



# ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

## BIGGLESWADE

### Eco Group Data Collection Report

Report on data collection activity completed between May and July 2022

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## Overview

### **Summary of Activity:**

A data collection exercise was carried out between May and July 2022. This involved a survey completed by church members, discussions with key stakeholders and church members, review of PCC minutes and review of service records. A carbon footprint and A Rocha eco church survey were also completed. The survey represented approximately one fifth of our electoral roll, while this gave useful baseline information, only where there is a significant outcome supported by other data have we use this to come to conclusions.

The purpose was to identify key issues as well as establish a baseline of where we are as a church. This would then inform future work of the Eco Group as well as wider church action. This report summarises the key findings.

### **Summary of Findings:**

Key issues for members of the church are energy use, managing resources and the local environment. Church members generally feel well informed about environmental issues but less so in relation to local issues. Nearly all Church members already do a lot of individual activities but more could be done as a church.

Environmental issues do have a place in worship but could have a higher profile and other events could be used to achieve this. While involved in some key campaigns, the church is not involved with many environmental organisations, particularly on the local level.

Our Eco Church rating is bronze or better in all areas except Land, we would need to do more with the church grounds to achieve Bronze. Our carbon footprint is 47.68 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

There is both a will and opportunities for the church to focus on the following:

- Church to drive and promote its own initiatives
- Continuing action to reduce environmental impact of energy use
- Provide more information, particularly on local issues
- Church grounds provide opportunities for environmental action
- There are opportunities for events to engage with others

### **Suggested activity for the eco group:**

Drive the church's initiatives relating to environmental issues including the following 4 areas:

- Coordinate the promulgation of information about environmental issues
- Develop, with other stakeholders, green usages for the church grounds
- Support Building and Grounds group to reduce environmental impact
- Organise church events, both for members and the public

## Report

### What issues matter to people?

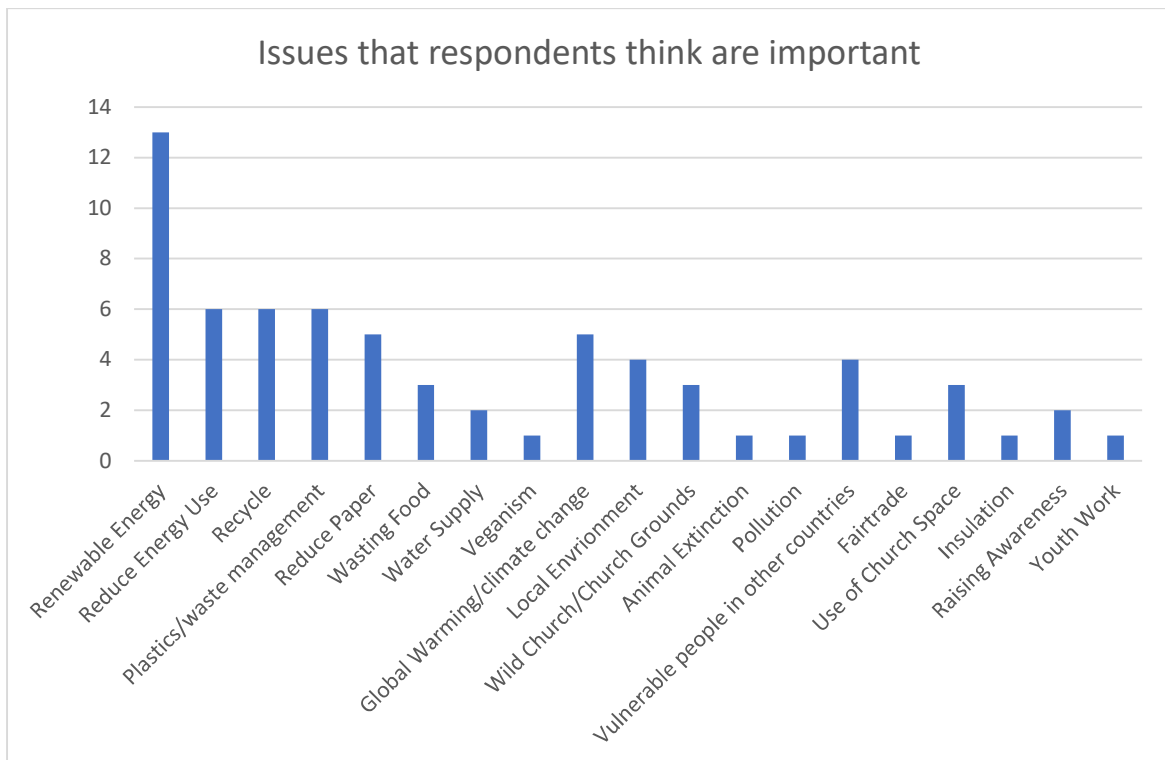
- Renewable energy and reducing energy usage
- Use of resources and waste management
- Environment, including in Biggleswade itself and locally

