



Horfield Methodist Church

The Story of our Eco Church Journey

Version 2. February 2023



We hope to
welcome all
serve the community
spread God's love



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1. Eco Church Explained

Eco Church;A Rocha is an award scheme for churches throughout England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's Earth.

This is a free online resource. We can use the online survey and resources to find out how we are doing and measure the progress we make. We can see how we are expressing our care for God's world through worship, teaching, and in how we look after our building and land. Also in how we engage with the local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of our congregation.

The things we do and the changes we make count towards a prestigious Eco Award. There are three awards, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

We are the proud recipients of both the Bronze and Silver awards and are looking at how we could one day achieve Gold award status.

2. What have we been doing?

We set up our Eco Group, volunteers who have joined together to steer the church on its Eco journey. The group have looked at how we are impacting on the environment and what we can do better. The group is meeting regularly and our focus is on improving and reducing our impact on the community around us. We are working on five key areas;

Worship and Teaching - making sure we have Special Sundays which relate to caring for God's earth. Our hymns and songs enable us to celebrate God's creation regularly. We pray for the environment and issues that the world is facing. *already achieving gold standard*

Buildings - we have calculated our carbon footprint and are setting targets to reduce and improve our footprint and ensure our energy use is efficient. *currently silver standard*

We have looked at all the aspects of our building eg, insulation, lighting, window glazing, paper and plastic usage, recycling, cleaning products used

Land - Our garden club is working to ensure that the small outside space we have, supports the local wildlife. We think carefully about what is planted and how we maintain the land. *currently silver standard*

Community and Global Engagement - some members of our church are involved with local conservation work eg, with A Rocha UK Partner in Action, RSPB/Wildlife Trusts nature reserve. Some are involved in or have participated in a community clean up project. Our church financially supports an environmental charity - Grow Wilder in 2022, Earthwatch in 2023. *currently silver standard*

Lifestyle - we encourage members to limit their waste by adhering to the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle. We operate a communal Christmas card scheme. Our church funds are ethically invested and we encourage others to think about who their money is invested. Our notices give practical tips and advice on caring for God's earth. We meet online when we can to save on fuel, travel and heating costs. *already achieving gold standard*

3. Carbon Footprint Guide

Global Warming and your Carbon Footprint explained

Global Warming is changing the environment and impacting on people's ways of living. The situation is getting worse and it is vital we do something about it. This document will try to give simple explanations for the situation and its solutions.

What are greenhouse gases?

The earth is warm enough to sustain life thanks to the gases in the planet's atmosphere that hold heat - these are the greenhouse gases (basically they act just like a greenhouse in trapping the heat inside our atmosphere). We are often described as the goldilocks of planets, the greenhouse gases that naturally occur ensure the temperature is just right to sustain and nurture life.

The earth's temperature

The average temperature of the earth is 15 degrees Celsius. The more greenhouse gases held in our atmosphere the hotter the temperature gets. The 2 main greenhouse gases both occur naturally, but are increased by human activity;

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) - occurs naturally as it flows in a cycle between oceans, soil, plants and animals, humans produce more from burning fossil fuels, such as coal and oil.

Methane (CH₄) - occurs naturally in swamps and in anything that decomposes naturally without air, humans produce it by rotting garbage, wastewater, gas from livestock and rice crops.

How are we increasing the earth's temperature?

Our energy use - we get our energy from burning fossil fuels and this releases almost three quarters of all the human produced greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We burn fossil fuels to provide electricity and heat, also in manufacturing (factories) and transportation.

Our land use - how we remove forests and use land has a big impact on human produced greenhouse gases. Trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Logging and clearing land for agriculture and development means the carbon dioxide stays in the air.

Your Carbon Footprint (the amount of greenhouse gases you produce)

Your carbon footprint is how much carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere as a result of your activities/energy use.

Simple Ways You Can Reduce Your Carbon Footprint (the amount of greenhouse gases you produce)

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Eat less (or no) meat. - going vegetarian has the same impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions as if you trade in a regular car for a hybrid. To produce 1 pound of meat uses ten times more energy than making 1 pound of beans or grains.

Use Green Energy - don't worry if you can't afford solar panels or a wind turbine, just ensure your home energy supplier is supplying renewable energy and you're on their green tariff.

Travel Smart - fly less or not at all, use public transport if you can, cycle or walk if you're able, minimise your driving. Our eco group meet online, saving on travel and energy use.

Only use the energy you need - switch off lights when you leave the room, turn down the thermostat, don't leave things on standby. Switch to low energy, LED light bulbs.

We are each responsible for our actions and decisions and **we can make a difference**.

