**St Gregory and St Martin’s Church, Wye - Environmental Policy**

**Introduction**

The story of creation tells that God appointed humans to be stewards of life on Earth (Genesis 1: 26-28). However, this is not reflected in how we Christians treat our environment. Instead our actions have contributed to the widespread extinction of species and human-induced climate change (the biggest environmental challenge we face) is damaging the most vulnerable people on earth and could ultimately jeopardise our very existence. In their joint message for the protection of creation[[1]](#footnote-1), representatives of the major Christian faiths said the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them”. They went on to say, “All of us – whoever and wherever we are – can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation”.

*"It is our moral duty to care for God's creation".*

Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher,

lead Bishop for the Environment in the Church of England,

**Our mission and commitment**

St Gregory and St Martin’s Church, Wye, achieved a silver level Eco Church award in September 2024. We believe that care for creation is fundamental to the church’s mission and we are committed to: affirming the fifth mark of mission “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life on earth” as central to our worship, life, work and mission. In particular:

* We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship. 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 strive to equip leadership, staff, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.
* We recognise the climate and nature crises and the fundamental injustice these represent. We acknowledge that the most important environmental impact will be an ongoing reduction of our carbon emissions. We will seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as much as we can, working toward net zero carbon with an awareness of the Church of England’s commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
* We recognise the significant contribution churches can make to the UK’s target of 30% of land protected for nature by 2030. We will respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action in the management of our churchyard,
* We recognise the impact of the climate and nature crises locally, nationally and globally. We will 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..

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.

**Our principles and values**

As Christians we live by a creation mandate to be good stewards of God’s world: Genesis 1:26-31 and celebrate with the Psalmist that “The Earth is the Lord’s”. We are committed to the principles of:

* Complying with environmental legislation.
* Minimising carbon emissions from energy used in our church building by reducing the amount of energy used and buying energy from renewable sources as far as possible.
* Minimising the use of finite natural resources (including water) and using, as far as possible, renewable or recycled resources.
* Minimising waste (including paper as well as avoiding the use of disposable plastics) and applying the principle of: reduce, reuse, recycle.
* Minimising energy use from travel (e.g. avoiding the need to travel and where travel is necessary using public transport, using electric cars, cycling or walking).
* Applying ethical and green procurement procedures and using fairly traded and environmentally friendly products.
* Praying about and campaigning on environmental issues.
* Enhancing our churchyard for wildlife, as well as for relaxing and peaceful enjoyment.
* Encouraging a sustainable lifestyle within the congregation and local community.
* Working with others in our local community on environmental issues and initiatives.
* Seeking climate justice for those who have done least to cause the crisis.

**Our aims**

Our aims are:

* To lead the church and wider community in caring for creation and in demonstrating good environmental practice.
* To work with and encourage other churches within the United Wye Benefice, as well as other denominations and faiths in Wye, to take action in caring for creation and to register as Eco Churches.
* To provide information and resources to support action for the environment by all, and to encourage the sharing of good practice.

These aims will be achieved through the delivery of the Environmental Action Plan, which is a separate working document.

**Review**

Responsibility for this policy lies with Wye PCC and the Eco Church Working Group. The policy will be reviewed every three years by Wye PCC, which will also be responsible for overseeing the action plan.

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| **Environmental policy review schedule** | |
| **Date of review by the Eco Church Working Group/PCC** | **Date of approval by the PCC** |
| 16th July 2018 | 16th July 2018 |
| 8th October 2024 | 8th October 2024 |
| 20th January 2025 | 20th January 2025 |
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1. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sites/abc/files/2021-09/joint-statement-on-the-environment.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)