

Diocese of London



Parish Environmental Champions – Roles

“What does the Lord require of you,
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?”
Micah 6:8

Summary

The task of a parish Environmental Champion is to help their church and congregation to grow in understanding of the God the Father Almighty, Creator of the heavens and the earth – and how we should fulfil God’s command to ‘till and keep the Earth’ (Genesis 2 v 15). It is to explore new dimensions of what it means to love our neighbour, against a background of environmental degradation, climate change and overstrained resources.

Activities and concerns which a church is encouraged to engage with – supported by its Environmental Champion(s) – may include:

- o *Environmental campaigning and action*
Encouragement, education, enabling, promoting behaviour change;
- o *Premises management*
Properties – churches and churchyards, vestries and offices, mission and social care buildings; Their energy and carbon, water and waste, and the wildlife and ecology of their surroundings;
- o *Eco-justice and eco-twinning*
Twinning with overseas dioceses and centres of connection with ethnic minority congregations; Contributing to resilience-raising projects and disaster relief; Fair trade and food.

Whose responsibility?

- o Environmental action is the responsibility of everyone. It can’t be done by just one person, nor even by a group. The responsibility of a champion is to encourage, support and enable – not to do everything;
- o Yet the role of champion still works best when it isn’t exclusive to one person – everyone else should not associate the environment with just one person, and assume it’s covered. We all should share responsibilities as widely as possible. An informal open action group of energisers and encouragers, with a core to provide stability and organisation, is probably the best way to support this effort.

Am I the right person?

- o There are no special qualifications to become a parish Environmental Champion;
- o You don’t need to be an expert, just to share a love for God’s creation, and a willingness to communicate, listen and learn;
- o The suggested task list below is quite lengthy. It isn’t intended to be a burden, but an aid to thinking and planning. Choose and prioritise! No-one can do everything at once!

Appointment

- o The Parish Priest of your church with the Church Council (PCC, GCC or DCC) should be responsible for making this appointment of a person or group from the congregation as Parish Environmental Champion(s) – it is essential that they are supportive of actions by their Parish Champion(s);
- o To set the ball rolling, you may need to take the initiative by volunteering and getting yourself appointed, by the Parish Priest and Church Council, as well as pulling together a larger action group;
- o Agree with the Parish Priest and Church Council a job description based on this guidance note; make sure all concerned understand what the time commitment will be, what you are planning to do, and how others will play their part; report back regularly on progress;
- o It may be appropriate to set a limited term of appointment in line with those of Church Council members and comparable posts – such as 3 years – but renewable for a further three. This would make the commitment finite and less open-ended; also it provides a natural review time for the Church Council – to look back at progress made, and forward to the next period, and to encourage provision of a succession;
- o When you have appointed your church's Environmental Champion(s) please tell the [Head of Environmental Challenge](#) – so you are added to mailing lists.

Information and resources

You aren't on your own! The Church of England and Diocese of London are there to provide or direct you to a wide range of resources:

- o *Worldwide web*
www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint
www.ShrinkingtheFootprint.org;
- o *Head of Environmental Challenge*
Brian.Cuthbertson@london.anglican.org, (020) 7932 1229;
- o *Care of Churches Team and DAC*
Geoffrey.Hunter@london.anglican.org, (020) 7932 1230.

Specifics

Church and congregation

- o Stimulating awareness of the environmental and climate changes, and helping the church community to equip itself theologically and practically to meet these challenges;
- o Pointing people and organisations to information and support for their particular needs;
- o Working with the Parish Priest and PCC in developing and establishing a Parish Environmental Policy (see www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint for the Diocesan Environmental Policy);
- o Encouraging your church to stay engaged and committed to the *Shrinking the Footprint* campaign;
- o Forming an environmental action group; then working with and supporting the action group – which should include but not be limited to the Environmental Champion(s) and representatives of the parish leadership team;
- o Keeping up to date with resources and support (see foot of this paper); making sure these are widely disseminated and used;
- o Leadership and support for the church's managers and congregation members in taking action to deliver the church's contribution to the Diocese's goals and targets;
- o Preparing a report on environmental action, including progress on reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, to be presented to the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting);
- o Contributing a regular column in the parish magazine, and/or regular info bulletin, paragraphs in weekly news-sheets etc;

- o Arranging for occasional speaker events on the environment and climate change, for the congregation and wider community;
- o Helping the clergy team source material for teaching in church services, on care for God's creation and the Christian gospel and discipleship;
- o Supporting the involvement of your church in regular annual environment-related events, including the Lent Carbon Fast, Creation and Environment Sundays, Harvest Festival, Creation Time, national Climate Week, WWF's Earth Hour, the Big Lunch – see www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-News;
- o Promoting the involvement of the arts including church music in communicating to hearts and minds our responsibility to care for God's creation.

Premises and buildings

- o Support for the PCC in considering whether to commission an Environmental Audit of energy, carbon, water and waste – see www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-Environmental-Audits;
- o Support and monitoring of actions to implement low-cost savings and the advice of any environmental audit.

