

Report of Environmental Working Group

1. Environmental issues within the CofE are the joint responsibility of two divisions - Cathedrals and Church Buildings and Mission and Public Affairs. Together they manage the Church's national environmental campaign – ***Shrinking the Footprint*** (StF) established in 2006 following a 2005 synod debate on *Sharing God's Planet*, a report produced by Mission and Public Affairs. The synod had called upon the whole church at every level to engage with the issues of climate change and energy use.
2. The **Environment Working Group** (EWG) was established following a Synod debate in 2014 which overwhelmingly supported a motion by the Southwark diocese which called on the CofE 'to raise the profile of climate change within the church and to seek to align the mission of the church with its investment arm and the life of the church'.

Chair: The Bishop of Salisbury

Members: The Bishop of Dudley, The Bishop of Kingston, The Archdeacon of Maidstone, Dr Robyn Pender (Historic England), Revd Canon Dr Victoria Johnson, Revd Canon Giles Goddard, Philip Fletcher, Revd Dave Bookless and Martyn Goss.

Staff:
Malcolm Brown (Director of MPA)
Becky Clark (Director, Cathedrals and Church Buildings)
David Shreeve (Environmental Consultant - MPA) 2 days pw
Ruth Knight (Environmental Policy Officer – CCB) 2 days pw

3. The strategy developed by the EWG has been to maximise the Church of England's involvement in wider initiatives where we can make a unique or decisive difference and to pursue initiatives of our own that are specific to the life of the church with the aim of bringing the good stewardship of God's creation to the heart of the Church of England
4. At its formation EWG drew up a three year plan listing six objectives. This report details the actions which these have involved.

1 Emphasise Creationtide as integral to the CofE's liturgical practice

1.1 Creationtide 2016/2017 - 1 September – 4 October. This initiative first encouraged by the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church sought to build on his church's adoption of Prayers for the world's environment on 1st September. In 2016 it received the support of the Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury. EWG developed and promoted liturgical resources to help parishes engage with Creationtide. In 2017 this material is being supplemented by extensive additional resources, readings and discussion notes designed to be ecumenical and available to all through the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland network.

2 Engage with congregations and those responsible for buildings re environment and biodiversity issues

2.1 Encouraging biodiversity – the CofE has an estimated 10,000 churchyards amongst its extensive estate which also involves farms, glebe and forests. These it shares with communities who all benefit from its biodiversity and protection. We are involved in a national survey of burial grounds which will audit the actual size and content for the first time. Two Churchyard Tree Conferences have been organised with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund which called for a national churchyard programme involving churchyard tree management and awareness training which is now being developed along with the establishment of a pilot scheme linked to Buglife's *B-Lines* programme which will all help develop an awareness of the value of the church land to communities.

2.2 Big Church Switch – We have secured partnership funding from Tearfund and Christian Aid to establish a one year pilot post to coordinate this campaign encouraging church communities to switch to renewable energy. The new post is also responsible for supporting the DEO energy group and coordinating the different diocesan energy efficiency and procurement programmes. It is clear from early studies that parishes are losing significant amounts of money through poor energy deals and this work aims to help communities while encouraging a greater awareness of environmental stewardship.

2.3 Virtuous Circles Project developing an innovative, environmentally sustainable and economically viable programme to insert reversible pods into churches facing closure. The pods host holiday accommodation or community facilities, the use of which produce sufficient income to ensure the church remains maintained and open for worship. Heritage Lottery funding has been gained for a pilot in rural Herefordshire and a pipeline of further churches is being developed.

2.4 10th Anniversary Church Times Environmental Awards - organisation and fundraising for an award programme open to all churches. The Award Ceremony will be held at Lambeth Palace on 16 October 2017.

2.5 Eco-Church and Eco Diocese – active support and funding for these A Rocha programmes have encouraged significant increase in uptake.

2.6 Parish Buying - support for procurement and Parish Buying team to ensure environmentally friendly options are available and are actively promoted to parishes.

2.7 Bats In Churches - StF team member is a Main Partner on multi-million pound Lottery grant with Natural England, Historic England, Bat Conservation Trust and Churches Conservation Trust to tackle the impact of bats in churches and support churches to engage new communities.

2.8 Discipleship – Bishop of Kingston is drafting a paper on 5 marks of mission and why they are central to Christianity today.

