

St Mary the Virgin, Houghton with Wyton PCC

ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

As a church, we are committed to environmental sustainability and recognise our responsibility to minimise our environmental footprint within God's creation. Our mission is to provide a safe and welcoming space for worship and exploration of the Christian faith, while actively contributing to the well-being of our community and the planet.

To fulfil this commitment, we have adopted the following 'green practices':-

Energy Efficiency: wherever possible we invest in energy-efficient technologies and practices to minimise energy consumption and procure our energy supplies from an approved green energy supplier. Where under our control, our facilities are designed to optimise natural light and ventilation.

Waste Reduction: we prioritise reduction of waste materials, avoiding single use products and encourage recycling of items where appropriate following the principles of waste reduction. All waste classified as recyclable is clearly identified, segregated and disposed of accordingly. We organise the recycling of items, not collected as part of the household recycling scheme. We discourage the unnecessary use of water, with the installation of water meters, water minimising systems to taps and toilet cisterns.

Transportation Impact: we encourage our church community to use eco-friendly transportation options such as cycling, walking, or public transport where practicable. Meetings and some church services are able to be accessed via online platforms, therefore negating the need for travelling. We encourage car-sharing when other means of transport is not feasible.

Green Procurement: our procurement process prioritises environmentally-friendly and sustainable products, including use of seasonal foods. We seek to purchase and serve food and drink that meets the **LOAF** principles, **L**ocally sourced; **O**rganically grown; **A**nimal friendly; **F**airly traded.

Education: we provide resources and information to members of the congregation on sustainable health practices and lifestyle choices; giving support and encouragement to be involved in church-wide projects.

Continuous Improvement: environmental considerations shall be taken into account with every major decision made; we are registered with A Rocha to work towards full achievement of the Eco Church awards.

We will regularly review and assess our green initiatives to identify areas for improvement. Members of the congregation are encouraged to contribute ideas for further reducing our environmental impact as a church community.

By adopting the above practices, we aim to create a healthier and more sustainable future for our church community and beyond.

This Policy was approved by the PCC on (date): _____

Signed (incumbent): _____

**To be reviewed annually*