The first major issue for survey respondents to the survey was energy usage. With over half of respondents identifying renewable as one of the most significant issues we are facing and a quarter saying that we need to reduce energy usage as a church. In 2017 and 2018, the PCC had also discussed reducing energy usage for environmental reasons. Several stakeholders, including the buildings and grounds group, identified the installation of solar panels as one way to address this area, which was also suggested by 2 survey participants.

The next most significant issue was the use of resources including reducing the use of plastics and paper as well as recycling. Unlike energy usage, this was more divers with plastics, recycling and reducing paper usage having 5 or 6 responses and waste food coming in with 3 respondents. This has less clear a focus but does match issues raised by church leaders about environmental issues relating to waste.

A significant environmental issue was global warming however, issues relating to the local environment came up in 40% of responses for the biggest issues we are facing. This also matches views expressed by church leaders about how we use the church grounds and interact with the local area.

Church leaders highlight the importance of the church being proactive and engaged with climate issues.



## How much do people know?

- Generally church members feel well informed
- More informed about global and national environmental issues
- Less informed about local (Biggleswade) environmental issues

In terms of knowledge people were more likely to know about issues globally and nationally than in Biggleswade. Overall, the average score was 11.32 out of 15, which suggests a relatively high level of understanding within the church of environmental issues

When scored out of 5, the average score for Local (Biggleswade) was 3.3 with a median of 3, and modes of 3 and 2.

For Nationally this was an average of 3.9, with a median of 4 and a mode of 4 (with 5 being the second most chosen). For Globally, this was an average of 4.1, with a median of 4 and a mode of 4 (with 5 being the second most chosen). The difference between globally and nationally is not statistically significant.

What this means is that more members of our congregation score themselves low for knowledge of environmental issues in the Biggleswade area and this is consistently lower than national or global. This is not unexpected as there is more information generally available on national and global issues. Respondents who scored themselves low for local knowledge still identified local environmental changes as being important issues.

Church leaders are confident with their knowledge of environmental issues, Sunday School leaders have relevant knowledge and access to educational resources, though this is not a key focus of their work, nor should it necessarily be.

How much do you know about the environmental issues...				
Stat	In Biggleswade	Nationally	Globally	Overall
Mean	3.32	3.92	4.08	11.32
Median	3	4	4	12
Standard Dev	1.121427662	1.0166612	0.97652	2.767237

### What is already happening?

- Lots of individual activity particularly around waste management and energy saving.
- Less use of public transport and electric cars.
- Church already considers environmental issues in decision making
- Church engages with external campaigns but does not do much on its own initiative

### What are people already doing?

As individuals, church members are already taking action to reduce their environmental impact. Nearly all respondents separate household waste and recycle large items at the tidy tip. Most use energy saving appliances and try to walk or cycle where possible.

Other significant activity includes adapting diet to reduce environmental impact, upcycling and making modifications to their houses. Currently only a few church members drive electric cars, use public transport or contact their MP.