Energy and carbon

- o Making sure regular readings are taken from electricity and gas meters (or recording oil use, if applicable), filing and monitoring utilities bills;
- o Ensuring clear and safe access to meters, and that church staff reading gas meters know how to translate units to kWh (seek support from [Head of Environmental Challenge](#) and/or your gas supplier as necessary);
- o Ensuring clear and safe access to heating and lighting controls, and that people are trained to use them correctly;
- o Monitoring heating levels, response to user needs and weather conditions without waste;
- o Making regular tours round the buildings, to see if lights are on at night in error and if so turning them off;

TIP! From time to time, take meter readings before buildings are closed at night, and when first opened next morning. See how much energy is being used during hours of closure. Is the heating on all hours (that may be planned, is temperature as intended? What else may be using energy?

- o Making sure your church has acted to implement the Diocese's recommended Three Basic Steps. Steps 1 and 2 are to change the light bulbs to reduced energy types and turn down heating by 1°C) – see www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-Action;
- o Arranging for energy figures to be reported online through diocesan Annual Returns;
- o Getting involved in any decision which affects energy consumption, especially purchasing appliances and new lighting;
- o Arranging for the church to take part in the Diocese's scheme of *Climate Action Plans* – see www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-Climate-Action-Plans – to measure the Church's energy efficiency and carbon footprint, then plan zero-cost energy savings, using *Energy-saving Benchmarking* – www.london.anglican.org/Energy-saving-Benchmarking;
- o Helping review the church's energy supply, including options for switching to renewable electricity (the third Basic Step – see above) or to more economical suppliers, supported by *Charity Funding Solutions* (see *Climate Action Plans* web page, above);
- o Encouraging a PCC decision to neutralise remaining emissions using *Carbon Retirement* (see *Climate Action Plans* web page, above);
- o Getting involved in the church's planning and decision-making on investing in energy-saving building improvements, as part of the Diocese's *Climate Action Programme* – www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-Climate-Action-Programme and *Climate Action Projects* – www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-Climate-Action-Projects.

Water and waste

- o Encouraging water saving measures in the church;
- o Monitoring the water meter if there is one;
- o Encouraging sparing use in the church kitchen(s);
- o Making sure leaking taps are repaired swiftly;
- o Limiting use by toilets – encouraging the PCC to install dual-flush cistern apparatus, and/or ‘Water Hippo’ or ‘Save-a-Flush’ bags (a supply of which is available to collect from the [Head of Environmental Challenge](#) in London Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU;
- o Managing water use in the churchyard – talk to the Local Authority if it is responsible for upkeep;
- o Encouraging the PCC to consider installing one or more water-butt(s) connected to rainwater pipes from the church roof.

Wildlife and ecology

- o Encouraging management and use of the churchyard in a manner which cherishes and safeguards wildlife;
- o Promoting education and awareness of churchyard fauna and flora;
- o Monitoring the care of trees in the churchyard;
- o The above in liaison with the PCC and the Local Authority.

Communities and lifestyles

(See www.london.anglican.org/Shrinking-the-Footprint-world)

- o Raising awareness about alternative means of transport including to church;
- o Communicating information on topics such as travel and flying, ethical shopping and resources consumption, food, waste and recycling, gardening, caring for wildlife and biodiversity;
- o Connecting Church with Community through an environmental event – eg a churchyard nature conservation scheme (see www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/), participating in national events like the Big Lunch, setting up a stall at a Church Fair with an environmental theme eg bird box making, guessing the energy consumption of the Church (cf “guess the weight of the cake”) inviting the local school to use the Church grounds for a bug-hunt;
- o Liaising with the Area or Parish World Development Advisor (www.london.anglican.org/Page3104);
- o Acting as link person(s) with local environmental activists or groups such as Transition Towns.

Eco-justice and eco-twinning

- o Ensuring that the impacts on others, especially on the poor in developing countries, of each church’s energy use and carbon footprint, are understood and taken fully into consideration in decision-making and planning;
- o Communicating the impacts of our personal lifestyles on others, so they are understood by all church members;
- o Identifying UK and overseas church communities for potential ‘eco-twinning’ arrangements;
- o These might for example be based on existing missionary links – fostering an environmental dimension to these relationships – or on locations of projects by organisations supported by the church such as the Angola London Mozambique Association (ALMA – www.almalink.org), Christian aid organisations like Christian Aid (www.ChristianAid.org.uk) and Tearfund (www.Tearfund.org);
- o Or they might be developed from links between an ethnic minority congregation in the Church and a country with extended family connections;
- o Supporting the process of establishing such relationships and fostering their development;
- o Ensuring that decisions by a parish on support for overseas projects take into consideration the need for environmental adaptation and resilience, especially against the impacts of climate change;
- o Developing the knowledge and awareness of church members of the ethical dimensions of buying and especially food consumption;

- o Supporting the church's participation in the Diocese's Fairtrade campaign – <http://fairtrade.london.anglican.org>.



**The Diocese of London
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