Environmental Policy and Action Plan

Ramsden St URC Spring 26

Policy statements

We recognise 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 recognise the need to manage our limited land for nature.

We recognise that we need to take action locally, nationally and globally to tackle climate injustice.

We recognise that integrating creation care into our daily lives is an act of worship and obedience to God as we grow in discipleship.

Denominational commitment

As a member of the United Reformed Church, we recognise the commitment made by North-Western Synod at March Synod 2025.
In line with our denomination's commitment to net zero, we have committed to reduce our carbon footprint.

Our principles and values

God created the world and everything in it.
God has created an awesome and majestic cosmos to bring him praise and glory. We are but one part of his created order. Jesus has redeemed the whole earth 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.
*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (*Genesis 1:1, 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.
Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it… (Isaiah 42:5, 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. *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God* (Micah 6:8, NIV).

Our Commitments

Worship and Teaching
We will share our biblical understanding of responsibility to God for all that is entrusted to us through creation, making the links between poverty, wealth and environmental breakdown. We will strive to equip leaders, staff, volunteers and church members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.

Buildings and Energy
We recognise 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.

Land and Nature
We will respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action, collaboration and support 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 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 church has a strategy or plan to promote ethical and environmentally aware lifestyle choices and consumption patterns by individuals and households.

Application

We are committed to applying these principles in the following areas:

Worship and Teaching

- **Awareness**
    - All Elders and the Minister, volunteers and church members will be made aware of this policy and it will be accessible on our website.
    - This policy and action plan will be regularly reviewed at leadership meetings, communicated and embedded in work plans.

- **Skilled and equipped**
    - We will encourage the Leadership Team and eco-enthusiasts to receive Carbon Literacy training.
    - We will offer other church members the opportunity to complete Carbon Literacy training or other relevant topics as interest is shown.
    - We will offer opportunities for more in-depth engagement with environmental issues through our worship and activities .

Buildings and Energy

- **Energy use (building)**
  - We will assess our energy use annually, using Climate Stewards 360°carbon calculator measurement tool.
  - We will aim to reduce our carbon footprint and review our progress annually.
  - We will monitor our water use.
  - We recognise that digital data has a footprint and we will encourage regular digital clean-ups.
  - We will encourage staff working from home to consider their energy use and switching to a green tariff.
  - We are committed to offset our carbon footprint with Climate Stewards.
- **Travel**
  - We are committed to minimising unnecessary travel and encouraging use of the least polluting means of transport.
  - We will encourage the use of public transport and bicycles over private cars for church business.
  - We will consider the pros and cons of meeting in person versus online, e.g. for staff meetings.
- **Fabric**
  - Through the annual fabric review and quinquennial review, we will monitor the upkeep of the building, ensure repairs are undertaken promptly and continually review ways in which we can improve.
- **Operations**
  - We will regularly review our operations plan (heating protocol, lighting procedures, etc.) to ensure energy efficiency.
- **Climate resilience**
  - We will seek to be a 'warm space' and 'cool space' during the winter and summer as the need arises and offer this to our community
  - We will explore a climate resilience plan.
- **Procurement**
  - We recognise that the decisions we make in what we consume for church life (such as materials, products, equipment and consumables) have an impact on the environment.
  - Ethical Procurement Policy
    - we aim to buy products which are environmentally friendly and ethically sourced as far as possible aiming to use suppliers who take environmental responsibility seriously.
  - We will use recycled paper wherever feasible and otherwise use paper derived from sustainably managed forests.
  - We will avoid the purchase of products and packaging that use non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials as far as possible.

Land and Nature

- **Churchyard**
  - Land Management Policy
    - we aim to grow a variety of seasonal plants in planters and hanging baskets to encourage and support a diverse range of wildlife.
    - We provide bird feeders, a bug hotel and birdbox.
    - We use peat free compost, wooden containers where possible, and have a water butt.

        - We don't use chemicals to manage weeds or to feed the soil.

