

Environmental Policy

Christchurch Abbeydale

1 Policy Statement

We recognise the urgency of the climate and nature crises and the fundamental injustice these represent. We will take the practical steps necessary to strive toward safeguarding the integrity of creation and sustaining the life of the Earth. We are also committed to improving the sustainability and environmental stewardship of our activities for the benefit of all of God's creation.

This Environmental Policy contains the environmental and sustainability commitments made by Christchurch Abbeydale.

2 Context

As Christians we are called to conserve the Earth's complex and fragile ecology and to be good stewards of its resources. We recognise that human beings have a special responsibility to care for God's good Earth so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.

The Church is called to demonstrate God's love for the whole world. Evidence clearly shows that the climate crisis is becoming more urgent and that its greatest impact will be on the most vulnerable people in our world. Damage is being done to ecosystems all over the planet, resulting in severe loss of biodiversity and shrinking the Earth's capacity to provide food for all of its inhabitants. The inability of human desire to address this crisis has diminished the biosphere for future generations; and that action can no longer be delayed.

As a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) the organisational context and commitment used for this Policy Statement is taken from the Environmental Policies for the United Reformed Church, The Church of England, The Methodist and Baptist churches.

3 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.

Christchurch Abbeydale is wholly 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.

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.

4 Our Commitment

Christchurch Abbeydale is committed to making the Church premises carbon neutral by 2030. Christchurch Abbeydale has registered as an Eco Church to support its implementation and ambition of this goal. The ambition will be achieved by adopting the A Rocha Eco Church guidance and accreditation scheme.

We plan to do this by:

- i. Reducing our carbon footprint each year, from 2026 to 2030, with the goal of carbon neutrality (net zero carbon emissions) by 2030.
- ii. To off-set any remaining carbon footprint after 2030.

Care for the complex web of life on our planet is a core value for our activities, affecting the way we worship, what we purchase, eliminating our use of plastics and recycling and reducing our waste, and how we live our individual lives.

The Christchurch Church Council shall appoint an Eco Team to take responsibility for implementation of this 'Environmental Policy' and the 'Strategy and Action Plan'

5 Worship and Teaching

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 our church leadership and members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to this responsibility.

In our worship life we will make opportunities for special celebrations of Creation; and we will incorporate into our regular services preaching, prayers and songs about caring for God's Earth.

Our human responsibility of caring for the Earth will be included in teaching for children and adults.

6 Buildings and Energy

We recognise the most important environmental impact will be an ongoing reduction of our carbon emissions. We will therefore seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

In managing our church buildings, we will find ways to reduce our consumption and to meet our energy needs from renewable sources. We will endeavour to make environmentally positive choices in all aspects of our work, including: using eco-friendly products; reducing waste; improving energy efficiency; and encouraging environmental awareness among all users of the church facilities. We will look at upgrading to more energy efficient products.

Land and Nature

We will respond to the nature crisis and loss of biodiversity through practical action, collaboration and campaigning. We will explore creative options for encouraging the local community to engage with nature and environmental issues.

7 Community and Global Engagement

We will highlight and raise awareness that the climate and nature crises affect the poorest first 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 will create opportunities for our local community to engage with environmental issues. We will be an example in our neighbourhood of how to make a meaningful response to the challenges posed by climate change and the need for a more sustainable lifestyle. We will work with others in our local community to identify environmental issues which should be addressed in our area and help develop actions to tackle them.

We will support charities and campaigns that support the global impact of the climate crisis.

8 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.

We will encourage individual members of our congregation to examine their own lifestyle and take actions in their personal lives to complement and supplement the actions of the church community.

Author: *Malcolm Brader*

Approvals: *Christine Birkett Gordon Dale David Evans Mike Thomas Mavis Wood*

Minister: *Reverend Peter Clarkson*

Adopted by the Church Council on 2nd September 2026