Eco Church is a scheme run by A Rocha UK equipping churches to care for God’s creation through their worship, buildings, land, community engagement, and individual lifestyles.

By completing an online survey, churches can be considered for an Eco Church Award at either Bronze, Silver, or Gold level. As of the end of 2022, there are 1155 Bronze, 401 Silver, and 23 Gold Church of England Eco Churches, and our first two gold cathedrals; Salisbury and Chelmsford. The scheme is a fantastic resource for encouraging churches, cathedrals, and dioceses to embody the fifth mark of mission.

There are five areas that a church must demonstrate environmental engagement with to receive an award:

- Worship and teaching
- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

You can see the full list of survey questions here.

Listen to Dr Gillian Perrott reflect on St Mary’s Beaminster achieving a Gold award. You can also read here about the experience of becoming an Eco Church by St Hugh's in Scunthorpe. Below, you’ll find more case studies of churches who have been awarded Eco Church status, highlighting good practice in relation to each of the five assessment areas above.

Learn more at our Eco Church webinars
Eco Church is an ecumenical programme and, whilst these webinars are being hosted by the Church of England Environment Programme, they are open to people from all churches to attend.

1. An introduction to and overview of Eco Church: Getting started

This webinar will tell you everything you need to know to get started. Come along if you've heard of Eco Church but haven't started yet, and want to know a little more before you take the plunge. The webinar will answer questions like: “What is Eco Church? Why take part? How does the award scheme work? What does it cost? Where should we start?” It will be filled with practical examples of churches around the country who have made changes, using Eco Church as a framework.

Speaker: Helen Stephens is the Church Relations Manager at A Rocha UK, and absolutely central to the running of the Eco Church programme across the country. Helen has supported hundreds of churches to get started in their Eco Church journey, and has a wealth of practical advice to offer.

New Date: Thursday 14 September 12-1pm Register here

A previous webinar is available for you to watch the recording here.

2. Working towards an award and maintaining momentum

This webinar is aimed at people in churches who have registered for Eco Church and taken their first steps, but need a little help to get things going and work towards their Bronze or Silver award. The webinar will cover typical barriers, and give you tips on how to get around them and maintain your momentum. The webinar will contain practical examples of churches who have achieved an award and how they got there.

Speaker: Helen Stephens is the Church Relations Manager at A Rocha UK, and absolutely central to the running of the Eco Church programme across the country. Helen has supported hundreds of churches to get started in their Eco Church journey, and has a wealth of practical advice to offer.

New Date: Tuesday 19 September, 12-1pm Register here

A previous webinar is available for you to watch the recording here.

3. Working towards Net Zero Carbon

This webinar looks at the links between Eco Church and Net Zero Carbon; how they are different and how they inter-connect. It will focus mainly on the 'Buildings' section of the Eco Church survey, since it is heating and lighting a church building which creates most of a church's carbon footprint. The webinar will explain about free carbon footprinting tools available to churches.

Speaker: Helen Stephens is the Church Relations Manager at A Rocha UK, and absolutely central to the running of the Eco Church programme across the country. Helen has supported hundreds of churches to get started in their Eco Church journey, and has a wealth of practical advice to offer.

New Date: Tuesday 26 September, 4-5pm Register here

A previous webinar is available for you to watch the recording here.

We have a whole range of Net Zero Carbon webinars, and you can find the other topics here.

4. Eco Church Land

This webinar will tell you all about the 'Land' section of the Eco Church framework, why it matters, and filled with practical examples of what churches around the country have achieved.

Even urban churches will find out what's possible, whether it's installing planters and swift boxes, or forming partnerships to help others nearby.

Speaker: Delyth Higgins is the Eco Church Officer for Wales at A Rocha UK, the charity behind Eco Church.
New Date: Thursday 9 June, 12-1pm [Register here]

A previous webinar is available for you to [watch the recording here].

This webinar is part of a week-long webinar series, as part of Churches Count on Nature Week. You can see the whole webinar programme here.
St John’s Church, Ben Rhydding (Bronze)

Worship and Teaching was one of St John’s highest scoring areas on the Eco Church survey. This was thanks to initiatives like their animal blessing service, which has been a much-loved service at St John’s. Reflecting on the service as part of their wider Eco Church efforts, St John’s said:

“We particularly wanted it to be more than a pet service, so as to include farmed and wild animals too. We were able to highlight, and pray for, some of the serious challenges facing animals in all contexts, together with some of the organisations working to change these for the better.