Community and Global Engagement

- **Advocacy and action**
    - We will raise awareness of, and encourage participation in, taking action as a means to loving our neighbour and caring for creation.
    - We will seek ways to support and campaign on environmental issues as a whole church.
    - We will collaborate with, and encourage awareness of, local environmental groups and other churches to share resources and best practices
    - We will support groups to provide opportunities for marginalised groups in our community to have access to nature.
    - We will raise awareness about ethical finance.
- **Accreditation**
    - We are registered as a Fairtrade Place of Worship.
- **Food and drink**
    - We will opt for Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar when purchasing for the church (see more detail in Ethical Purchasing Policy).
    - We will encourage the practical application of Green Christian's LOAF principles - local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded where possible.
- **Sustainable transport**
    - We will encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport.
- **Waste**
    - We are committed to reducing waste, re-using and recycling waste as far as practically possible.
    - We aim to offer recycling of 'difficult' items to the wider community.
        - Collection point in community room
            - Batteries
            - Blister packs
            - Pens
        - Electrical goods – encourage sending to re:new
        - re:new collections
- **Finance**
    - We are committed that a portion of our charitable giving will go toward charities that care for the environment or to support those who are adversely affected by climate change.
    - We will avoid banking with banks most heavily invested in fossil fuels.
    - Through funds held with Synod
        - We will not knowingly invest in or deal with companies or organisations whose activities significantly conflict with our own environmental policy.
        - We will actively seek to work with financial institutions that make a positive difference.
- **Communication and promotion of Eco Church**
    - We will respond to enquiries and seek to promote Eco Church locally.
    - We will participate in denominational and other events to promote Eco Church and care for the environment.

Lifestyle

- **Sustainable lifestyle**
    - Through conversation we will consider our life styles to enable us to share practical lifestyle actions that can be taken. Information will be shared via newsletters and social media.

- Throughout the year we will share information, stories and examples of lifestyle action to encourage individual members of our congregations to take actions in their personal lives to care for God's creation.
- We will encourage our church members to consider their own household carbon footprints.

Implementation and monitoring

- The Eco Team will report **progress and updates** from the Action Plan to the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team will **review the targets and revise** the Action Plan annually.
- The Leadership Team will ensure **communication** with the church membership.
- This policy document will be **fully reviewed** every two years or earlier as needed considering developments.

Annual Reporting (summary table)

	Year 1 (baseline)	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**
KwH electricity used	**440**			
KwH of gas used	**3,443**			
Annual staff mileage/fuel paid for or used				
Annual carbon footprint (result of 360°carbon)	Energy: Other: Total:	Energy: Other: Total:	Energy: Other: Total:	Energy: Other: Total:
Annual recycling rate (as a percentage from amount of un-recycled + recycled waste produced)				
Annual amount of non-recycled waste				
Water usage	**8 m^3**			

Date policy updated: July 26

Date of next review: July 28

Name of eco lead person: Heather Wood

Name of Eco Church Team: Ramsden St Team

Action Plan *(Add or delete rows as needed to create an action plan specific to your church)*

Category	Action point	Tasks	Person(s) responsible	Date to achieve
Worship and Teaching	Increase awareness	Eldership team and congregation aware of policy Shared on website	HW	July 26
Buildings and Energy	Reduce carbon footprint	Encourage digital clean-up Consider offsetting Continue to review fuel usage	HW	Dec 26
Land and Nature	Increase biodiversity	Plant native cherry in planter in courtyard	Team	July 26
Community and Global Engagement	Increase awareness of environmental issues	Organise recycling container for batteries, blister packs and pens Organise congregational involvement in bird and butterfly count Develop a plan for supporting campaigns and local action	Elders	July 26
Lifestyle	Encourage personal action to care for God's creation	Plan conversations about lifestyle. Share eco tips, items of news or information each week in weekly mailing Plan to hold a talk on ethical finance during Great Big Green Week 27	KH HW Furness Churches Green Group	July 27