

Guideline Targets for the Diocesan Environmental Policy

The Environment Group decided that in order to measure the levels of compliance of the Environment Policy across the diocese, targets will be set and measured. Parishes are encouraged to set deadlines to allow measurement to be made over a set period of time, say one year. Members of the Environment Group are available to provide guidance on how to achieve targets, and parishes are encouraged to e-mail the chair of the group, Dr Richard Southern, on r.l.v.southern@herts.ac.uk.

Targets

- Waste: 'To have a mechanism in use to enable waste recycling. This should include paper, bottles, green waste, etc.'. David Gunn to write the background.
- Energy: 'To achieve a 10% reduction in energy usage'. (Gordon Ludlow)
- Wildlife: 'Churches with churchyards to have a designated area managed for wildlife'. (Judith Evans)
- Transport: 'To initiate a car sharing scheme and to provide a secure location for bicycles'. (John Quill)
- Fair Trade: 'To become a Fair Trade parish'. (Christopher Green)
- Awareness: 'To ensure that Diocesan employees and office holders are familiar with and implement this environmental commitment and its objectives'.

Waste

Waste not want not

As one supermarket chain puts it "every little helps." A saying that applies equally to Church and Church Hall waste, no matter how little it seems, what ever you give is important. It is important for the future of our lives and the generation that comes after us that we are good stewards of this God given world.

So please ask the question "What does the Church do with its' waste?" Where do the old hymn sheets, order of services, news bulletins and magazines go? What happens to the

Church Hall waste the paper, bottles, cardboard, plastic? Are these just thrown into a dustbin?

Why not recycle the waste; why not have sacks or bins designated for each category? Most supermarkets have places where such items can be deposited; another task; but in the end very worthwhile. One supermarket chain even gives club card points for returning their rubbish!

Have you compost bins for grass cuttings and church flowers? More initial expense, but you never know someone could donate one or two.

Why not ask your local Council if they can provide the appropriate bins; it is in their interest as well as ours to help “save the planet.” A number of Councils are only too pleased to provide re-cycling bins and boxes free! Visit their web-site for more information.

Please put waste recycling on your next Church committee meeting agenda, it will not be a waste of time!

Energy

Energy Management is a global issue that can be tackled locally!

There are some very good reasons that encourage good energy management within our parishes. We should not waste the god given natural resources given to us, these resources are not infinite. Supplies will in the future become more difficult to eke from the earth and the developing economies of India & China will demand their share at an increasing rate making availability even more precarious. Possibly an even greater reason for promoting energy efficiency is so that we do not cause catastrophic damage to the earth for future generations by emitting green House gasses such as carbon dioxide. It is generally acknowledged that climate change is a fact, happening now and that is being caused by human activity. There is still of course small minority within the scientific

community who challenge this common understanding. The simplest reason in wanting to manage our use of energy better is that it makes financial sense to use less energy and save money.

The three steps to good energy management can be summarised as; good housekeeping (reducing the need to use energy), maximising the efficiency of existing systems and investment in new technologies or equipment.

As part of our housekeeping we need to record and know what energy we are using. We can then start to set real targets for reductions. Reducing the need to use energy can involve physical changes to our buildings and equipment such as installing roof insulation to thickness of 200mm+, draft proofing windows and making best use of natural light. We can also reduce our need to use energy by changing our behaviour.

We should:

- Only fill the kettle with the water we need to use,
- Make use of natural light where possible,
- Turn lights out when rooms are not occupied (it is a myth that florescent lights use more energy being switched on and off),
- Don't heat a large hall for it only to be used by a small number of people (arrange to meet in a smaller space),
- Only heat/light rooms and buildings when they are in use.
- Turn down heating thermostats,
- Turn computers, printers and other office equipment off when not in use.
- Appoint people to be responsible for energy management the parish.

To compliment the housekeeping routines of energy management we should look to improve the efficiency of the equipment we use. The simplest thing to do, if you haven't already done so, is to replace all those inefficient tungsten filament lamps with compact florescent equivalents. We do not need the services of an electrician to achieve this, just someone who can safely access the fitting and can change a light bulb. We should

however employ a competent heating engineer to service boilers and other heating equipment annually to maintain efficiency.

