



As many of you will probably know, the Church of England is committed to achieving Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2030. This is motivated by a recognition that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and unjust to the poor and future generations and is linked to our Christian mission, as expressed in the Five Marks of Mission.

NZC is defined as the reduction as far as possible of all in-scope carbon emissions (from the oil, gas and electricity we use in our buildings and petrol and diesel transport related to reimbursable travel for clergy and volunteers) and the removal of an equivalent amount of carbon from the atmosphere for the remaining in-scope emissions by use of accredited offsetting schemes.

Clearly there is much in common between NZC and the Buildings Category of the Eco Church initiative, which was briefly referred to in the previous Eco Church Article (and, at St. Mary's, we are working on both initiatives). Broadly speaking we need, as far as possible, to insulate our buildings effectively, use energy from a green supplier (which uses sources such as hydro-electricity, solar or wind-power to generate energy) or install equipment to generate our own energy, and install energy efficient lighting.

As far as NZC is concerned, those emissions we cannot eliminate can be offset by investing in programmes that reduce emissions such as planting trees and investing in conservation.

Similar principles also apply to us as individuals and, as part of the Eco Church Lifestyle category, we are encouraged to consider some of our personal lifestyle practices in terms of energy consumption and our carbon footprint. We all know that turning our heating down by one degree and not using a car for short journeys are good for the environment (and our pocket), but did you know:

- If everyone in the UK swapped just one more red meat-based meal to a plant-based meal per week, we would cut the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 50 million tonnes, resulting in up to an 8.4 percent reduction in the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- Overall, the fashion industry is responsible for 8-10% of global emissions, according to the UN - more than aviation and shipping combined – yet the average number of times a garment is worn before it is discarded is just 7 to 10 wears and 50% of clothing bought in the UK is never worn.

Margaret Emsley

On behalf of the ECO Church Team



This is the first in a series of what is planned to be a regular article in the St Mary's Church Magazine about ECO Church and The Church of England's plan to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZV) by 2030. This first article is going to provide an overview of the ECO Church initiative.

ECO Church is an A Rocha UK Project run in Partnership with The Church of England and other churches as well as Christian Aid and Tear Fund. Eco Church's vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully.

Awards exist at three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold – with the level of the award being based on the answers provided to questions in five categories:

- Worship and Teaching: *Embedding creation care in worship, prayer and learning*
- Buildings: *Finding energy efficient and innovative ways to manage our places of worship*
- Land: *Nurturing spaces for people and nature*
- Community and Global Engagement: *Transforming local and global communities and ecosystem*
- Lifestyle: *Living joyfully and sustainably as followers of Christ*

St Mary's is one of over 3000 churches who have achieved at least a Bronze award and we are now looking to gain a Silver award. The rules have changed since we were awarded a Bronze award (which was based on total points awarded) as it is now a requirement that to gain a Silver award a church must achieve sufficient points in all five categories. This means that we need to improve in the Building, Land and Lifestyle categories. In particular, the Lifestyle category requires us as individuals to be encouraged to consider some of our personal lifestyle practices in aspects such as energy consumption and our carbon footprint. More details will be provided in the next issue.

In the meantime, a question to think about (based on a BBC quiz):

Which of these three actions on average make the least impact and which make the most impact in terms of reducing carbon emissions:

- Insulating your walls and loft or installing double glazing
- Household recycling
- Switching to a renewable electricity supplier?

The answer will be in the next issue.

Margaret Emsley

On behalf of the ECO Church Team