

What words come to mind when you think about becoming an Eco Church?
(please enter one word at a time)

Challenge creative Care for creation
 Responsibility justiceseeking
 Virtue sustainability exciting
 Custodian missional Teamwork
 Action hope Lower carbon footprint

Creation Matters

Newsletter of the Southampton Eco District

Southampton Eco
District Events

Emma Nash began our series of “**Creation Mondays**” webinars with a presentation called ‘**Baby Steps to Bronze.**’ These webinars are organised in conjunction with The Methodist Learning Network.

The majority of the attendees were at an early stage of a path to Eco Church bronze award or were contemplating doing so. Emma challenged the group to provide their view about what it meant to become an Eco Church, and the results are shown as the picture above. This showed an appropriate overview that would resonate with those who have trod this path for a considerable time. Emma provided examples of rewarding and effective initiatives that are pointers for fledgeling Eco Churches. She left us with the wise warning not to await the perfect plan before acting and not to be afraid of imperfect executions of plans. Active Hope involves learning through reflecting on our experiences.

6. Perfect is the enemy
of good



Creation Mondays videos

Emma’s talk is being mounted on one of the Eco Church pages of the Southampton District’s website.

The new Eco Church survey -

Overview

[New Ecochurch survey](#)

In 2025 a new Eco Church survey will replace the current one, which has been little changed since the project began in 2016. Present awards will continue to be recognised but submissions for awards offered after the end of January should use the new survey.

The themes of the survey are only slightly changed. The five categories now are:

- Worship and teaching
- Buildings and energy
- Land and nature
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

A link to the new Eco Church survey is provided in the margin, and that page also includes guidance and further links to appropriate resources. The survey questions for each category can be found on the Eco Church page of the District's website.

You have until
the end of
January 2025
to complete an
existing survey

The newer emphases within the survey reflect the challenges that A Rocha see as essential to address the failures of humanity to tackle the emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss. If churches are to be pillars of light, in our communities, if churches are to show their love of God's creation, then the guidance intrinsic to the new survey provides a framework.

One new theme with the **Worship and teaching** category is "People". There are three related questions:

Our ministers, leaders, preachers and intercessors can preach/teach confidently about creation care and environmental issues.

Those responsible for pastoral care (or the equivalent) in our church are aware of and feel equipped to respond to environmental concerns including eco-anxiety

Specific callings to take action on environmental issues (including Eco Church) are affirmed equally alongside other ministries/vocations (e.g. social care/ action) in our church.

The responses for the first two questions include:

Some training is needed

This is a challenge the Eco District recognises - hence the Creation Monday webinars.

Buildings and energy

Within this category, there is a pathway question to guide you to questions appropriate to your own church:

Commitment:

Our church has recognised the climate and ecological crisis and the fundamental injustice this represents. We have committed to reducing our carbon footprint year-on-year in line with our denomination's commitment to net zero.

360Carbon

Please identify which pathway on balance best fits your situation. Please include all the buildings you own, manage or use.

The three separated pathways are:

1. *Our church or cathedral is used regularly (at least weekly) and has energy and water supplies.*
2. *Our church is intermittently used (less than once weekly) and may not have an energy or water supply.*
3. *Our church does not own or manage a building e.g. churches that meet in rented space or outside.*

All pathways include the 'Commitment' question. Essential to fulfilling this commitment is to make a measurement of the carbon footprint of your church's activities appropriate to your pathway. In the Connexion a recommended tool to achieve this is '360carbon' of Climate Stewards. In pathway 1 there are separate footprint questions as to energy alone and also to other carbon-contain activities like travel, food, purchases.

Land and nature

There are two pathways through this category:

Pathway 1: for churches which own or manage land such as a garden, churchyard or burial ground.

Pathway 2: for churches with very limited land such as a paved car park, a perimeter, or other hard-standing areas and for churches that do not own or manage any land.

The commitments to enhancing the environment for biodiversity vary between the two pathways. For those churches with land, there is the possibility of managing that land in a way that enhances biodiversity. For churches without land, the option is to assist others in partnership to achieve this end.

In both cases an option is presented to utilise the ground work provided by A Rocha's Target 25 initiative. Target 25 aims to support 25 species, groups of species or habitats which are UK based and under pressure. The project includes the option of using monitoring procedures to contribute to building up a picture of the health of species and habitats, and record a time profile to check for the effectiveness of steps that have been taken.

Commitment:

Our church recognises the significant contribution churches can make to make the UK's target of 30% of land protected for nature by 2030.

Pathway 1: We have established a plan to manage our land for nature to help us do this in the most impactful way.

Pathway 2: We manage our land and/or work in partnership with other organisations/community groups to manage land for nature.

A Rocha's Target 25

What's going on?

Net Zero by 2030

The next Creation Monday webinar will be on **Monday, December 16 (7.30-9 pm)**. It will be given by **Hamish Leese**, newly appointed as Director of Environmental Engagement in the Connexional team.. The title of Hamish's presentation is:

Action for Hope: How can we become net zero by 2030?

Hamish will explain the scope to the commitment made by Conference in 2019, and help us work through what that means for us all. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

[Action for Hope](#)

[Southampton Eco District Events](#)

Eco Church venturing beyond Bronze

At the last count, about one third of the churches in our District had registered for Eco Church, and approximately one sixth had gained awards. The fraction which have gained silver or gold awards is about one in 20. In part this is due to the time it takes to achieve the award after having made it to the previous rung of the ladder, but also it is due to the significant extra commitment.

In this last of the presently planned Eco District webinars, we offer the opportunity to learn from the experience of two churches that have taken these steps already.

Jim Gillings leads the Eco group at Salisbury Methodist Church (SMc) in Wiltshire. SMc were registered for Eco Church in January 2020, and awarded their Bronze award in August 2022. That formed the platform for their Silver award in October 2023.



Rose Gosling leads the Eco team of

Summerbridge Methodist Church in North Yorkshire. Summerbridge was registered as an Eco Church in January 2019, and their next milestone was a Gold award in August 2020, being the third Methodist Church in England and Wales to receive such an award.



Creation Matters is the newsletter of the **Southampton**

Eco District group:

Eco District pages are to be found from the Ministries tab of:

<https://www.sdmc.org.uk/>

To order your own copy and to provide news items contact

ecodistrict@sdmc.org.uk