

## District Environmental Policy

1 In May 2019 the Bristol District Synod declared a climate emergency and acknowledged that we face an existential threat without precedent, and that this requires actions without precedent. The Synod called on ministers, preachers and all church members to take action in response.

2 Across the whole District we want to see local churches and circuits:

- a. recognising that as Christians we are responsible for the care of God's earth, embedding sustainability in all of our activities and reflecting on the environmental consequences of all our decision-making.
- b. making care for the environment integral to our worship of God and teaching
- c. reducing the impact of our buildings and our use on the environment
- d. using any land around our buildings in ways which benefit the environment and the community
- e. engaging with local and global organisations in seeking a fairer, more environmentally friendly world and engaging with the political process at all levels to generate political action to protect and restore the planet
- f. encouraging lifestyles both personally and as church members which reflect these aims.

3 In order to achieve this vision the District:

- a. has registered its commitment to become an Eco District with A Rocha.
- b. will appoint a steering group to coordinate progress within the District and to encourage circuit environmental officers and church groups and direct them to helpful resources.
- c. encourage all circuits and as many churches as possible to become Eco Circuits/Churches

4 In becoming an Eco District the District will:

- a. require all circuits to appoint an environmental officer / representative or small group to act as a focus for work in the circuit and to liaise with the District
- b. seek to ensure that, as a minimum, 10% of churches in the District gain Eco Church awards, and aim for the Gold standard of 40% of churches awarded
- c. aim to manage the District manse [and any other District buildings or land] in a manner which would achieve the Eco Church gold level
- d. ensure that materials to enable theological reflection on environmental issues are included in the support given to local preachers and worship leaders both in training and in practice
- e. manage its investments ethically, commit to divesting as soon as possible from fossil fuels and seek to use the new fossil-free Epworth Fund.
- f. seek to work with other Districts and with other denominations and faith groups to encourage environmental action
- g. record and celebrate individual environmental initiatives within the District

- 5 In practical terms the District will:
- a. encourage the use throughout the District of the season of Creationtide to emphasise environmental issues, alongside harvest festival services
  - b. encourage the use of public transport or, where this is not possible, car sharing to attend Synod and other District meetings, including in making decisions about the location of these meetings, and urging Circuits to do likewise
  - c. seek to make use of conferencing facilities (like Skype, Teams and Zoom) for District meetings where appropriate and feasible to minimise carbon emissions, and maximise the use of electronic communication in preference to paper
  - d. encourage the use of reusable or recyclable materials for catering, environmentally friendly cleaning materials throughout the District
  - e. promote the use of LOAF foodstuffs (and especially fairly traded tea, coffee and biscuits) at all synod and District events (LOAF is an acronym for Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly, Fairly traded.)
  - f. include as standard item on Synod agendas a report on progress being made in the District, including celebrating any awards
  - g. review this policy annually
  - h. seek ways to encourage, enable and incentivise the use of electric vehicles for circuit staff
  - i. encourage all churches to switch to a renewable energy provider.

Agreed by the Bristol Methodist Synod on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021