2.9 Trees for Sacred Spaces - an initiative supported by the Mayor of London will provide young trees for planting by churches and church schools in the London, Southwark, Chelmsford and Rochester dioceses. It is possible that this initiative could be replicated in other dioceses

2.10 Lambeth Palace Environmental Audit – it is ten years since the first audit and a second is now underway with the help of free consultancy from Historic England and National Trust.

3 Support clergy and DEOs in their engagement with environmental issues especially through ministry training and dioceses

3.1 Lead Bishop - support and research for Archbishop and lead bishops for rural, health and environment and duty bishops in the House of Lords and elsewhere.

3.2 Annual Bishops' Environment Breakfast – a considerable increase in attendance and support has been recorded over the five years this event has been organised for the College of Bishops in Oxford. It is now attended by far the majority of bishops for whom corporately this is now a core priority.

3.3 Diocesan Environment Officers (DEOs) make an important contribution in all the dioceses where they have been appointed. However, few have the support and resources that would make them fully effective. All receive regular information from the national StF organisers and are encouraged to attend an annual conference funded and organised by StF for information and development of their role.

3.4 Lambeth 2020 Pre-Planning – environmental issues are expected to be a major issue at the next Lambeth Conference.

3.5 Synod Environment Group – since the formation of the EWG this group has been established.

4 Develop ecumenical and interfaith links

An Orthodox perspective is that The Care for our Common Home is an issue that relates all other differences. There has been astonishing convergence of ecumenical and other faiths, thought and action about the environment with a great deal of shared work, some of which has already been listed. There have been other major actions specifically done in this way.

4.1 Lambeth Declaration 2015 - compilation and promotion of this second Lambeth Declaration signed by all the UK's major faith leaders and members of 2016 General Synod and launched at a high profile day organised to rally support and awareness of COP21 - the UN Paris Climate Summit.

4.2 Paris Climate Summit – The StF team secured partnership funding from Tearfund and Christian Aid for a project coordinator to organise the Pilgrimage to Paris initiative. This involved a group of faith representatives walking from London to Paris to present the signatures of over a million people and the Lambeth Declaration calling for ambitious and binding carbon targets to the UN. Support was also given to faith/climate events at St Margaret's Westminster and Emmanuel Centre and a special service at St Martin in the Fields to celebrate the pilgrims setting out for Paris. EWG members supported Paris events which included a lecture given by the Bishop of Salisbury.

4.3 Sacred Spaces - support has been provided to enable a number of faith and environment elements to be included the 2017 Waterloo Festival. These include an Energy Saving Workshop for representatives of local churches, interfaith meetings and the launch of the National Burial Grounds Survey.

4.4 Just Water - support was given to the London programme organised by St Paul's Cathedral as part of an international initiative funded by Trinity Wall Street.

4.5 Ecumenical Relations regular working links including Environmental Issues Network, Quaker Roundtable events and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

5 Improve communication on CofE environmental issues with and beyond National Church Institutions

5.1 Transition Pathway Initiative – members of the group and staff have worked closely with EIAG and the Commissioners to support and promote opportunities for the new Investment Research initiative.

5.2 Government Affairs – establishment of links with Ministers and officials at Defra, BEIS and DCMS and membership of All Party Groups.

5.3 Historic Environment Climate Change Adaption Group - StF team member is Chair and Co-Founder of this group aimed at sharing best practice and creating partnerships to address adaptation issues. Also chair of the Historic Environment Forum climate change group ensuring that C of E communities have access to the most up-to-date research, best practice and funding opportunities for the retrofit of historic buildings.

5.4 British Standard Working Group – StF team member is chair and author of Energy Performance in Historic Buildings, a guide for the construction industry, as part of an international group.

5.5 Fracking – EWG has monitored the situation regarding fracking generally and the role of the Church. A resource paper by EWG and MPA which considered the issue along with the concerns of local communities and the IPCC report.

5.6 Social Media presence including Twitter and Facebook.

5.7 Communications - frequent links with CofE Communications Team ensure regular coverage of StF and EWG initiatives are featured in a wide range of media.

5.8 External Relations- EWG is frequently represented at a wide range of events.

5.9 Synod Environment Group – since the formation of the EWG this group has been established.

When addressing climate change and many other environmental issues it is clear that the benefits of assuming moral responsibility and taking immediate action far outweigh the cost of remaining indifferent and passive. We are realistic in our approach. We believe that a multitude of small actions, alterations in practice, thinking and behaviour, both inside and, in so far as is possible, outside the church will cumulatively bring about the extraordinary change necessary.