

For the Mission Department bulletin – 6th December 2020

Free webinars on moving your buildings to net zero

Sign up for webinars in the new programme announced from the Church of England, which are intended to be ‘technical webinars for non-technical people’. Topics include:

- Learning from others: Energy management at the Wallace Collection
- Choosing the best heating system for your church
- Housekeeping and quick wins: simple steps that don't cost the earth, and energy audits
- Effective management of lighting towards net zero
- Solar PV panel technology
- Electric vehicle charging

Sign up here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-getting-net-zero-carbon#na>



Fighting biodiversity loss in the soil

The health of our soils is a serious concern. with dropping soil fertility and pollution affecting the incredible 25% of the world's biodiversity that lives in soil. Taking action to protect soil will help to protect the quality of 95% of the world's food supplies and contribute to action on climate change and biodiversity loss.

A new very useful website www.uksoils.org was launched last week to mark World Soils Day on December 5th, promoted by the Sustainable Soils Alliance, which has a wide range of resources including ideas on how your church community can help by reducing plastic waste, composting, using eco-friendly gardening and household products, disposing of hazardous waste such as batteries wisely and eating a more plant-based diet.

Wanted – volunteers to become Eco Church champions

Our Diocese is hoping to support the growing number of churches registering for the Eco Church programme by forming a group of Eco Church champions. We need volunteers willing to help promote the Eco Church scheme throughout the Diocese next year. Training from A Rocha UK will be provided so that churches will be able to request speakers to introduce and explain aspects of the programme, and receive further information and resources as needed.

Choose either Saturday morning 6th or 13th February 2021. More information will follow, but please reply to Rachel environment@stalbans.anglican.org.uk indicating your preferred dates.



Join the Make COP26 Count Programme.

You will be part of a cohort of UK churches supported to take action at a local and national level ahead of COP26, working with international partners from the global church for the duration. The programme is being run jointly by Hope for the Future and USPG and starts in January 2021. To find out more, go to the USPG website, <https://www.uspg.org.uk/cop26>, and express your interest [here](#).

The Environment Bill and how churches can support this important legislation

The Environment Bill currently going through Parliament contains important regulations which will replace current EU protections for the environment from January 2021. The attached **summary** prepared by Hope for the Future has been sent out by the national Environment Officer, Jo Chamberlain to all Dioceses so that churches can be informed of the issues and be in contact with their MPs to press for greater protection and enhancement of the environment. The lead Bishop on the environment, the Bishop of Salisbury, has approved a **briefing** for churches outlining the main arguments as they will be presented by the Bishops in the House of Lords when this important piece of environmental legislation reaches that stage of proceedings.

Bim Afolami, MP for Hitchin and Harpenden, is on the scrutiny committee, so any engagement from constituency members there would be very valuable.

Attached: Summary document
Policy resource

Churches working in partnership with local authorities

Churches hoping to develop partnerships with their local authorities may find this directory useful when searching to find their local council's climate plans. As well as their [listing of climate emergency declarations](#), the Climate Emergency UK website now has a useful searchable directory of council climate plans <https://data.climateemergency.uk/> which can be searched by postcode.

St Albans District Council's [Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy](#) sets out targets and priorities for the first phase (2020-23) of actions towards achieving net zero by 2030, and makes interesting reading for those churches planning their own parish strategy.

Green Homes Grant Scheme extended

The Government has [published a press release](#) detailing that homeowners across England will have until the end of March 2022 to have energy efficiency upgrades to their homes completed through the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme, helping up to 600,000 households save up to £600 on their energy bills. The Prime Minister announced the extension of both the Green Homes Grant and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in his [10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), designed to help the country build back greener and help reach the UK's key target for net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The scheme funds up to 2 thirds of the cost of green home improvements up to £5,000, or 100% of the cost for homeowners on low incomes, up to £10,000. Measures covered include insulation of walls, floors and roofs, double or triple glazing when replacing single glazing, and low-carbon heating like heat pumps.

£1 billion will be available next year into making new and existing homes and public buildings more efficient, including through the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Environmental Working Group of the Church of England supports Faiths Long-term Plans programme

Churches are encouraged to sign up for free webinars exploring an inter-faith approach to the ecological crisis and the impact of Covid-19, with the aim of inspiring a new wave of action involving over 70 of the world's faith organisations. You can find out more about the programme and its organisers at <https://www.faithinvest.org/faith-long-term-plans>