Finally we should look alternative equipment or technologies. If your boilers are over five years old investigate the option to change to a high efficiency condensing model. Is there an option to install a renewable energy source (solar or wind) to provide some of our energy needs, there are grants to help with the capital investment.

More ideas and further information can be found at the “ENSURING YOUR BUILDINGS ARE ENERGY EFFICIENT” page.

Wildlife

Churches with churchyards to have a designated area managed for wildlife.

Grassland is the most important habitat in most churchyards and a number of plant species are dependent on these sites for their long-term survival. Many butterflies and moths are, in their turn, dependent on these plant species.

Churchyards without grassland can offer alternative habitats such as old walls with lichens and ferns.

If your churchyard is a County Wildlife Site it needs special care and should have a management plan. Free professional help is available.

Suggestions

Allow a designated area of grass to remain uncut until July, then cut and remove the cuttings. The objective is to allow native wild flowers to flower and the long grass to provide a habitat for wildlife.

In a churchyard without grassland introduce plants which are rich in nectar for butterflies and a food plant of the larvae e.g. primroses, cowslips, dog violet, field scabious, buddleia, holly.

Leave a log pile to decompose in an out of the way corner.

Install some bird boxes.

Further help:

Wildlife in church and churchyard. Nigel Cooper. Church House Publishing

Judith Evans promoter of The Living Churchyard c/o St Albans Diocesan Office

Transport

A way towards car sharing

Well you've got the Electoral Role and you know where everyone lives – but can you picture where everyone lives including those people who aren't on the Electoral Role? Well here's a suggestion. You could put a large street map of your parish and the surrounding area on a board at the back of church. And along with that you could put a large box of coloured pins and some thread and some small pieces of card. And you could ask everyone who attends church to put a pin in where they live. And if you want to be really sophisticated you could get them to choose a colour to indicate if they drive or are driven or walk or cycle or catch a bus or whatever – and if they drive you could have colours to show if they have spare seats. And they can then take a thread from the pin to a card beside the map with their name.

There may be other ways of doing the task, but the important bit is that once you've had lots of people do this it'll give you a visual picture that you could use to encourage people who live near to each other (and who might not even realise it!) to travel together. From an environmental perspective best of all you encourage them to walk together if it's not too far, but if they live further away or include people who can't easily walk you can

encourage them to fill up cars rather than each person or family bring their own car. The map will also show who has to travel past other members of the congregation who live nearer church and that would help people arrange to collect passengers on the way.

There will be all sorts of variations on this theme. The whole thing could be quite fun and a way of getting people together. If you're really keen you could work out how much you're saving as a church and perhaps even have an incentive scheme. Whatever works for you as long as it means a serious shift towards creating a church that uses less car miles each Sunday, and at other times of the week. And less car miles means a greener, safer world.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. The Fairtrade Foundation is a registered charity that encourages companies to pay producers in the developing world a social premium above market price. Because the economics of international trade are unfavourable to the poorest producers, the social premium helps to overcome the inequality.

There are now a million people directly involved in the production of Fairtrade goods and millions more benefit from the investment of the social premium in their communities. The Fairtrade Foundation shares agreed standards with similar organisations in other countries and with these partners maintains standards by inspecting suppliers and checking contracts and terms of trade.

The initial focus of Fairtrade was on commodities, such as coffee and tea, which have the most widespread impact on the livelihoods of small producers. Now Fairtrade standards have been extended to rice and cotton and even sports goods. The Fairtrade Mark appears

on over 2000 different retail products. They are available in Fairtrade shops and in many supermarkets and whole food shops, or by mail order.

St Albans is a Fairtrade diocese, which means that over 60% of the parishes in the diocese are using only Fairtrade products for parochial events.

Our aim now is 100% participation in Fairtrade

Awareness

The Environment Group will monitor and advise where needed and necessary, the various Diocesan committees on environmental matters. Additionally, the Group will strive to ensure that Diocesan employees and office holders are familiar with and implement the environmental commitment contained within the Policy and its objectives.