

## Motion on Sustainable Church Flowers

### Note by the Diocesan Secretary

Our Diocesan vision for environmental action is of a Diocese which seeks to understand more fully the world and our calling within it; which cares for our buildings and land in environmentally friendly ways; which transforms our activities to make them just and sustainable, and which advocates for creation care and environmental justice at every level.

Church flowers are a beautiful way to worship God through His creation and bring the beauty of that Creation into our churches. They also have an environmental impact, not just through the use of floral foam as a way of displaying them, but also when considering where they have been sourced, and the conditions they have been grown in – for example the amount of water and pesticides used.

We are already encouraging churches to consider creation care in all their different activities, by promoting the Eco Church framework, which includes [resources on sustainable church flowers](#). We have also created a [Parish Resource Pack](#) including a guide on [eco-friendly supplies](#). Alongside office materials and cleaning products, this guide encourages churches to move towards sustainable materials in church flower arrangements.

The Wantage Deanery Synod motion is entirely consistent with this in encouraging a sustainable approach to church flowers, and specifically to discourage the use of floral foam.

Choosing seasonal, locally sourced, organic, natural flowers and greenery, with limited packaging, reduces a floral display's carbon and environmental footprint by avoiding air miles and environmentally damaging chemicals and materials.

Floral foam is a form of plastic, which crumbles over time into tiny fragments which can then be washed into waterways and soil as microplastics. "Bio floral foam" still causes these problems. The Royal Horticultural Society have required exhibitors to avoid floral foam in displays at their shows since 2021 (RHS Chelsea [factsheet](#)). There are alternative ways to support flower arrangements, such as chicken wire, twigs, pebbles, cultivated moss (not wild) and flower frogs (blocks with pins), with many [suggestions available online](#). It is important that alternatives do not also carry an environmental impact – for example, the use of sphagnum moss from peat bogs is equally, if not more, damaging to the environment.

We recognise some options such as organic or locally grown flowers may be more expensive than alternatives. However, there are many ways to minimise this disadvantage by choosing flower varieties which last a long time so they can be displayed for more than one week and by using fewer flowers with more greenery. There are people who enjoy growing flowers for [cutting and may be able to supply a local church](#). Dried flowers or long lasting, flowering potted plants (without peat) can be an alternative to fresh cut flower displays for a period.

If churches already have some floral foam, it also needs to be carefully disposed of as it cannot be composted, or recycled. Water containing floral foam fragments should not just be poured down the sink or drain. The water can be poured through a piece of old, fine, cloth and then any fragments put in the waste bin.

This [resource from A Rocha UK](#) contains examples of parish policies relating to floral foam, and case studies of other sustainable church flower arranging, to help parishes consider how they might implement some of these ideas.

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Diocesan Secretary  
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