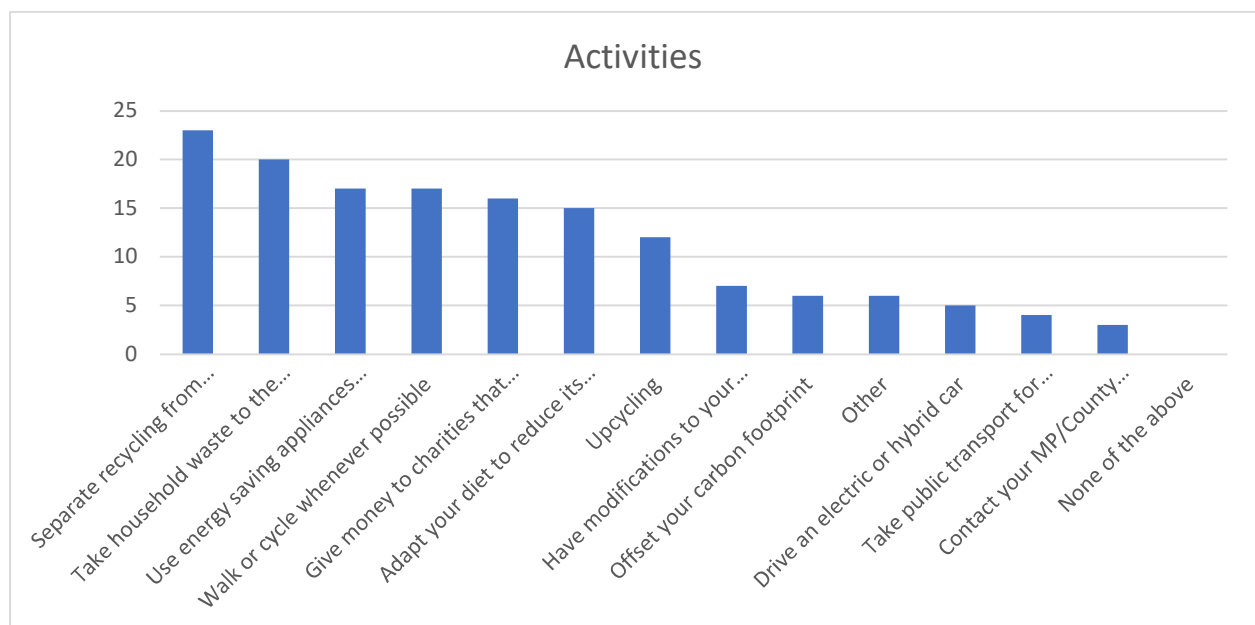
### What is the church already doing?

The church is involved in external campaigns such as the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, Christian Aid Week, Churches Count on Nature and supporting Hands at Work which have environmental dimensions to their work. The church, currently has done little on its own initiative but all stakeholders report a desire for this to change.

Environmental considerations are already factored in to decision making, such as in relation to lighting and heating.

Both the Building and Grounds and Sunday School groups expressed that environmental issues are important but should not be the sole driver of action. Responses from church leaders were mixed in relation to how often the topic comes up with parishioners outside of formal church business.

Church leaders are already considering ideas to do more as a church.



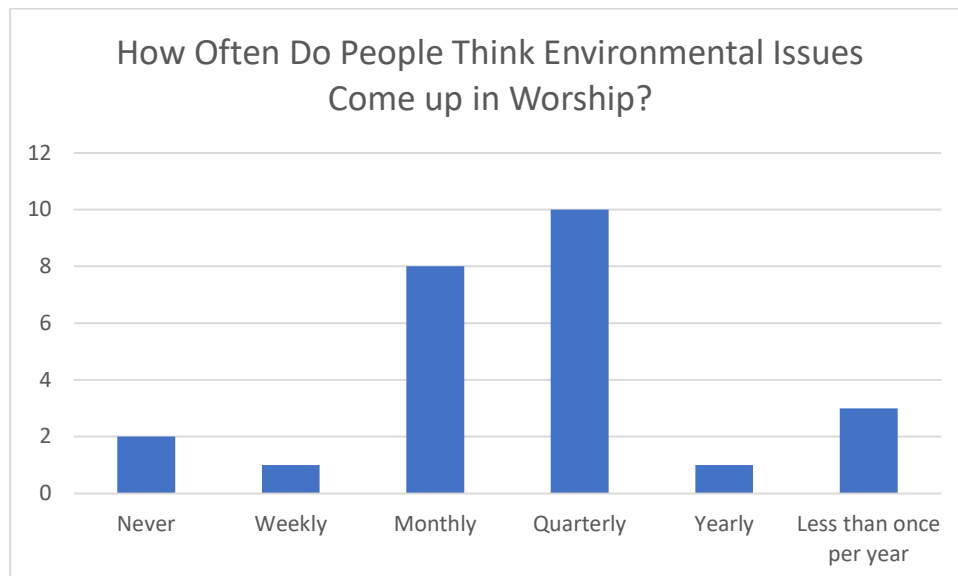
## Do environmental issues have a Place in our worship?

