



St Mary's Eaton Socon
THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

Creation Care
Loving, caring supporting



GREEN SHOOTS - AUTUMN 2022

Our occasional newsletter

“Walk to Church Sunday”: 22nd September each year is “World Car-free Day”. As a symbol of our commitment to the environment, we are encouraging everyone who can to make a special effort to walk or cycle to church on the nearest Sunday, **25th September**. (The same day as our youth group are doing a sponsored walk around Grafham Water.) It’s good for our health and it reduces pollution.

Car Share: some of you already share cars to come to church. It would be cheaper for you and better for the environment if more of us did. On Sunday 25th September – “Walk to Church Sunday”, there will be sheets to sign-up for those who wish to be involved on a regular basis, either as driver or passenger.

“Wildlife Walk” on 28th August: several of us enjoyed a wildlife observation walk from the Church, over Eaton Socon Lock, through Pocket Park, ending with a cup of tea and cake at Audrey and Pete Hedges’ boat, “Dragonfly”. The weather was kind to us and we saw lots of wildlife which our ID sheets helped us to identify.



We are holding another family-friendly **“Wildlife Walk”** starting at 3pm on **Sunday 25th September** (“Walk-to-Church-Sunday”). We plan a similar route, leaving from outside the church, and concluding with tea and cakes at “Dragonfly” moored near to Willow Bridge. Please let Audrey know if can come (and any dietary requirements), by booking via the church website (www.eatonsocon.org/blog/Calendar).



COP27 is scheduled for November in Egypt, reminding us of the continuing global political battle on climate change. The UK Government still holds the COP presidency until it hands over to Egypt in November. Pray for those campaigning to reduce our impact on the climate and compensate those who've suffered due to climate change. Pray that our new government will move forward with creation-friendly approaches, particularly in response to the economic and energy crises.

Quiz results: thank you to the 87 people who completed our “Creation Care Quiz” on Sunday 12th June. Space doesn't permit all the results to be shown, but here are some:

- 64% knew that the Church of England has set the target to become net zero Carbon neutral by 2030; 94% thought that St Mary's should play its part
- 82% prefer there to be some long growth in the churchyard to favour wildlife
- 86% would be happy if we reduced the church thermostat by a degree to save money and reduce our carbon footprint
- 51% did not know that they could twin their toilets at home
- of those who buy garden compost, 50% buy peat-free

We hope to repeat the Quiz in 2023. If anyone has any feedback, we would be happy to hear from you.

FairTrade Church Status / Eco Church Survey:

as part of our commitment to environmental care and justice for others, we'd like to see St Mary's become a “Fairtrade Church”. To do this we have to:

1. Use Fairtrade products (we just about do this already)
2. Integrate Fairtrade into the life of St Mary's. e.g. during Fairtrade Fortnight hold a Fairtrade themed service and sell products at a stall

One person has already come forward to help champion this idea, but we need a second to make it viable. If you are this person or you would like to know more, please contact one of the Creation Care team.

This would also help us to move up from the Eco Church “Bronze Award” that we achieved last year (displayed in the church entrance hall) to the “Silver Award”.



FAIRTRADE
FOUNDATION



Ethical Investments: not all of us have cash to invest these days, but if you have, please consider investing in ethical ways. Make sure any investments are doing more good than harm. For a long time many Christians have avoided investing in alcohol, gambling, arms and tobacco. Now there is a wide range of funds which are also trying to avoid environmentally harmful activities, and positively investing in companies with sound employee practices, governance and sustainability credentials. See for example ethicalconsumer.org and yourethicalmoney.org. Or invest some of your money directly in Christian philanthropy - for example see www.greenpastures.net.



Church Carbon Footprint:

Our PCC has agreed that St Mary's should do all it can do be "carbon neutral" by the year 2030, a target set by the CoFE for the national church. We estimate our church's carbon footprint each year. Unsurprisingly, the biggest source of carbon was the gas used to keep the church warm. The figures for the last three years are:

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|------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2019 | 42 tCO ₂ e | tCO ₂ e means tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – the figure includes the harmful effect of gases other than CO ₂ such as methane. |
| 2020 | 23 tCO ₂ e | |
| 2021 | 39 tCO ₂ e | |

The 2020 figure was low due to the pandemic's effect on the use of the church buildings and transport.

The Creation Care team "offset" the carbon we produce as a church through payments to [Climate Stewards](#), starting at 10% for 2020, 20% for 2021, and so on, hoping to reach 100% by 2030. The CoFE target, to be carbon neutral by 2030, is ambitious but achievable.

Overseas Spotlight: Floods in Pakistan.

Since June, floods in Pakistan due to heavier than usual monsoons and melting glaciers have left a third of the country under water. They've caused well over 1000 deaths and displacement of over 300,000 people. A state of emergency has been declared.

Please remember Pakistan in your prayers. For more information, or to donate, see www.tearfund.org/Campaigns/pakistan-floods-appeal.



(thanks to Sky News for the photo)

This is yet another example of how climate change is affecting the world now. The Indian Ocean is one of the fastest warming seas of the world – up by 1 degree compared to a global average of 0.7 degrees. It is thought that the warmer sea surface temperature causes increased monsoon rainfall, while the recent intense heat-wave suffered by the area has accelerated glacier melting.

Sadly, it is often the poorest countries that are most affected and least able to cope.

Churchyard News

The hot dry weather during the summer has affected the churchyard just as it has our gardens. Because of logistical problems, the Council has suggested easier ways of managing the churchyard, particularly regarding the mowing regime. We are grateful for all they do and have accepted their proposals. We have published our new Management Plan for the churchyard at www.eatonsocon.org/churchyard, while it is awaiting PCC approval.

During a week in June, “The Churches Count on Nature” week, Margaret Tabone repeated her wild flower survey, which has been uploaded onto the National Biodiversity Database. Birds were also surveyed (Sue Boreham) as were butterflies (Mike Matthews).

The **Monthly Churchyard Working Parties** held on the first Monday morning of each month, continue to be popular. All the flower beds are now being looked after under our “Adopt a Flower Bed” scheme, but more people are always needed, so do join us if you can! The bed immediately next to the east wall of the church hall is now a productive **vegetable patch**. Feel free to pick anything you wish – chard and tomatoes are doing well at the moment.

The next “**GroundForce**” day is planned for **15th October**. Watch this space.

We are exploring the possibility of introducing a new “**wildflower meadow**” to the south-east of the church building. This might be similar to areas we see around town. The Spring is the best time to begin work. It should provide a colourful display during the summer.



Toad seen in churchyard



Fox caught by trailcam, drinking at night in the churchyard



Tomatoes & Chard in the “veg patch”



Borage growing in July along the eastern border

St Mary's Creation Care Team:

James Faulkner, Anthony Harris, Audrey Hedges, Roger Peppiatt, Margaret Tabone
Our group reports to the PCC. We have a page on the church website www.eatonsocon.org/Creation-Care. We would be pleased to hear your views and suggestions – please email to creationcare@eatonsocon.org or leave a voicemail message on 01480 352154 (Church office).