



parts of the Church to recognise the Climate Crisis and step up its action

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In guidance sent to bishops, dioceses and church leadership teams, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) points to the ambitious programme of action required, covering everything from the Church's buildings to its investment assets.

The paper also highlights future mission challenges including a need for churches to be ready to provide sanctuary for those affected by extreme weather events in this country and beyond as the impact of climate change accelerates.

With work already underway to develop an Energy Footprint Tool and to offer local energy audits for churches, schools and houses, the EWG says the assessment of our carbon footprint must extend to all areas within the overall Church of England portfolio such as investment holdings in farming and forestry.

The EWG, chaired by the Bishop of Salisbury, brings together experts and representatives who oversee the Church's Environmental Programme. They plan to bring a motion to General Synod in 2020 proposing revised carbon targets for the Church with an ambition for net zero emissions by 2050, and to move faster in areas where this is possible.

The work of local Diocesan Environment Officers is also identified as key, with the paper calling on bishops and dioceses to prioritise support for these roles to help resources parishes and local communities.

The Church's national investing bodies have already divested from companies deriving more than 10 per cent of their revenues from the mining of thermal coal or the production of oil from oil tar sands, as these are the highest carbon fossil fuels. The national investing bodies have made commitments to start to divest in 2020 from further companies that are not taking seriously their responsibilities to assist with the transition to a low carbon economy. They have also committed to ensuring that, by 2023, the Church has divested from fossil fuel companies that they have assessed, drawing on Transition Path Initiative data, as not prepared to align with targets well below two degrees Celsius.

Several areas of focus for 2020 are also identified, including a Lent Campaign on the Environment backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and plans for events surrounding COP 26, the UN climate change summit, in Glasgow. Climate change and the environment will also be a central part of the Lambeth2020 Conference which brings together bishops from the global Anglican Communion.

The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, said: "As Christians and as a Church we hope to be good stewards of God's creation and to care for the environment. We commit to respond to the serious circumstances we face.

"It will need the commitment of everyone in the Church to engage strongly with our communities and establish creative policy frameworks that get the best out of people, not just because of anxiety but for the love of this wonderful creation."

More information

- [Sign up for the Church of England's Lent Campaign](#)
 - [Energy Audits](#) (pilot scheme)
 - [Environment programme](#)
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