

## Parish of Emmanuel Church Northwood - Eco-Church Policy and Action Plan

### Need for a Policy

As a church we believe that we are individually and corporately stewards of God's world.

In recent years it has become increasingly apparent that urgent action is required from us all to seek to live justly and sustainably, in a world of finite resources, rapid climate change and unsustainable levels of environmental destruction. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to be good stewards of God's abundant creation, both its human and non-human elements. We seek therefore to both preserve and enhance the life of the planet and its people through our actions and decisions.

*It is anticipated this policy will be a live document with the ultimate aim for the church & church family to adopt more mindful and sustainable practices in support of the world we live in.*

### Theological Basis

In Genesis 1:28 and 2:15, God specifically commanded humankind to take care of both the living and the non-living creation. We are to work at ruling and ordering creation as good stewards without abusing it for our own selfish ends. By caring for the earth properly, we enable it to be fruitful and to play its intended role in giving glory to God.

We recognise that one of the marks of the presence of God's Kingdom amongst us is justice and that Christians are called to work towards justice in all spheres of our society. Climate change and use of the world's resources is a justice issue because the impacts of environmental destruction disproportionately affect the poorest in our world. To seek God's Kingdom is to pursue environmental justice.

As followers of Jesus Christ we believe that care for God's creation is a foundational biblical command and a gospel imperative; it is central to Christian Mission.

### Policy Statement

The PCC and church leadership will take the practical steps necessary to realise the Fifth Mark of Mission, which is *"To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth"*. This policy provides parameters to guide all staff members and volunteers through every aspect of church life at Emmanuel Church Northwood (ECN).

It is recognised that some additional costs may be incurred to minimise environmental impacts through the Action Plan below. Where appropriate, especially for larger costs such as for replacement of boilers or lighting, these costs will be considered in conjunction with the forecast payback period which is reasonable to expect this to be up to 8-10 years.

This policy provides parameters to guide all staff members and volunteers and is reflected in the following Action Plan which will be reviewed and updated at least every 3 years. The Operations Manager / Property Committee will have specific responsibility to identify areas in which improvements can be actioned within the scope of this policy.

### Action Plan

1. We will appoint a person as our Environmental Officer / Champion to lead our programme and encourage him or her to bring relevant environmental issues and concerns forward to the PCC and the wider church on a regular basis.

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2. We will actively include our concern for sustainability in our worship and teaching including our childrens and youth work.
3. We will undertake an environmental and energy audit of the church premises and property, including the houses we own, identify the most significant issues and impacts which should be addressed and make and implement plans/programmes to tackle them.
4. 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.
5. As the church's energy use is arguably its greatest environmental issue, we will seek to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the electricity and gas used in church premises. The Operations Manager in conjunction with the Property Committee and supported by the Eco-Church subgroup, will look to do this in many ways including but not limited to:
  - Switching to "green" energy suppliers (renewably generated electricity and biogas)
  - Using thermostats for temperature control
  - Continue to monitor the feasibility of installing solar panels (PV cells) on the church building
  - Fitting LED light bulbs and adding signage to remind individuals to switch lights off when not in use
  - Encouraging all building users to turn off lights, appliances and computers when not in use
  - Improving insulation wherever practicable
  - Replacing old, inefficient boilers where practicable with high energy efficiency electric substitutes and investigating renewable heating alternatives
  - Using rechargeable devices where practical and where not possible using rechargeable batteries over single use
  - Replacing mains gas appliances with electrical alternatives whenever practical e.g. cooker, oven
  - Targeting to offset any emissions which we are unable to eliminate
  - When replacing any appliance we will aim for the highest energy rating (A+++)
6. We will encourage our staff and congregation wherever possible to use forms of transport which have minimal or reduced environmental impact – e.g. walk, cycle, public transport, car sharing. We will encourage them to do this in both their work and social lives including travelling to church and visiting local areas.
7. We will seek ways to reduce material consumption and the impact of our activities on the environment by, wherever possible and practical:
  - Ensure separate bins for recycling and non-recyclable waste are present throughout the building and also introduce food waste bins into specific areas.
  - Serving locally produced food
  - Using 'high welfare' animal products and minimising the amount of red meat and dairy products served
  - Limiting printing at the church - utilising email rather than sending hard copies - using recycled paper - reusing/ repairing items

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- Using low environmental impact cleaning materials
  - Recycling all possible materials and supporting the church family in this practice
  - Encourage the reduction in use of any single use plastics
  - Implementing the use of recycling schemes such as Terra-cycle
8. We will avoid using water unnecessarily around the church building by taking steps including (but not limited to):
- Requesting the installation of water meters
  - Fitting water minimising systems to taps and cisterns wherever practicable
  - Considering the use of waterless systems wherever practical (such as urinals)
9. We will assess our land and property for wildlife and manage them to conserve biodiversity in addition to supporting conservation on a wider level (local, national and international).
10. We will encourage individual members of our congregations to take actions in their personal lives to complement and supplement these actions of the church community.
11. We will use fairtrade products wherever possible and aim to become a recognised 'Fairtrade Church' through the Fairtrade Foundation.
12. When purchasing products, we will consider, where practical and possible, to:
- Minimise deliveries
  - Purchase products which are made in the UK
  - Support ethical suppliers/companies
13. We will participate in the Eco Church programme.
14. In the event of a building/refurbishment project we will be mindful of the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) standards and factor this into the decision making process in relation to the sustainability of the project and subsequent building.

### Policy Review Timeframe

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

| Version of Policy | Date ratified by PCC | Minimum date of next review |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.0               | 18th August 2021     | 18th August 2024            |