



Creation Care Group

The Creation Care Group was set up three years ago to help St Mary's understand and respond to the developing environmental crises around us. We want to show that we love creation because we love its Creator. We've made changes in our Church life, and encourage Church members to make changes in their own lifestyles too.

Our efforts were recognised by an Eco Church silver award this January, following our bronze award eighteen months ago. This required further progress in five areas:

Worship and Teaching – our worship and prayers often reflect our love and concern for creation, including a Sunday in June when we focussed on our individual responsibility to care. Over 80 people returned a questionnaire about their own attitudes and actions. Creation Care is also a regular part of the children's and young peoples' teaching.



Buildings – we've provided bins opposite the kitchenette to help people recycle batteries and ink cartridges. And the recent installation of LED lights in the Church will help to reduce our electricity use. By far the biggest part of our 'carbon footprint' is the gas we burn to heat the Church and Hall – we planned to turn the thermostats down a bit, but the recent unwelcome price rises have made us turn them down even further!



Land – we've continued managing the Churchyard to be of more benefit to wildlife, while keeping it a pleasant place for visitors. The meadow areas have enabled wild plants and creatures to thrive there – we have found about 60 species of plants, apart from the trees and grasses. A small new bed behind the Hall has grown a variety of herbs and vegetables as well as some sunflowers, and elsewhere we've added plants that will provide seeds for the birds. Of nine bird boxes, six were used last year. Our camera has caught a hedgehog and a fox visiting our feeding and watering point during the night, as well as birds and a family of mice.

The 'Quiet Area' was completed to provide space for individuals or small groups to relax. A new noticeboard outside the Hall provides information for visitors – thank you to ESCA for helping with the cost of that.



Community and Global Engagement and Lifestyle – we've become a Fairtrade Church, starting with a successful stall at the Christmas Fayre. We've also started occasional walks to help people to enjoy our lovely local area. We try to make sure that everyone has a copy of our home-grown leaflet of practical ways in which we can each enjoy more the world around us and do less damage to it, and there are regular tips in our Newsletters.

The challenge now is to keep at the silver level, and to look for areas where we might improve further. We were pleased that the PCC has agreed a Church Environmental Policy.

We're very grateful to the Town Council for their work and cooperation in the Churchyard. We're also grateful to all the people who've adopted beds in the Churchyard, or helped at the Groundforce mornings or the monthly Monday working parties.

There's more information about us on the Church website at www.eatonsocon.org/creation-care, and about the Churchyard at www.eatonsocon.org/churchyard.

If you are interested, want to know more, or have ideas, please contact one of us.

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