- Does have a place in worship
- General view is that it needs more of a place
- Most likely avenues, intersessions, sermons and evening services.

Most people feel that environmental issues come up monthly or quarterly in worship, with 72% of respondents in one of these two categories. There were no records of specifically environmental worship found in the service register. The PCC only occasionally discusses environmental issues, 9 times in the last 5 years (not including Eco Group business), and for the most part, this is in relation to building and grounds.

Church leaders express that it is an important issue but not always possible to link with the theme and readings of the week. Separate services and events were identified as an option to develop this. References are made in the intersessions and some sermons. Generally, environmental issues have a place, but not yet enough of one would summarise the view here.

Sunday School does have some activity in relation to this, particularly in creation and “sorry” prayers.



## How involved is the church in environmental organisations?

Few members of the congregation are involved with environmental organisations, those who are tend to be in multiple, four respondents accounted for 80% of the organisations that people have links to or affiliated with.

These issues are on Diocesan agenda and, as mentioned above, the church is already involved in external initiatives. There are not many local environmental organisations that the church works with.

### Other considerations identified

Within the questionnaire, issues relating to the use of the church grounds and heating were most common. People also want to be provided with more information, identifying lack of knowledge as an issue.

Respondents also identified that time and finance could be issues.

In relation to the grounds, in discussions it was clear that this could be a contentious issue, particularly in relation to re-wilding versus Living Churchyards.

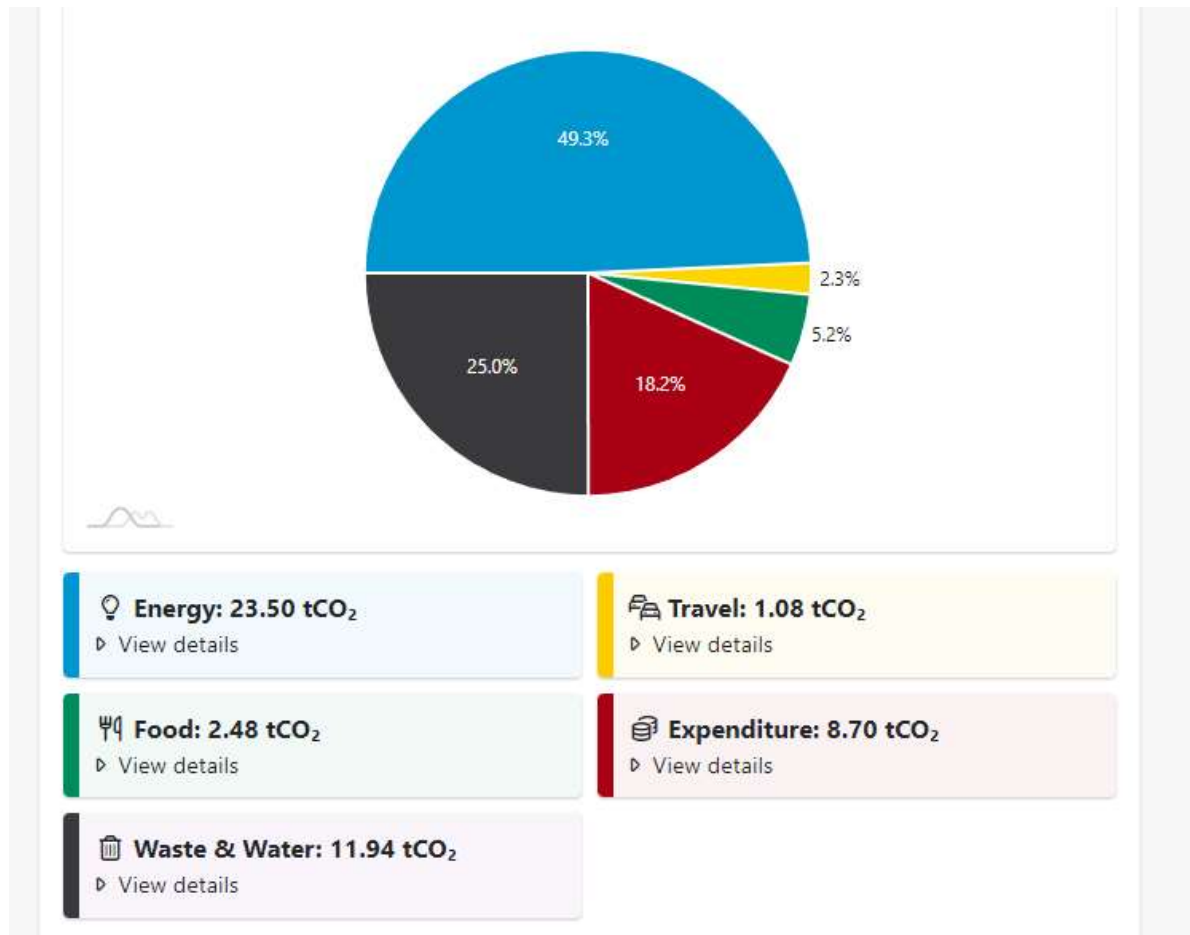
Efforts should link in with the diocese to prevent unnecessary duplication of work or missing opportunities.



