



and do their bit to help the planet.

From making local honey to building bug hotels and hosting outdoor services, churches around the country are finding innovative ways to go greener and do their bit to help the planet.

St Mark's Broomhill and Broomhall Church in Sheffield has recently been granted a Gold Award as part of the national Eco Church scheme run by Christian charity A Rocha UK.

St Mark's journey to the Gold Award began in 2010 when a few members of the congregation with science and engineering backgrounds became interested in helping the church to reduce bills by cutting their energy usage, while also helping the planet.

Margaret Ainger, who co-chairs the church's environmental group at St Mark's, said: "They started tracking the kilowatts per hour that the building used, things that at the time the rest of us had no idea about. That evolved over time into a wider climate and environmental group, and then the Eco Church programme came along."

Over the past five years the church has used smart thermostat technology to halve its energy consumption and the Grade Two listed church has also had solar panels installed on its roof.

The church has found different ways to help reduce its carbon footprint - which all helps with the Church of England's pledge to be net zero carbon by 2030. Margaret said: "The award requires a high standard of work across the whole church, so everyone needs to buy into the ethos. It can be small changes, like putting 'please switch off the lights' stickers on switches, to bigger things like reaching out into the community and showing people what is possible."





**Walkers make a bee-line for rural church**

Bees are helping to create a buzz in a small rural church in Worcestershire – thanks to the production of churchyard honey.

People walking through the churchyard of St Mary’s Church in the tiny village of Hanley Castle have been keen to try out the churchyard honey – since the launch of the produce this summer.





As part of their commitment to become an Eco Church, St Mary's offered the churchyard as a space for bee hives in 2021. The introduction of approximately 60,000 bees has helped the church with the land management of the church yard, encouraging biodiversity and pollinators alongside wild flower areas.

The honey was launched during a special Bee Day event and sold out within 30 minutes. Revd Sue Adeney, from St Mary's Church, explained: "People in our community have been both enthusiastic and fascinated that we are doing this. Many people came to our Bee Day and were disappointed not to buy the honey as it sold out so quickly.

"Lots of interest in what people could do to encourage bees in their own gardens etc and it was lovely to see the bees attracted lots of non-regular church goers and walkers to the church."

St Mary's Church has also partnered with its Parish Council on an Eco and Habitats group to increase biodiversity across the whole parish and is waste, repair and vintage.



**Wildlife garden brings community together**

Volunteers at a village church in Kent have created a wildlife garden to showcase God's creation to its local community.



The King's Garden was created by volunteers at St George's Church in Weald after the village pre-school, which had been using the church hall, closed meaning the outside play area became free.

Rev Mandy Carr, St George's Church, explained: "We joined the A Rocha Eco Church scheme and so were looking for ways we could steward our churchyard and just go greener. With the help of volunteers, we've been able to do just that by redesigning and repurposing this area of church land."

A small volunteer design team from across the village met to discuss plans, with ideas including bird baths, bug hotels, and a small wildlife pond, plus various planting options.

Rev Mandy Carr continued: "What is so great about this project – it's not just its green credentials - is that it's bringing people of all ages together and from all over the community. So, while we have the Eco Club coming up to see the garden to donate the bug hotel representing the youngest participants, we've got one of our designers, Mike, (who I'm sure won't mind me mentioning) is 92 years young this year, representing the oldest. How fabulous is that?

"There will be a bulb planting party this month and we have been busy getting the bulbs for that, so that it is a riot of colour in the next year. The garden will also be used more when we start new reflective sessions because we'll have quiet mornings where people can use the space."





**Lancashire eco churches exchange vicars to learn more**



exchange vicars for a unique green experiment.

St John's Hurst Green was one of the first, if not the first, Eco Church in the county and nearby Mitton Church has now applied for that status too.

Increasingly urban churches are now achieving eco status and one such Parish is Christ Church, Lancaster which has already achieved Silver Eco Church Status.

For the Sunday of the swap, Rev. Canon Brian McConkey took the services at Christ Church so that Rev. Carol Backhouse from Christ Church, along with part of her Eco team, could travel to rural Ribble Valley to take services at Mitton and Hurst Green.

Between them they each shared more with their respective congregations about what is happening in their own areas.

Brian said: "For quite a while now, on the fifth Sunday of the month (four a year) we have 'Creation Sunday' as part of our commitment to Creation as an Eco-Church.

"We have also been looking round for other churches taking these issues seriously and Christ Church was one of them but in a very different setting."

Carol added: "The team from Christ Church led the whole service at Mitton and Hurst Green and shared their experiences. This exchange between an urban and rural church is important as we begin to understand each other more and the challenges we face as Eco-Churches in our own settings."

Rev. Canon Professor John Rodwell, Diocesan Environmental Officer, said: "This is just the kind of sharing of experience we need to make progress in our care of Creation across the diocese. Linking our rural and urban worlds, their people, their landscapes, is crucial in sustaining one





# Green dream of silver award at Lancashire church

A Lancashire church is once again proving its green credentials as it aims to win another award to sit alongside one it received last year.

And their efforts are also paying dividends in other ways with young people from local schools due to get involved in supporting their work, to be



All Saints Church in Finch Lane, Appley Bridge, is moving towards the Silver Eco Award from the ‘A Rocha Eco Church’ awards scheme, having won the Bronze award last year.

Recently, a large all-age group of the church family and friends worked hard in the churchyard on tree husbandry; grave plot refurbishment; wildlife refuge building; bird box installation; raised bed creation and planting fruit bushes along the boundary fence line. This work was followed by a welcome picnic lunch for everyone.

Vicar, Rev Sue Timmins, said: "We have already had bookings for a session in the churchyard from two local schools in the autumn and thanks to the generous donations we have received for our project, including from the Whitemoss Community Fund, we are also about to embark on major window replacement in the church building.

"God's Kingdom here in Appley Bridge is receiving a huge boost thanks to the prayers, efforts and generosity of his people."

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/environment-programme-news/churches-climate-issues-season-of-creation>