



St Mary's Eaton Socon
THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

Creation Care
Loving, caring supporting



GREEN SHOOTS – JUNE 2024

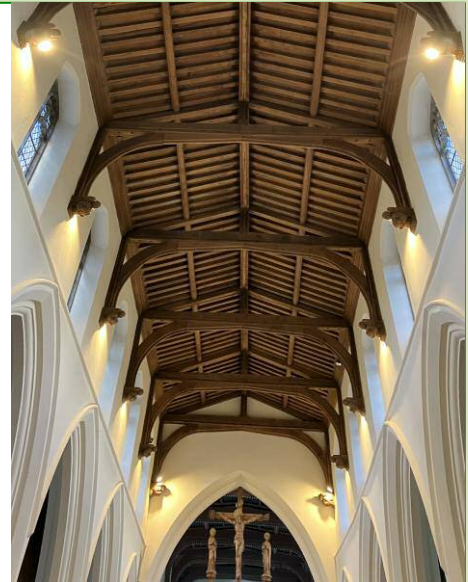
Our occasional newsletter

Fuel costs

We all know how electricity and gas prices shot up two years ago.

Church fuel costs went up too, but it could have been far worse. We used a lot less fuel in 2023 than we had the previous year.

Just before Christmas '22, the Church nave lights were changed from traditional bulbs to LEDs. That reduced the electricity use when they are all on from about 2,700 to 600 watts. Indeed the Church's electricity use dropped by just over 2,000 units a year. (That ties in with the amount the Church building is used for different activities through the year.)



The other change in 2022 was that we started taking much more careful control of the Church and Hall thermostats - both the temperature they are set to and the times they are on. Last year we used only 63% of the gas we were using two years earlier. Without these measures the Church fuel bills would have been nearly £5,000 higher last year. We saved about 25%!

Our own bills may not be as high as the Church's, but have we taken those steps at home?

They really do save money, and of course help to reduce our carbon footprints too.

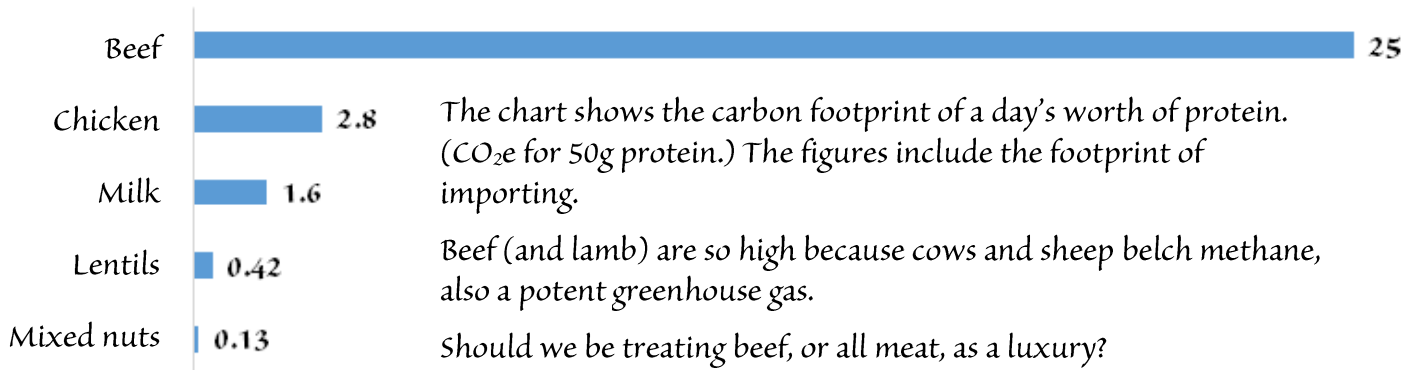
Personal Creation Care Survey

Do you want to assess where you are on your creation care journey, and find ideas for your next steps? Help is at hand online at creationcare.org.uk. This website, run by St Paul's Church, Dorking includes 7 areas:

- Worship & prayer
- Home
- Garden
- Travel
- Food
- Possessions
- Community & Global engagement

Why not have a go? If you do, please state that your Church is St Mary's Eaton Socon.

Our Diets Matter!



Litterpick

On Saturday morning 16th March, a bright sunny Saturday morning, nine of us met outside church. Armed with pickers, gloves and sacks, we walked the paths and streets around Eaton Socon, collecting about 10 sacks of discarded waste. We were encouraged by several passers-by thanking us for our efforts! Back at the church we enjoyed a much-needed hot drink. Do join us at 09:30am on Saturdays 15th June and 28th September for our next two litterpicks.