3.1 Our own carbon footprint

Managing our own carbon footprint means we can become part of the solution and help in our

own small way to contribute to stabilising the issues that God's earth is facing.

We have calculated our carbon footprint. By knowing our footprint we can start to address our issues, see any inefficiencies/waste and even reduce costs.

This means we are looking at our emissions. These are generally things we have control over in some way, eg turning off the lights when they're not needed, or deciding who to buy our energy from.

The areas we have looked at are covered by the following categories; **People, Energy, Travel, Food/Drinks, Expenditure, Waste & Water**

People

How often is the church occupied?

The number of services in a year

The use of the church by other groups, how often, how many etc

We are looking at the total occupied time of the church in any year and how many people have use of our building

Energy

What is our energy consumption in a year?

Travel

How do our congregation and staff travel to and from church?

Food/Drink

How many hot drinks/hot meals are we serving in a year?

What food and drinks are we preparing?

Expenditure

What is our spend in a number of areas, such as IT, building and grounds, postage, printing etc?

Waste & Water

How is our waste dealt with and how do we dispose of water?

3.2 Carbon Footprint & Offsetting Our Emissions

Our carbon footprint was 25.01 tCO₂ in 2021.

To put this in perspective the average carbon footprint of a UK household is 2.7 tCO₂ in energy use alone. The average carbon emissions of each individual in the UK is 12.7 tCO₂.

This was over 3tCO₂ less than our baseline figure pre covid (28.43 tCO₂) and the following would have impacted this;

People

we were still in lockdown at the start of the year and our in person worship didn't start until May.

user groups didn't return until April and some of our other groups started later than this or have not returned yet.

Energy

we now get credit for the electric energy supplied on our contract by Eon as this is 100% renewable

we also get credit for the some of the gas supplied by British Gas.

Food/Drink

No hot food/cooking has taken place this year

We offset the emissions we couldn't reduce by making a contribution to A Rocha. A payment of £500.10 was made to support projects such as;

Biosand Water Filters (Uganda) - the supply of biosand water filters to poor communities in Kampala - these provide clean water for families and save 0.9 tCO₂ per year

Fireless Cookers (Uganda) - a fireless cooker (families are taught how to make their own fireless cooker - it's a heavily insulated basket made from local materials. It allows them to prepare a meal in the morning on a conventional fire, bring it to boil, douse the fire immediately to save fuel then place the stew in the fireless cooker which then acts as a slow cooker and cooks the meal during the day using 0 energy - this saves about .74 tCO₂ per year, cuts fuel costs and reduces lung and eye disease from smoke.

Smokeless Metal Stoves (Nepal) - installing fuel-efficient cookstoves in the Humla District of north-western Nepal. Each stove will avoid the emission of 6.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

3.3 Our 2022 Carbon Footprint

Our carbon footprint in 2022 was 28.18tCO₂.

2022 has seen the building coming to life again post covid and the restrictions this imposed on us. As the year progressed the numbers of people using our building increased and we have seen the return of tea and coffee after worship and numbers increasing at our user groups. We finished the year with approximately 600 people using our building each week.

We have also been able to open the church for Eco coffee morning events, the queens funeral and carol services etc. New user groups have started to hire the premises eg, Pathfinders and the Bartholomites drama group. The Christian Believers Fellowship now meet and worship in the church Sunday afternoons.

We had some major work completed in 2022, with the old hall floor being replaced, loft insulation installed and pipes being lagged.

We will again offset the emissions we couldn't reduce by making a contribution to A Rocha, but also making a donation to Earthwatch, who are planting Tiny Forests in cities around the UK. These are areas of closely planted trees which grow quickly and are maintained and monitored. We have our own Tiny Forest here in Bristol, Southmead on the Trym Valley. One of our members helped mulch the trees in 2021. For more information about this important project go to; www.tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk

The amount donated to offset our emissions is £670 for 2022.

4. Garden Group

Within the ECO group a sub Garden Group was set up to specifically look at the land. In 2022 we achieved the following;



- A full survey of all the wild and cultivated plants on our land was carried out. Also, a list is kept of any identifiable insects, birds and animals. A wildlife camera was put out 3 times, unfortunately no creatures were seen. On the site there are shrubs with berries in Autumn, plants with seeds and many nectar and pollen bearing plants. These will feed birds, insects and pollinators.
- Wild areas at the back and side of the church are allowed to grow unmanaged. Brambles next to paths and walls are kept trimmed but the main areas are left undisturbed. This allows wild creatures to live freely and plants to grow and seed with little interference from people.
- Two areas at the front of the church have been turned into small gardens (see photos). Previously they were just brambles and grass. They are planted up with pollinator friendly perennials. All are divisions taken from a member's garden, so no cost was involved. The soil is very shallow and solid clay but the plants have survived the hot and dry Summer and are flourishing.
- All the vegetation cut back and removed is piled up and allowed to rot down providing a good habitat for insects, mammals and reptiles.
- Stick and stone piles have been placed around the site to create habitats for wildlife.
- A management plan for the land was agreed. Shrubs are only cut back to provide access for maintenance. The grass at the front is only mown once a month. Any flowering wildflowers in the grass are left to grow and self seed and the grass left longer.
- Two bird boxes, suitable for Robins and wrens, have been sited amongst the brambles at the side of the church.
- A Salvia Royal Bumble (pictured below) was planted to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee. It is pollinator friendly and requires little maintenance. A descriptive (handmade using 'found' wood) plaque was installed next to it,



