

Northampton Methodist District Environmental Policy

(as adopted by District Executive June 2020)

The Northampton Methodist District affirms the 2019 Conference's recognition of a Climate Emergency and its call for the UK to achieve net zero emissions well before 2050¹.

This policy supports that goal, using the term Climate Emergency as shorthand for anthropogenic climate change and a range of related issues such as resource depletion, pollution, and species loss. It provides a framework that applies to all activities within the District. In addition it signals the intention of the Northampton Methodist District to achieve an Eco District Award.

To underpin the broad concepts outlined below, Appendix A includes suggested adaptations that could be made by those serving the District in specific roles. Appendix B contains Eco District criteria from the A Rocha website, and the latter is recommended for further reading. Appendix C provides an indication of the level of engagement within the District at the time of writing this policy.

Objectives:

Awareness and Commitment

- to promote awareness throughout the Northampton Methodist District of this policy and of our commitment to behaviour consistent with an Eco District Award
- to encourage enthusiastic celebration of the generous material and spiritual gifts of God's creation
- to promote more sustainable lifestyle and investment choices by engaging church members and the wider community with Climate Emergency

Resource Use

- to reduce the specific – based on footfall – consumption of electricity, gas, oil, paper, water, etc
- to encourage renewable energy generation, both on site and via green tariffs
- to apply the waste hierarchy – reduce, reuse, recycle – for example by encouraging churches to join or start a water bottle refill scheme

Local Environment

- to promote biodiversity within the grounds of churches and manses
- to encourage the use of church land for recreation and contemplation by church members and the community
- to share the enjoyment of nearby nature, for example through group walks or bicycle rides

Travel and Lifestyle

1 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/methodist-church-recognises-a-climate-emergency/> (accessed 16/05/2020)

- to minimise travel by meeting online, and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport; to optimise car-sharing and the use of energy-efficient techniques when driving is necessary
- to ensure all air travel leads to demonstrable humanitarian and/or environmental benefits and/or is offset in line with the UK's Quality Assurance Standard (or its successor) to normalise event meals that contain ingredients with at least one of the four LOAF categories: Locally grown, Organic, Animal friendly and Fairtrade

Appendix A – Suggested District Adaption

This Appendix illustrates how the District Environmental Policy may be applied to areas of work within the District as defined by headings in the 2020 Spring Synod Agenda booklet. Suggested under each heading are relatively minor adaptations to existing actions but with potential to transform the life of the District. Furthermore the District Executive encourages everyone within the District to implement other measures, especially if more appropriate and effective than those listed, to maximise progress towards the District Environmental Policy objectives.

District Executive

- Awareness and Commitment:
 - Include Climate Emergency on every District Executive meeting Agenda to review progress, and to develop future initiatives, reporting on both to Synod
 - Request Circuits to each nominate one representative to the District Eco Club to share knowledge and experience, etc, ideally leading to Circuit and church Eco Clubs
 - Request Circuits to reference the District Environmental Policy in Circuit Profiles

Action for Children

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on how Action for Children projects are affected by Climate Emergency

Archives

- Travel and Lifestyle: apply the District Environmental Policy when transporting items

Candidates

- Awareness and Commitment: ask successful candidates to promote our District Environmental Policy in their future Districts

Carbon Reduction

- Awareness and Commitment:
 - Report to Spring Synod changes in the number and level of Eco Church awards
 - Encourage comments in the Property Returns to cover all eco-friendly actions

Children and Young People

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage children's and youth work related to Climate Emergency and share examples via the District Facebook page

Connexional Press Liaison

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on Climate Emergency in the Connexion

Discernment Days

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage the group to engage with Climate Emergency

East Central Learning Network

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage all to engage with Climate Emergency

Ecumenical

- Awareness and Commitment: promote our District Environmental Policy to ecumenical partners and encourage the cross-pollination and fertilisation of ideas and skills

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on how various groups are affected by Climate Emergency

Finance

- Resource Use: encourage grant applications for projects that support the District Environmental Policy

Health and Healing

- Local Environment: report to Spring Synod on the benefits of appreciating nature

Leaders of Worship & Preachers

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage Leaders of Worship and Local Preachers to engage with Climate Emergency

London Committee Rep

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on Climate Emergency in London

Manses

- Resource Use: encourage ministers to request home energy efficiency improvements
- Local Environment: promote biodiversity within gardens; consider a robot lawnmower

Methodist Council

- Awareness and Commitment: ensure that Climate Emergency is discussed at each Methodist Council meeting and report on progress to Spring Synod

Methodist Homes

- Resource Use: encourage staff and residents to suggest home energy efficiency improvements
- Local Environment: promote biodiversity within gardens; consider a robot lawnmower

Methodist Women in Britain

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on how MWiB partners are affected by Climate Emergency

Mission

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage all to engage with Climate Emergency
- Resource Use: increase footfall of church members and the community

Probationers

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage probationers to engage with Climate Emergency

Property

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage church and Circuit property officers to engage with Climate Emergency
- Resource Use: encourage sharing of properties with ecumenical partners and other organisations; discourage routine redecoration, refitting of kitchens and bathrooms, etc

Retreat

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage retreats to engage with Climate Emergency

Rural Life

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on relevant developments such as sales of local, organic and animal-friendly produce, weather issues, environmental legislation, and the effect of farming practices

Sabbaticals

- Awareness and Commitment: encourage those taking sabbaticals to engage with Climate Emergency

Safeguarding

- Travel and Lifestyle: apply the District Environmental Policy to casework and Synod travel

World Church

- Awareness and Commitment: report to Spring Synod on how World Church partners are affected by Climate Emergency

Appendix B – Eco District Award Criteria²

Eco District status will be given to your District when it has:

- Registered its intent to become an Eco District
- Commissioned an individual or group
To coordinate progress within the District.
- Agreed an environmental policy
This should include, where appropriate, points on travel, the environmental performance of Manses (re: Methodist Church standing order guidelines on Energy Performance Certificates) and a commitment to reducing carbon emissions
- Gained the appropriate levels of local church registrations and awards for Eco Church
 - Districts of 1 to 10 churches
 - Bronze Eco District: at least 15% of local churches awarded
 - Silver Eco District: at least 30% of local churches awarded
 - Gold Eco District: at least 60% of local churches awarded
 - Districts of more than 11 churches
 - Bronze Eco District: at least 10% of local churches awarded
 - Silver Eco District: at least 20% of local churches awarded
 - Gold Eco District: at least 40% of local churches awarded
- Achieved the EC Bronze/Silver/Gold level
In the Buildings category for its District offices (where appropriate) and Land (where appropriate)
- Embedded environmental issues
Have sought to ensure that environmental issues are embedded within the curricula of ongoing presbyterial and local preacher education and support (see note i)
- Managed District investments ethically
With due consideration to the environmental implications / opportunities of such investments, taking into account the climate change investment policy of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church and the resources available within the Ethical Money Churches project (see note ii)

² <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/denominational-awards/eco-district/> (accessed 16/05/2020)

- Worked with other Districts and/or faith groups
To encourage greater environmental action, including promoting Eco Church as a helpful tool
- Established the habit of recording and celebrating individual environmental initiatives

Notes:

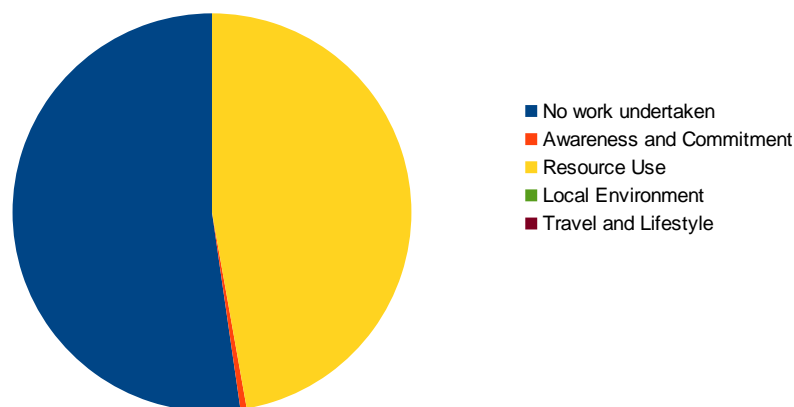
- For example, by ensuring that local preachers have access to materials to support theological reflection on our care for God’s creation. See the Methodist church Worship: Leading & Preaching course, Singing the Faith Plus, and Eco Church “Worship and Teaching” resources.
- Where there are Circuit or District reserves under investment, these are frequently invested through the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church. The Districts and Circuits should be aware of the potential for positive investment to encourage a transition to a sustainable global ecology and the Churches’ role in this respect.

Appendix C – Baseline Engagement Level

The Methodist Church annual property returns ask, "What work has the church undertaken in the last year [...] to reduce energy consumption in line with the Connexional recommendations "Hope in God's Future - Christian Discipleship in the context of Climate Change"?" As shown in the pie chart below, analysis of data for the church year 2018-19, the latest available, shows that under half of those completing the form made a comment that implied the church had undertaken relevant work.

Clearly this can be for many reasons but data from previous years gave a similar picture, with many churches either leaving the field blank or writing “none” (or similar). This could indicate a low level of engagement with the issues and/or a sense that their role in tackling the issues is insignificant, both of which it is hoped will be addressed through awareness of a District Environmental Policy.

Northampton Methodist District property returns, 2018-19
Responses to "Hope in God's Future" question



For reference, A Rocha’s Eco Church scheme considers the following five areas:

- Worship and Teaching
- Buildings
- Land
- Community and Global Engagement
- Lifestyle