

# Holy Trinity Guildford Eco Group

## Who are the Eco Group?

The Holy Trinity Eco Group has been working hard since 2016, exploring the different ways in which we can reduce our environmental impact as well as making the spaces around the church attractive to wildlife and places of rest and contemplation in the centre of a bustling town. We are always looking for more people to join us and help create and promote a both more carbon-free church and community. If you would like to be actively involved in the Eco Group or have ideas as to how we can make Eco Church a success, please contact David Uzzell ([eco@holytrinityguildford.org.uk](mailto:eco@holytrinityguildford.org.uk))

## We are an Eco Church

Eco Church is A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. For more details, see <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

The work of our group follows the key areas identified by the A Rocha Eco Church initiative which seeks to encourage practical sustainability projects and actions, in respect of

- worship and teaching
- looking after our buildings and land
- engaging with our local community and in global campaigns
- the personal lifestyles of your congregation.

The actions taken by churches in each of these areas can lead to the prestigious Eco Church Award at Bronze, Silver or Gold levels.

Holy Trinity Church currently has a Silver Award, one of only four churches in the Diocese at this level.



## Why is it important to be an Eco Church?

To be an Eco Church is to show that we are concerned to look after our church. We want to pass it on in a good condition to those who come after us. It is the same with our planet. There are practical, financial, social and of course environmental reasons for doing this, for example, to save energy and other finite resources.

But there are additional arguments which are especially relevant to us as Christians:

- The church should be demonstrating to all Christians and non-Christians that it is concerned with social and environmental issues. The church can set a good example to the local community and make visible to the wider world, as a matter of witness, its concern for the environment.
- The church can demonstrate that the social and physical environment is inseparable from the spiritual environment.
- Christians believe that God is revealed in many ways - through the person of Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit and through the physical manifestation of all Creation. The respect and protection of the environment ought, therefore, to be an essential element in Christian belief and practice.
- As there is a theological imperative for social action, so too is there a theological imperative for environmental engagement and action.
- Christians ought to be concerned with social justice in the whole of God's world. The environment is an inseparable part of social justice.
- *Act Locally, Think Globally* ought to have special significance for Christians. The church with its local, national and international networks is in a unique position in the cause of environmental justice and action in both the local and wider community, in the countries of the developed world and the Global South

*Remember, one can only know what one is capable of loving. There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither truly love nor truly know God.*

*Shams of Tabriz (1185–1248)*

## How important is the environment to the congregations of Holy Trinity and St Mary's churches?

### Report on Holy Trinity and St Mary's Eco Congregation Survey Headline Results

In 2018, we carried out a survey of the congregations' (Holy Trinity and St Mary's) attitudes and day-to-day practices in reducing their environmental footprint. Here is a selection of some of the findings. It is our intention to repeat this survey to see where and how we have improved.

- 95% said they wanted for more information, ideas, tips. On how they can reduce their environmental impact
- More than 90% supported the church reducing its environmental impact
- 95% said that as a Christian, it is important to reduce our impact on the environment
- 80% of the congregation always or often buy electrical or gas appliances which are at least rated 'A' in terms of energy efficiency.
- 95% of the congregation buy Fairtrade and/or ethically sourced goods some of the time, and over 50% all the time
- 55% of the congregation try to have meat-free meals at least 5 days a week
- 78% try to encourage native wildlife and plants in my garden (e.g. provision of bird boxes and feeders etc.)
- 27% of the congregation have contacted our local MP or Borough councillors or Parish Councillors at least on one occasion to raise an environmental issue.
- Just under 40% of the congregation belong to a local (e.g., Guildford Environmental Forum, Surrey Wildlife Trust) or national environmental groups (e.g. RSPB).
- 75% of the congregation sometimes walk or cycle to church services, although this drops to 49% who do so always or often.
- 94% of the congregation try to reduce their car use by, for example, walking or travelling by public transport, but this drops to 51% who do so always or often
- 70% try to encourage others (e.g., family & friends) to reduce their energy consumption

Maybe in these areas we can make some improvements over the next year.

- 37% of the congregations' electricity supplied to their houses is generated from renewable resources and/or charged according to our supplier's 'green tariff'.
- Only 15% of households use LED low energy bulbs
- Only 65% of households have least one of the toilet cisterns fitted with dual-flush buttons or other water-saving devices
- 50% of households buy cleaning products which are environmentally friendly.
- 61% of the congregation think it is important to consider the environmental impact of how they invest their savings

Elsewhere on this website you can find advice on how you can reduce your environmental impact in most of these areas. If you want more advice, do write to the Eco Group at [eco@holytrinityguildford.org.uk](mailto:eco@holytrinityguildford.org.uk)

### What did you say?

At the end of the survey, we asked the congregation to say briefly what motivates you to try and reduce your environmental impact. Here are some of the comments.

- ⊕ *Environment and climate change are the most significant issues of our age.*
- ⊕ *A concern for the environment, for our and future generations, and respect for God's creation.*
- ⊕ *If we do not protect the environment from climate change, we cannot protect people either.*
- ⊕ *To reduce carbon emissions and try to make human impact on earth less harmful to nature. To make living more sustainable and leave earth in a better condition for next generation. To help reverse our impact on biodiversity.*
- ⊕ *We only have one planet we depend on the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the joy it brings.*
- ⊕ *As one writer said, we are the 1st generation to understand our impact on the environment and the last to be able to do anything about it.*
- ⊕ *I am always worried about the world young people will face - that drives me most - however feebly.*
- ⊕ *If I am to love God I do not want to mess with his creation, but I do believe God has given us dominion over it to use carefully.*