

Waveney and Blyth Deanery Environmental Plan

Introduction

The impact of climate change can be seen locally, nationally and internationally. Changing weather patterns, including this summer's prolonged drought, have created problems for those working on the land. They are also affected our local wildlife. On a wider scale, we are now seeing droughts, floods and rising sea levels making some parts of the world uninhabitable. Many young people feel let down by the lack of commitment to tackle the crisis.

Why should we take action on climate change?

The Church of England's Five Marks of Mission "express the Anglican Communion's common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic and integral mission."¹ They remind us that "the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ:"¹

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth"

¹Anglican Communion website <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>

Working to safeguard creation and achieve climate justice are an integral part of our Christian mission. However, we, like many others around the world, may feel so over-whelmed by the scale of the problem that we feel powerless to take action.

The Waveney and Deanery Environment Action Plan is a way of all of us doing small but significant things to live out our Christian mission in the world. These steps fall into three categories:

1. To reduce the harmful impact of our own lives on the environment.
2. To encourage our communities to engage with God's creation so that they enjoy it and want to protect it.
3. To campaign for climate justice.

It is not possible for each of our churches to participate in all the actions listed in the plan. However, if each church is able to do something and share what they are doing with the local community, then we will have united in our mission to God's Creation and his people.

	Action	Details	Date
1.	Recruit at least one representative, clergy or lay, from each benefice to be part of a Deanery Environmental Action group.	The role would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sharing what is happening in their benefice.➤ Publicising talks, campaigns and projects within their benefice.➤ Assisting with ideas and planning for campaigns and projects, both within their benefice and across the deanery.➤ Encouraging congregations to make lifestyle changes to be more eco-friendly.	First meeting to take place in January 2023.

2.	Hold regular talks around the Deanery on Environmental Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Start with a talk about Eco-Churches to encourage our churches who aren't involved to sign up to the scheme. ➤ Talks to include local initiatives, the work of charities such as Christian Aid, the stories of eco-campaigners. ➤ Talks to be open to both church congregations and the wider community. 	Talks every two months, starting in February 2023.
3.	Using our churches and churchyards to encourage community involvement with the local environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Find out what has already been done and how successful it was. ➤ Produce guidelines / suggestions for the deanery, especially around family activities. ➤ Invite local schools to share with churches what they are doing for the environment. ➤ Involve local experts to help with doing surveys of churchyards or leading guided walks. 	Report back at Deanery Synod November 2023
4.	Encourage churches to sign up for Eco-Church status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introductory talk Feb 2023, including contributions from churches already in the scheme. ➤ Progress and problems to be shared in meetings of Deanery Environmental Action group. 	Reviewed at Deanery Synod November 2023
5.	Promoting worship which is linked to creation and environmental issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Celebrating creation and safeguarding the environment are already part of many of our acts of worship. Explore how to share this with the wider community. ➤ Consider holding prayer events for people who are increasingly anxious and fearful about the future of our world. This could include prayer walks so churches could listen and support people in their communities. 	Report back at bi-monthly meetings of Deanery Environmental Action group.
6.	Campaigning for Climate Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage all our churches to take part in campaigns run by Christian Aid, Oxfam, and other organisations. Letter-writing and adding our voices to petitions are small actions but across the Waveney & Blyth Deanery this could amount to a lot of people. ➤ Consider holding events which highlight the impact of climate change around the world and the reasons why it affects all of us. 	Report back at bi-monthly meetings of Deanery Environmental Action group.