

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, has accepted the invitation of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to succeed the Bishop of London as the Church of England's lead bishop for Environmental Affairs with immediate effect.

In his new role Bishop Nicholas will work with the Mission and Public Affairs department of the Archbishops' Council and also with the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division on the Church of England's Shrinking the Footprint campaign. He will also Chair the new Working Group on the Environment established by General Synod in February 2014.

Bishop Nicholas said:

"There is an urgency about environmental issues. They press hard on all of us, but the poorest of the earth are the most vulnerable. Faith communities are taking this seriously.

"Christianity is about our turning to a way which is life-giving. The environmental challenges facing us can seem insurmountable, but our deepest resources can renew the hope that we will act to sustain and renew the life of the earth. My hope as I take on this new role is that this work will energise the Church of England and everyone who cares for creation."

Philip Fletcher, Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council, said:

"The need for a senior figure of Bishop Nicholas' skills and experience to champion and advocate the work of the Church of England in this area is vital. At a time when Climate Change and environmental issues are being rightly viewed with increasing urgency, the appointment of Bishop Nicholas is as timely as it is welcome. His role in chairing the networking group on the Environment is good news for all who hope to see an increasingly effective and engaged response from the Church of England."

Biographical Note:

The Right Reverend Nicholas Holtam has been Bishop of Salisbury since 2011. Born in 1954, he studied geography at Durham before training for ordination in London and Cambridge. He served a curacy in the East End before spending five years teaching at Lincoln Theological College. He then returned to London to work as a parish vicar, first in the Isle of Dogs, and then for 16 years at St Martin in the Fields in Trafalgar Square where he initiated and led a £36 million buildings renewal. He is a Trustee of the National Churches Trust, a Vice-President of the Royal School of Church Music, an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians, and chairs the Church of England's committee for ministry with and among deaf people. His ministry has always been deeply committed to the social implications of the Christian Gospel and its demand to prioritise the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

More details about the work of the Church of England's Shrinking the Footprint campaign can be found at:

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint>