

## Eco Diocese



Eco Church is an A Rocha UK project, run in partnership with Christian Aid, The Church of England, The Methodist Church and Tearfund.

Eco Diocese is an initiative to encourage diocesan-level engagement with Eco Church, and promote local church participation in the scheme.

### How does it work?

We register as an Eco Diocese with a signed letter from the Bishop of Newcastle. The Diocese of Newcastle then encourages churches within the diocese to sign up to the Eco Church award scheme. Churches can be awarded different levels by showing they fulfil a list of criteria, [available here](#).

#### Diocesan Awards

 <b>Bronze</b>	10% of local churches registered to Eco Church; 5% of local churches awarded
 <b>Silver</b>	20% of local churches registered to Eco Church; 10% of local churches awarded
 <b>Gold</b>	30% of local churches registered to Eco Church; 20% of local churches awarded

### Why should we become an Eco Diocese?

#### » Faithful response to Climate Crisis

God is the creator of the earth and throughout scripture we are reminded that God created us with a purpose, to worship him and to take care of all he has made. Our faith is a response to the good news that Jesus, through his resurrection, reconciled all creation (Colossians 1:20). This means we should act on the current environmental crisis, showing compassion and love for God's people and his creation.

Climate change is a justice issue, the poor are the most vulnerable and the least responsible for its effects. This challenges us to consider our choices in the light of Jesus' call to love your neighbour as yourself. The impact of the climate crisis is already causing more frequent storms, droughts and floods, leading to homelessness, poverty and more deaths globally each year.



#### » Mission & Opportunities for outreach

There is the opportunity through environmental projects with our communities and schools to engage people in the good news of Jesus, inspire love of God's creation and connect people with their local church.

#### » Diocesan Environmental Policy

The aims of Eco Church are in line with our Diocesan Environmental Policy and will help us to put this into practice.

» **Carbon Net Zero Church**

In February 2020, the Church of England General Synod passed a motion to cut carbon emissions to become a carbon neutral church by 2030.

The Eco Church award scheme provides structure and encourages churches to cut carbon emissions, alongside considering the impact of waste and the celebration of nature and God’s creation. Cutting emissions would also mean more energy efficient buildings, and in the long term this would lead to lower bills for churches.

» **Participate in an ecumenical and nationally-recognised award scheme**

Eco Church is supported by the Church of England nationally, as well as the Methodist Church and Tearfund. It has been well-received and 32 other dioceses have already registered with the scheme.

In May 2019 Diocesan Synod confirmed our intentions as a Diocese to progress with our environmental aims, we have:

- ✓ Agreed our written Environmental Policy
- ✓ Establish a point person or group within the Diocese e.g. Environment Working Group

The next steps:

- » Register our intent to become an Eco Diocese
- » Achieve Eco Church Bronze or better for Church House (and Land where appropriate)
- » Have gained at least 10% churches registered and 5% with Bronze to be a Bronze Eco Diocese
- » Have environmental issues in our ongoing ministerial education
- » Have appropriate Diocesan investments
- » Work with other denominations and/or faiths to promote Eco Church
- » Record and celebrate individual environmental initiatives

Churches awarded	
	St Mary the Virgin, Ovingham
	St Francis, High Heaton
	St Aidan’s, Brunton Park
	St Augustine’s, Alston Moor
	St James and St Basil’s
Churches registered	
	16 other churches from across the Diocese have registered for the Eco Church scheme and are doing fantastic work with their congregations to celebrate God’s creation and protect the environment.

### Eco Churches in the Diocese of Newcastle

8.8% of churches have already signed up to Eco Church and 4 churches have been awarded.

To achieve Bronze Eco Diocese:

- 10% of local churches registered, which is another three churches to register
- 5% of churches to be awarded, which is another seven churches to achieve bronze awards