We have run two of these services and they have been great fun. Would anyone actually come, we wondered rather anxiously!

But they did. At first, a lovely mixture of youngsters and adults, with: nine dogs, three guinea pigs, a hamster, and several cats by proxy. They all behaved beautifully, and each one was individually introduced to everyone, and prayed for, human companions too. We distributed tasty treats as animals left, and there was such a buzz of animal and human interaction!”

Could you try holding an animal blessing at your church for the festival of Francis of Assisi?
Christ Church East Greenwich (Silver)

Christ Church East Greenwich were awarded a Silver Eco Church award in 2019. In seeking to affirm the fifth mark of mission, they had a month's teaching and worship series centred on the environment, in conjunction with harvest. In 2020, they dedicated all of the teaching during Lent to environmental issues, using Ruth Valerio's book Saying Yes to Life and the Church of England's #LiveLent resources. They also created their own small group resources to be used in conjunction with Ruth Valerio's book, available on their website.
St Matthew’s, Bristol (Silver)

As part of their Eco Church engagement, St Matthew’s incorporate teaching about creation care — inspired by the fifth mark of mission — into their Harvest service, which also includes a shared lunch. Other Sundays also pay special attention to the environment and the current climate crisis.
St Helen’s, Isle of Wight (Gold)

St Helen’s, a Gold status Eco Church on the Isle of Wight, have embedded creative engagement with the environment into their worship and teaching. In 2019, they hosted a service by the sea, which including baptisms, which you can see photos and videos of on their website.
Management of church buildings
Christ Church, Selly Park (Bronze)

Funded by a legacy gift by one of its members, Christ Church installed solar panels on its roof as part of its broader environmental aims. Some 70 panels were installed and since their installation in 2018 the system has generated over 30,000 units (KWh) of power, exceeding initial expectations. A display monitor in the church building shows an up-to-date record of the power generated and carbon saved by the panels, which means the congregation can easily see the impact that the panels are having.

St Paul’s Church, St Alban’s (Bronze)

When St Paul’s undertook a building project in 2009, they were committed to doing it in a way that was as sustainable as possible. The key elements for consideration were material selection and energy efficiency. Existing material was reused where possible and Enviroblock was used for new internal walls, made of at least 80% recycled content. They also sought to use recycled floor materials where possible, as well as using marmoleum — a product made from natural and renewable materials.

Solar panels were installed on the roof, and to date the church has avoided emitting over 44 tonnes of carbon as a result of the electricity they have been able to produce. In conjunction with the use of insulating boards for some walls, double-glazed windows, and thermostat-controlled radiators, St Paul’s have ensured that all energy used is done so in the most efficient way.

All Saints Church, Hethel (Silver)

In February 2018, a set of four Mitsubishi air-source heat pumps (ASHPs) were installed in Hethel Church. A detailed Powerpoint presentation explaining the heating needs of the church and why air-source heat pumps proved to be the best option is available from All Saints’ A Church Near You page.

Lee Abbey, Devon (Silver)

Water from streams in the forest on Lee Abbey’s estate powers a hydro-electric turbine generating about a quarter to a third of their electricity each year. Lee Abbey also have hot water solar panels installed on the roof of one of their community buildings and they hope to convert to using biomass boilers and ground source heat pumps for heating their premises.

Christ Church, Toxteth (Gold)

Among other steps that Christ Church Toxteth Park are taking to preserve and protect the natural environment around them, they have started calculating their carbon footprint for each year and looking at ways to offset their emissions through carbon reduction policies. In 2019, they did this by planting trees in the North West of England through the Tree Appeal. They have also been encouraging the congregation to calculate their own carbon footprint and think about ways to
reduce or mitigate their impact on the planet.

St James’s, Piccadilly (Gold)

St James’s Piccadilly is one of England’s first Gold Eco Churches. By regularly auditing their energy usage they have been able to identify ways of reducing and offsetting emissions. Solar panels installed on the roof of the church generate 3,500 kWh of renewable electricity each year, and they pay to offset their non-renewable gas usage through the Woodland Carbon Code and Forest Carbon programmes.

St James’s have documented their Eco Church journey in each of the five categories via a slideshow, which is viewable [here](#).

Management of church land
**St Luke's, Crosby (Bronze)**

St Luke's have developed their grounds and made them accessible to the public via the **Quiet Garden Movement**, offering space for prayer, reflection, and rest. The gardens have been cultivated as an expression of caring for God's creation with an effort made to use recycled or repurposed materials, while also creating an environment attractive to local wildlife.

In addition, St Luke's have installed three bee hives, managed by the local community, and the honey produced is sold locally with proceeds supporting A Rocha Kenya. You can read more about their beekeeping here.

![St Luke's, Crosby](image)

**St Edward's, Plymouth (Silver)**

In 2017, St Edward's set about improving their churchyard to make it a sanctuary for those from the local community, who could themselves be involved in its renovation. They were keen to improve the churchyard's biodiversity, setting the following goals as part of the project:

- Protecting now-flowing plans, such as lichens and mosses growing on walls and memorials.
- Improving the diversity of native trees and shrubs.
- Regulating the grass mowing regime in specified areas to allow some of the dormant wildflowers to flower and seed.
- Creating a biblical herb garden containing examples of herbs and plants mentioned in the Bible.
- Establishing bird nesting boxes and bat roosting boxes.

By improving their churchyard's biodiversity, St Edward's were also able to achieve a Silver Eco Church award. Learn more about their churchyard on their [website](#).

**St Mary's, East Grinstead (Silver)**

St Mary's transformed an area surrounding an oak tree into a seasonal garden, in partnership with the local school. They also instituted a wildflower area and put up bird feeders, nest boxes, bug houses, and a hedgehog house to support the local wildlife. Find out what else they did as part of their Silver award [here](#).
St Peter’s and St Francis, Frimley (Silver)

As part of their wider Eco Church activities — including holding services themed around Creationtide, holding a world animal day, and introducing Fairtrade products — St Peter’s and St Francis have created several resources for exploring their churchyard, helping visitors to discover their local biodiversity. They also have a Facebook page sharing ideas and resources.
A giant globe takes the breath of two onlookers suspended high above Salisbury Cathedral’s medieval nave.
Combe St Nicholas (Bronze)

Combe St Nicholas offer their local community an accessible recycling drop off point in an area where kerbside plastic recycling is not available. This enables local residents, particularly those who might struggle to get to a larger council-run recycling centre, to keep recycling their household plastic and also enables the church to be a point of contact for those living locally. In addition to plastic recycling, they also coordinate crisp packet and milk bottle top collection, and the church itself has achieved plastic-free status.
St James, Woodley (Bronze)
In conjunction with the local council, St James have been advocating for the local and global changes needed in response to the climate crisis. They also have an active Facebook group, which shares environment related news and ideas.

Cathedral, Isle of Man (Silver)
As part of their engagement with global issues of climate change, Cathedral, Isle of Man, recently hosted an exhibition in support of a Christian Aid project training and supporting beekeepers in Burundi.

Salisbury Cathedral (Silver)
In 2019, Salisbury Cathedral hosted the GAIA installation as part of the Salisbury International Arts Festival. The rotating seven metre globe featured NASA imagery of the Earth's surface and its installation marked 50 years since the moon landings of 1969.
A giant globe takes the breath of two onlookers suspended high above Salisbury Cathedral's medieval nave.
St Luke's, Maidstone (Bronze)

St Luke's, a Bronze Eco Church in Maidstone, have numerous ideas on the Eco Church page of their website encouraging congregation members to consider how to make their own lifestyles more environmentally friendly. Ideas range from gleaning to eco-volunteering holidays: find out more on their website.

Holy Trinity Church, Guernsey (Bronze)

As part of their A Rocha Eco Church workshop, Holy Trinity Church hosted a ‘food waste’ banquet, involving 60 people from 12 different churches.

St Andrew’s, Churchdown (Silver)

As part of securing their Silver Eco Church award, St Andrew’s encouraged its members to consider environmentally friendly forms of transport, including a car share scheme.

St John and St Stephen’s Church, Reading (Silver)

St John and St Stephen’s have been on an eco-journey for over a decade. One of the challenges they describe was convincing those who were sceptical about the importance of climate justice. But as this resistance eased, they have been able to introduce many green initiatives, including encouraging congregation members to walk or cycle where possible. Joanna Laynesmith, a member of St John and St Stephen’s, blogs about her experiences of Eco Church here.
As one of the few Gold Eco Churches in the country, St Andrew's is engaged in a wide range of environment-conscious practices, which includes running Eco-Fayres for the local community. A member of their congregation, who often has a stall at the fayres, blogs about her experiences of trying to live plastic-free.

Want your church to become an Eco Church? Start by registering here.

Also of interest

Our Stories

Find out how the Church is responding to environmental concerns.

The practical path to net zero

Information for churches on reducing their carbon emissions.

Source URL: https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/eco-church