One of our members volunteers at Grow Wilder, a local charity acting as a positive force for change. Their goal is to bring about urgent action for the restoration of wildlife by educating and empowering people, communities and businesses to make positive changes through wildlife-friendly gardening and sustainable food growing. We supported this charity in 2022 through our fundraising and raising awareness of the work they do.



Tasks for the future:

Scarify a small area of grass and sow wildflower seeds from Grow Wilder.

Put some more plants in the “mini garden”

Another plant and animal survey in Spring.

5. 2022 Achievements and the future as we continue on this journey

Things we have achieved;

- 1) We offset our emissions and agreed to always offset our emissions at the end of every year
- 2) We had 2 successful fundraising events for our ECO projects.
- 3) Carried out a draught audit of each room in our building - work still to do on getting some windows sorted - areas of concern highlighted in the green room, office and kitchen.
- 4) Completed a DIY project to put insulation above the office upstairs and lag the pipes in the yellow room. This was all thanks to a grant we received from **Quartet Community Foundation**.



The work being completed by the 30th November 2022.

- 5) We set up a drop off zone for printer cartridges at church. We collect these and when we have enough we can send to Recycle4charity. They will pay for certain cartridges on their wanted list and this money can be given directly to a nominated charity or we can nominate our own charity - this could be climate stewards who run the carbon footprint toolkit we use and the money earned can be linked to our offsetting target. They will take all cartridges, so we will save them from landfill even if they are not all ones that they will pay for. This resulted in a £31.50 payment to Climate Stewards and helps towards our offset amount for 2022.
- 6) Had 3 Local Arrangement Services at church where the environment and the climate crisis were our focus.

Our goals and aims in 2023;

- 1) when serving food/drinks at any time have a vegan/veggie option, a non cows milk option
- 2) use organic products when we can
- 3) buy local when we can
- 4) We endeavoured to use only fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar at any events at church. In January 2023 we were awarded Fairtrade Church status. We will actively promote Fairtrade during 2023 and encourage our members to make the switch at home.
- 5) Continue with the communal card scheme at Easter/Christmas - this proved popular at Christmas 2022.
- 6) Continue to push the message to the congregation and user groups eg, - car share if they can, walk if they can, switch off lights that are not being used, recycle all they can, reuse, reduce....
- 7) Encourage people to do their own lifestyle audits - calculate their own carbon footprint.
- 8) Get people to think about where they bank/invest money - are their investments ethical? Is their bank investing in the fossil fuel industry?
- 9) Have at least 3 church services in the year dedicated to an Eco theme
- 10) Hold 2 Eco events, where we promote the message, attract members of the local community. educate, inform. Highlight the work we are doing and the issues surrounding the climate crisis we face.
- 11) Engage with local MPs. Councillors, be more vocal and challenge climate injustice.

At the start of 2023 we will be focusing on the Community and Global Engagement section of Eco Church. We want to increase our activity and look at how we can achieve Gold status in this category. We believe with the work being undertaken at the start of 2023 that we will achieve Gold status in the Land section.

Our energy contracts tie us in until 2024, but we commit to reviewing these to make sure they are the best ECO option when the time comes.

6. If you want more info who to contact

If you want to hear more or are interested in getting involved then just ask one of the Eco Group. They are;

Eurfron Parry
John Parry
Helen Wallbridge
Monique Brocklesby
Lou Carias
Asmin Taylor
Audrey Bainbridge
David Bainbridge
Janet Browning
Margaret Postlethwaite
Bob Walters
Lorraine Richardson

7. Useful contacts and resources

www.ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk

www.arochoa.org.uk

www.climatestewards.org

www.growwilder.co.uk

www.fairtrade.org.uk

www.rewildingbritain.org.uk

www.climatehero.me

www.footprint.wwf.org.uk

www.christianclimateaction.org.uk

www.tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk

www.greenpeace.org.uk

The book How to Save The World For Free, by Natalie Fee - available to borrow from Lou or Eurfron.