

## **WCP Environmental Policy notes for WCP meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov by Lynn Atkinson**

The WCP should provide an overall policy at WCP level which can then be implemented at congregational level in the way that best fits their situation.

Reading up on the draft URC policy and Ecochurch the environmental policy and associated actions required will go across all aspects of church life. We are not just looking at recycling and reducing plastic, using greener energy and LED lights but also things like encouraging our congregations to car share, walk or cycle to get to church, to think about how we can be more responsible with any food catering, adding solar panels to the roof, engaging the youth and children in environmental activities, community clean ups, feeding the wildlife, using recycled loo paper and printer paper, raising awareness amongst the congregations as to what they can do at home, sourcing any new mugs from charity shops rather than buying new, monitoring and reducing our CO2 emissions and much more.

We will need a small group of interested people to put the policy together which can then be brought to the WCP for agreement. It should set our high level strategy and goals, probably along the lines of those outlined in the URC draft policy. We hopefully don't need anything quite as in depth as the URC draft policy. It does have a useful list of websites for resources to help us. We should include review points, such as an annual review of the goals, what have we achieved, what else should we be looking to achieve and amend the policy accordingly each year.

Do we draw the people for this group just from WCP reps or ask at congregational level if there is anyone interested in being involved?

We can get each of the congregations to register with ecochurch. This would give us a framework to work within and be a guide to the actions we need to take. There is a survey to complete which awards you a level of Bronze, Silver or Gold. We could set ourselves the target of achieving Bronze by Christmas 2020 or maybe of achieving Bronze in at least 3 categories if we think that trying to achieve them all would be too ambitious.

In the meantime we can let the congregations know we are putting a policy together and ask them to start with an audit to enable them to complete the questionnaire. So we will need a small group within each congregation to do this. The questionnaire will drive the audit. A plan of action can then be drawn up based on the results. We could ask the congregations to have this in place by a specific date. How long do we give them? Up to Easter, as I can't really see it being possible to give much time to this before January?

We will also need to calculate and then monitor our CO2 emissions for running the churches and Manse's as part of this. There are resources to help us do this.

We can also ask the congregations to consider what changes we can start to make straight away just by looking around and thinking about it. This would give us a head start on any actions we need to take.

Any changes suggested that incur a cost would have to be agreed at the appropriate level before being made.

Some changes might be:

- Agree to no longer buy single use plastic plates, cups and cutlery.
- Avoid using disposable cups and if it can't be avoided purchase compostable cups from a suitable source
- Use up any single use plastic resources we have aiming to wash and reuse where possible.
- Use washable mugs and when replacing consider where they are made, where they have travelled from and are they good quality so they last a long time. Consider buying second hand mugs from the local charity shops.
- Explore the possibility of getting milk for coffee in milk bottles ( Lakeland sell a milk bottle with a screw top which could be used to take home any leftover milk from traditional milk bottles with foil tops, or use a flask)
- Explore the possibility of getting squash in glass bottles.
- Look at getting eco friendly cleaning products in refillable containers.
- Look at recycled printer paper and recycled loo roll
- Encourage wildlife on our land – put up birdfeeders and hedgehog houses – projects for the children maybe?
- Put up posters about the 5 R's - Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle.
- Make sure we have recycling facilities available.
- Ensure all tea/coffee is fairtrade
- Avoid using products in church catering which contain palm oil
- Use locally sourced food in any catering, and organic, animal friendly and fairtrade if possible.
- Do more community clean ups.
- Ensure all toilets are twinned
- Can we collect rainwater? Can we use it in church somehow?
- Change all the lights to LED or low energy bulbs.
- Look at who the energy suppliers are – can we get a deal across all the churches for a green supplier?
- Look into solar panels.
- Look at where our flowers come from for use within the church, is there a more local source.
- Open a repair café. Encourage people from the community to staff it and use it.

**Actions required:**

- Set up a WCP Environmental policy group
- Set up a group within each congregation (they would drive the actions but ultimately everyone within the congregations will have to get involved to provide info and make the changes)
- Register with Ecochurch
- Start the audits.