

Waltham Abbey Church

Environmental Policy & Action Plan



Policy statement

We recognise the urgency of the climate and nature crises and the fundamental injustice these represent.

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 take the practical steps necessary to strive toward safeguarding the integrity of creation and sustaining the life of the Earth.

Denominational commitment

The climate emergency is a global crisis. It is also a fundamental injustice for people living in countries who have seen the worst effects of global warming, and whose lives have been forever changed.

As part of its commitment to creation, the Church of England has committed to reach net zero carbon by 2030.

In line with that commitment, locally we will take steps to reduce our carbon footprint year on year.

Our principles and values

We worship a God who loves the Earth and calls us to care for it.

We are but one part of creation: we cannot think of ourselves as isolated from others or the environment. Jesus has redeemed all things through his death and resurrection.

We have a special responsibility to care for the Earth so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1.19,20, NIV)

Our church is committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment.

As Christians it is our responsibility to care for creation, using resources wisely so that climate change is mitigated, biodiversity protected or enhanced, finite resources conserved, and waste and pollution minimised.

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
(Psalm 24:1, NIV)

Seeking climate justice is part of Christian discipleship and practice.

Following Christ's teachings means loving our global neighbours and caring for creation. The climate crisis both reflects and feeds off inequality, exploitation and greed: often the communities who are suffering the most from its effects, particularly in the Global South, are those who have done the least to cause it.

We will aim to act in accordance with this understanding, making changes to improve our sustainability and to show solidarity with those across the world who are suffering in this crisis.

"The most important [commandment] is this: ... 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31, NIV).

Our commitments

As a local church we are committed to responding to God's call to care for his creation, including by participating in the A Rocha UK Eco Church award scheme

Worship and Teaching

We will communicate our Christian understanding of responsibility to God for all that is entrusted to us through creation, making the links between poverty, wealth and environmental degradation.

We aim to equip leadership, staff, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.

Buildings and Energy

We recognise the most significant 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.

Land and Nature

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, collaboration and campaigning.

Community and Global Engagement

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.

Lifestyle

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 seek to encourage our church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice.

Action Plan

Worship and Teaching

- We will aim to ensure all working and worshipping in our church can access Carbon Literacy Training
- We will continue to embed creation care into our worship and aim to formalise this

Buildings and Energy

- We will develop, formalise and strengthen a Net Zero Carbon action plan
- We will aim to ensure regular roof and gutter maintenance to prevent damp entering the building and warm air escaping.
- We will aim to fix any broken window panes and make sure opening windows shut tightly, to reduce heat loss.
- We will aim to install insulation around any currently uninsulated heating pipes
- We will investigate LED lighting in remaining locations in church and at the Abbey Church Centre, and installation of motion sensors in vestries, toilets and other areas of lower footfall.
- We will investigate options to draught-proof door and other gaps.
- We will continue to complete the Energy Footprint Tool each year, as part of our Parish Return, and communicate the results.

Land and Nature

- We will develop, strengthen and implement our management plans for the land surrounding the Abbey Church Centre

Community and Global Engagement

- We will develop a plan to make explicit and embed our current advocacy and action locally, nationally and globally, and extend this.
- We will develop a plan to reduce our waste in the Abbey Church and Abbey Church Centre.

Lifestyle

- We will develop a programme of newsletter articles to publicise our Eco-church activities and promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households.

Targets

To achieve an Eco-Church Bronze award before July 2027

To reduce our Carbon Footprint as recorded via the Energy Footprint Tool each year (next reporting for 2026 expected to reflect reduction against 2025 due to switch to Green Gas at Church already undertaken).

Date policy adopted: Abbey DCC 17 September 2025

Date of review and revisions adopted: 15 September 2026

Next review due: September 2028