

ST. MICHAEL-LE-BELFREY ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

There is ever growing awareness around the world of the destructive impact that humans are having on this planet. As a church we believe that ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.’ Psalm 24:1-2

St Michael-le-Belfrey Church will seek to respond to the environmental impacts of our church’s operations, mitigating against environmental damage and its consequences, and celebrating good stewardship of God’s creation. We aim to do this across every aspect of our church.

As a church we define ‘environmental impact’ as referring to:

- the ecological dimension (ecosystems)
- the social dimension (quality of life, climate, and trade justice)
- the economic dimension (management of resources and finances)

This policy is rooted in the Anglican church to the Five Marks of Mission as agreed by the Anglican Consultative Council of the Anglican Communion adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996¹, which are:

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

It also sits within the context of the new targets set out by The Church of England’s General Synod in February 2020 for all parts of the church to work to become carbon ‘net zero’ by 2030.

The five key areas of our church’s life that we will focus on as we form actions to respond to this policy have been identified by Eco Church² and are:

- Worship and teaching
- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

This Policy is intended to be an overarching guide to inform all actions across all areas of church towards a desired outcome. It is hoped that all activity at The Belfrey will be checked against it and informed by it, and that this policy will inform the church’s strategy and action plans as they are revised and produced going forward.

We recommend that The Environmental Policy is reviewed every year.

¹ www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm

² <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/>

St Michael-le-Belfrey Environmental Action Plan

"Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation." Archbishop Justin Welby

The following proposed actions for our church have been identified in response to the church's Environmental Policy and our church eco-audit.

1. To follow the Eco Church programme by A Rocha to audit key areas of our church.
2. To explore appointing an Environmental Champion as a primary advocate for The Belfrey's Environmental Policy and Action Plan.
3. To use the Environmental Policy and Environmental Action Plan to inform our prayers, and for our prayers to guide this policy as and when it gets revised.
4. To undertake a Waste Audit of the church's activities and implement its findings.

Worship and teaching

The EAG recognises that for some people in our congregations and youth groups the idea of shared responsibility for our environment may be unfamiliar. Through teaching and shared fun activities we hope to encourage a growing understanding of the created world as God's extraordinary gift to be cherished, nurtured and protected. Our objective is:

5. to ensure that environmental issues are regularly included in the worship and teaching of the church. This will be worked out in public preaching and teaching and in sung worship and prayer. It will also find a regular place in the programme of study for home groups across the city and in the young people's and student groups
6. to ask every church leader to attend at least one focus group to ensure all members share the same basic information. Where appropriate, training will be available to facilitate discussion and worship on this specific subject for home groups
7. to ensure one Sunday a year of particular environmental focus following a month of group activity
8. to ensure that age appropriate teaching materials are available to support roll out across all areas of the life of the church
9. to provide information and resources for all church leaders irrespective of their specific role.

Management of church buildings

10. To ensure that the Impact Project responds to the church Environmental Policy, consciously acknowledging the environmental effects of the Impact plans as they are drawn up, mitigating against environmental damage and its consequences wherever possible, and publicly celebrating environmentally sustainable plans and actions as part of the project as an expression of our worship to God.
11. To continue to undertake environmental audits of our church premises and other property.
12. To explore obtaining an Environmental Performance Certificate for our residential properties and draw up an action plan to implement changes to tackle the issues raised.
13. We will seek to reduce the church's greenhouse gas emissions and the environmental impact of all our activities by making the necessary changes in all our use of energy and resources including water, paper and plastics.

Management of church land

14. To ensure the land we own is managed to the best horticultural standards including if appropriate creating wildlife areas.

Community and global engagement

15. To become members of York Environmental Forum and some suitable Christian environmental charity or other reputable organisation
16. To reach out to other churches in York which have similar concerns to ours.
17. To cooperate with City of York Council and local charities such as St. Nicholas Centre in raising awareness of environmental issues and taking action to promote this.

Lifestyle

18. We will encourage staff and congregation to use forms of transport which have minimum or reduced environmental impact, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing, the use of electric, hybrid or hydrogen vehicles and Car-free Sundays.
19. We will encourage and challenge all our members to take actions in their personal lives to complement and supplement these actions of the church community.