

**Eco-congregation Policy**  
**St John the Baptist Shedfield**

**Introduction**

Caring for God's creation is part of our duty as Christians.

*Eco-congregation* is an ecumenical programme helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and respond in practical action in the church, in the lives of individuals, and in the local and global community. It breaks this down into four elements - worship, teaching, mission, and day-to-day management.

This policy lays down the guidelines within which we at St John the Baptist Shedfield intend to carry out this responsibility.

**Background**

*Eco-congregation* developed from a partnership between the environmental charity ENCAMS and the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It aims to encourage churches to consider environmental issues within a Christian context and enable local churches to make positive contributions in their life and mission.

*Eco-congregation* was dedicated in an ecumenical service at St Paul's Cathedral in September 2000 which included a sermon preached by the Bishop of London. It is run by ARocha, an international Christian organisation.

*Eco-congregation* is free and is funded by various Christian bodies. Awards can be obtained in recognition of spiritual, practical and community orientated work (there is a £50 entry charge).

**Objective**

To improve awareness of environmental issues in a Christian context, make our parishioners (and other users of our facilities) aware of actions being taken, and encourage their participation.

To outline our approach for addressing environmental issues.

To lay down certain specific actions that will be taken.

**Policy detail**

**i) Worship**

Focus on environmental issues on at least one Sunday each year.

**ii) Youth and Children's work**

Promote awareness of environmental issues in Sunday Club, Messy Church and other such groups, with a specific focus on one Sunday each year.

**iii) Mission and Community Outreach**

Promote awareness of environmental issues with other organisations using the church facilities.

Ensure there is environmental input to the selection of charities supported financially by the parish.

Encourage support for other relevant charitable or fundraising activities (e.g. Phil the Bag).

Work closely with St Nicholas, Wickham and share information on eco-initiatives.

**iv) Day-to-day Management**

Monitor and improve use of electricity and other energy sources, especially through awareness/control of heating and lighting.

Maximise use of Fairtrade, recycled and environmentally friendly materials, and double-sided printing.

Maximise recycling of waste generated on church premises, and ensure bins are conveniently positioned and labeled.

Maintain churchyard in line with Management Plan, for the benefit of parishioners, visitors and wildlife.

Review churchyard Management Plan every 1-2 years.

**v) Communications**

Keep parishioners informed of plans and activities through the website and regular articles in the parish magazine.

Ensure parishioners are aware of *Eco-congregation* and associated guidelines through sensitive use of notices and posters in the church and Study Centre.

Consider environmental aspects in PCC (and any other) decision making.

Prepare annual 'action plan' for agreement with PCC, including any desired expenditure.