

# 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. Representatives of the major faiths, including Archbishop Justin Welby, said climate change has already hit the poorest of the world hardest and urgent action is needed now to protect future generations<sup>1</sup>. Thus the environment has become an issue of justice and survival which churches and communities can no longer ignore.

In his lecture on 'Christian hope'<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Justin Welby said: "Each person is involved in a complex web of relationships beginning with the relationship that is within the Trinity; then the relation between God and humanity, relations within the human family, with the environment and with the natural world". Thus our relationship with the natural environment is integral to our relationship with God.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams wrote: "For the Church of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is therefore central to what it means to be a Christian". Care for the environment should therefore be a central component of our Christian practice.

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5569/archbishop-joins-faith-leaders-calling-for-action-on-climate-change>.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture on 'Christian hope' given in Moscow on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017. Available at: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5907/archbishops-gives-lecture-on-christian-hope-in-moscow>.

## Our principles

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.
- Taking action to address environmental issues, particularly climate change (e.g. by reducing carbon emissions).
- Minimising the use of finite natural resources (including water) and using, as far as possible, renewable or recycled resources.
- Minimising waste (including 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.

## 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

This policy will be reviewed every three years by Wye PCC, which will also be responsible for overseeing the action plan.

Environmental policy review schedule	
Date of review by the Eco Church Working Group/PCC	Date of approval by the PCC
16 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024