Fairtrade

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Fairtrade, since the first certified products hit supermarket shelves. We follow their ethos of putting the planet and people first. Although some products are more expensive everyone profits, not just the sellers. Lots of Fairtrade products can be found in cheaper supermarkets, and don't forget our Refill Shop on St Mary's Street – Fairtrade, organic and packaging free!

Car Share:

Some of you already share cars to come to church. It would be cheaper for you and better for the planet if more of us did. Near the door in church, there is a sheet to sign-up for those who wish to be involved on a regular basis, either as driver or passenger.

The Bible and the Environment

Julie Robb

The environment is newsworthy. In 2023, I led a major review of one of the MA programmes at London School of Theology. We wanted to create a programme enabling Christians to engage biblically with a range of contemporary issues, including the environment. A new course was written entitled 'The Bible and the Environment' with the help of Rev Dr Dave Bookless (Director of Theology at A Rocha International), Dr Martin and Rev Margot Hodson (John Ray Initiative) and Dr Timothy Tse.



How does the biblical story help students think about a biblical response to the environmental challenges the world is facing?

The biblical story is 'bookended' with the account of creation at its beginning and ends with the account of the 'new heaven and the new earth' (Rev 21:1). However, in between those two 'bookends', the biblical story proclaims God's care for his world and human responsibility for that care.

For example, Psalm 104 is a Psalm in praise of God's creation and his care for it. If God's care for creation causes the Psalmist to praise, how much more should we care for a creation that God cares so much about? Elsewhere, in Psalm 148 humans praise God alongside angels, the heavenly hosts and the sea creatures, fruit trees, wild animals and all cattle. In destroying or damaging God's world, we are reducing the ability of God's world to praise its Creator.

When God gave his people the land, he made a covenant, in which the health of the land was directly linked to the faithfulness of the people to God (see Deut 7:13-14; 11:13-17; 8:9-12). When they were faithful, the land would flourish; when they were unfaithful, the land would suffer. This message was reinforced by God through his prophets. God's people were not faithful and so the created world suffered. The land experienced drought, disease, depopulation and loss of biodiversity due to the sin of God's people (eg Isa 1:7; Hosea 4:1-3; Jeremiah 4:23-28; 9:12-14; 12:4; Isa 24:4-7).

This is a challenge. What part are Christians playing in preventing God's world from praising him? How much are the contemporary environmental challenges a result of the unfaithfulness of God's people? Neither question is easy but if we are going to think biblically about the environment, we need to ask these questions.

Moving into the NT, the students continue to face such challenges to their thinking. But the course does not end at Revelation. It finishes with thinking about the environment as part of the continuing mission of the Church. How does caring for the environment have a role in the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ? In 2010, a commitment was made by the global church to caring for God's world, summarised in the 'Cape Town Commitment':

If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the Gospel that says "Jesus is Lord" is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.

Students are not given the answers, but they are asked to think through what this means for them both personally and for the churches with which they are involved. It is my hope, and that of the College, that students who study this programme will capture this as part of their ongoing commitment to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

For more information, please go to the LST website at <https://lst.ac.uk>.

Churchyard Focus:

We have agreed with the town council that much of the churchyard will be mowed several times a year as was done previously, except a smaller area of "meadow", which will be mowed just once a year to give wild flowers there a chance to flourish. Our team will rake this area after mowing. The photo shows us raking in February.

We have created a second larger wildflower bed, near the existing one but closer to the south porch – watch it grow!

Finally, the PCC gave us permission to give a makeover to the fenced-off area which we have renamed the "Tower Garden". As well as a small pond to favour wild life, we are adding plants that will grow happily in the shade. Please look at it as you walk to church.



Monthly Wildlife Walks

Following a very wet start to 2024, we have resumed our wildlife walks. Our gentle stroll through the churchyard, over Eaton Socon lock, through Pocket Park and over Willow Bridge, culminates in tea and cake at the Dragonfly. We take part in activities that support our local wildlife.

On Sunday 9th June, starting at 3pm, our walk will be a family scavenger hunt. We meet outside the church tower as usual.

Repair & Alter Sessions

The session held on 20th April was a very productive day. 3 pairs of trousers altered, 3 jumpers repaired, 2 dresses altered and one pair of curtains altered. £50 was given towards Creation Care funds.



St Mary's Creation Care Team:

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, and a group on the church Facebook page. 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).