

Eco-Group Report for the Annual Church Meeting 2021

During the year ending 31st March 2021, the Eco Group continued to meet via Zoom to discuss how we can be better stewards of the earth that God created.

We created our Eco Manifesto, which was signed by nearly 30 members of the congregation, and sent it to Paul Blomfield MP to encourage him to make a stand for environmental issues.

We joined the 'Make COP26 Count' programme, which aims to support churches with spiritual, practical and political actions leading up to the COP26 climate conference being held in the UK in November 2021. As part of this, we hope to be meeting with Paul Blomfield MP to ask him to speak up for environmental issues in Parliament. We have also heard personal stories from people in areas that have been devastated by the effect of climate change.

We held special 'Climate Sunday' services on 4th October 2020 (which was also our Harvest Festival) and 21st February 2021.

We continued to keep the Eco Church Questionnaire updated and constantly try to improve our score, with the aim of gaining a Gold Award and becoming Net Zero by 2030. We have recently decided to have another look into the possibility of installing solar panels and/or air source heat pumps, as the technology has improved since the last time we looked at this and funding opportunities may be more likely.

We grew vegetables in the compound behind church and planted fruit trees in the orchard area of the garden and have started to publish an 'Eco Tip' in the Weekly Newsletter to encourage all members of the congregation to live a greener lifestyle.

On 7th April 2021 we gave a presentation about Eco Church to the Interfaith Group; this was well attended and those who came commented on how interesting it was. We were particularly interested to hear about the way other faiths are responding to the climate emergency, for example with the Eco Synagogue movement.

We plan to hold our 'Flushed Away' event, which we had to cancel last year, on 3rd June 2021; the aim of the event is to promote toilet-twinning and make people aware of the link between sanitation and an 'eco existence'.

The Eco Group is always happy to welcome new members.

Clare Loughridge, 20th April 2021

