down and focus on what matters. During this special time each year, we repair and restore our relationships with each other and with all creation. From September 1st to October 4th, Christians around the world celebrate the Season of Creation. Join us in this season of care: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

The Sustainability Book online. Texts and resources about the Sustainable Development Goals that you can use with your congregations, gatherings or for your own reference.



Climate Stewards helps churches to offset unavoidable carbon emissions by supporting community forestry, water filter and cookstove projects in the developing world. <https://www.climatestewards.org/>

Christian Climate Action is a community of Christians supporting each other to take meaningful action in the face of imminent and catastrophic anthropogenic climate breakdown <https://christianclimateaction.org/>

Eco Congregation Scotland: <https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/>

Green Christian is a community of Christians from all backgrounds and traditions. Inspired by our faith, we work to care for Creation through prayer, living simply, public witness, campaigning and mutual encouragement.
<https://greenchristian.org.uk/about/what-is-green-christian/>

Green Journey is a consultancy which helps churches to reduce overall energy costs while improving green credentials and reducing environmental impact:
<https://greenjourney.org/>

Operation Noah is a Christian charity working with churches to inspire action on the climate crisis: <https://operationnoah.org/>

URC Environmental Task Group: <https://urc.org.uk/caring-for-creation>

Climate Stewards 360 Carbon Footprint: <https://360carbon.org>

A Rocha Guide to Carbon Footprint Reduction: <https://3ak4be4522es3y5i4l2cwfkx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Buildings-Guide-to-Carbon-Footprint-Reduction-Schemes.pdf>

Eco Congregation Scotland Guide:
<http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/ideas-for-action/global-living/manage-carbon-footprint/>

World Wildlife Foundation environmental footprint calculator (simple and fun to use): <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

CoGo carbon footprint tracker/App: <https://cogo.co/>

InnerPlanet App to help people to measure their carbon footprints:
<https://www.innerplanet.world/>



<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/What-is-Fairtrade/Fairtrade-and-sustainability>

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Media-Centre/Blog/2017/June/Fairtrade-projects-cope-with-climate-change>