## Carbon Footprint

Using 360 Church, the carbon footprint of the church was calculated at 47.68 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

The breakdown for this was as follows:



The Cost of Offsetting this carbon would be around £1,300, based on an estimate from Climate Stewards.

Please note, this does not include the carbon footprint of the Mafambisa flights, which would come to 17.87 tCO<sub>2</sub>.



## Eco Church Ratings

The group completed an initial Eco Church survey. From this, it is clear that to achieve Bronze award we need to do more work in the churchyard.

Ratings:

Worship and Teaching: Gold\*

Buildings: Bronze

Land: No Rating\*\*

Community and Global Engagement: Bronze

Lifestyle: Bronze

\*It is worth noting that the group feels the bar for this category was well below what St Andrew's as a church is aiming for and lower than the requirements of other categories.

\*\* No Rating means the threshold for Bronze has not been met.

Some ideas that could help us get to bronze:

- Native wildflower area
- More wildlife surveys
- Composting facilities.
- Establishing a management plan for the grounds

### **A note on significance and confidence.**

25 church members responded to the survey against an electoral roll of 125. This was used to calculate a standard confidence of 0.18 (or 18%). This means any number quoted is 95% likely to be within that range of the real value.

For example, if the average score was 10, the real value would have a 95% chance of being between 8.2 and 11.8. An example from the data, the average knowledge of local issues was 3.32, there is a 95% this would actually be between 2.88 and 3.75 if we asked the whole electoral roll.

Where the confidence values for two variables overlap substantially, the numbers are not considered to be significantly different.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Church to drive and promote its own initiatives

Many of the engagement on a church level has come from external organisations. Individual church members already take action to reduce environmental impact but there is a desire in the church to do more.

This could include campaigns, church events, education and assisting people being more green.

### Continuing action to reduce environmental impact of energy use

This is the biggest issue identified by members. There is already action and a will in place on this, particularly in relation to heating and possible installation of solar panels.

This would primarily fall to building and grounds and PCC however the ECO group should be able to act as a resource to support and inform this.

### Provide more information, particularly on local issues.

Respondents would value more information about environmental issues and particularly identify local issues where they have the least knowledge.

This could be developed across different media. Social media can be used to provide regular, short form information, the website could be used for more detailed information as well as the magazine, if resumed. Events and services could also be used to raise awareness.

### Church grounds provide opportunities for environmental action

There is a lot of interest in how we use the church and grounds. This could be controversial and would involve a range of stakeholders.

This should start with exploration of the options for making the grounds greener and work with PCC and leaders to ensure it is consistent. There are however some quick wins, such as water capture and bird boxes.

### There are opportunities for events to engage with others

There is a will to do more and have more events. In discussions, views about having events such as outdoor events were expressed. The limitations of the liturgy mean hosting events would allow more focus on creation care.

Examples could include: Outdoor events, Youth and Sunday School events and special Services. Would need to ensure this deconflicted with other church activities.

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