



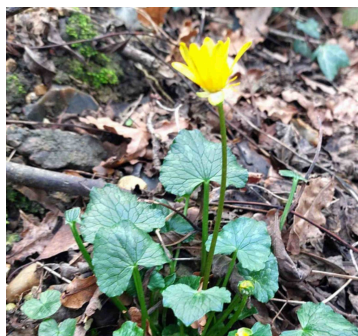
Ruth Valerio at Newport Methodist Church

Creation Matters

Newsletter of the Southampton Eco District

Creation Matters!, is an ecumenical network promoting creation care across the Isle of Wight. In February they met in Newport Methodist Church on a Saturday morning, and their invited speaker was Ruth Valerio, currently with the charity Embrace the Middle East. Ruth spoke about the challenges we face with the existential threats of climate change and biodiversity loss. Movingly she proposed the following attributes that churches can offer:

- A place for lament, confession and grief
- A realistic view of humankind
- A creational spirituality
- Resource for the long haul
- Hope



Lesser Celandine:

New Year plant hunt

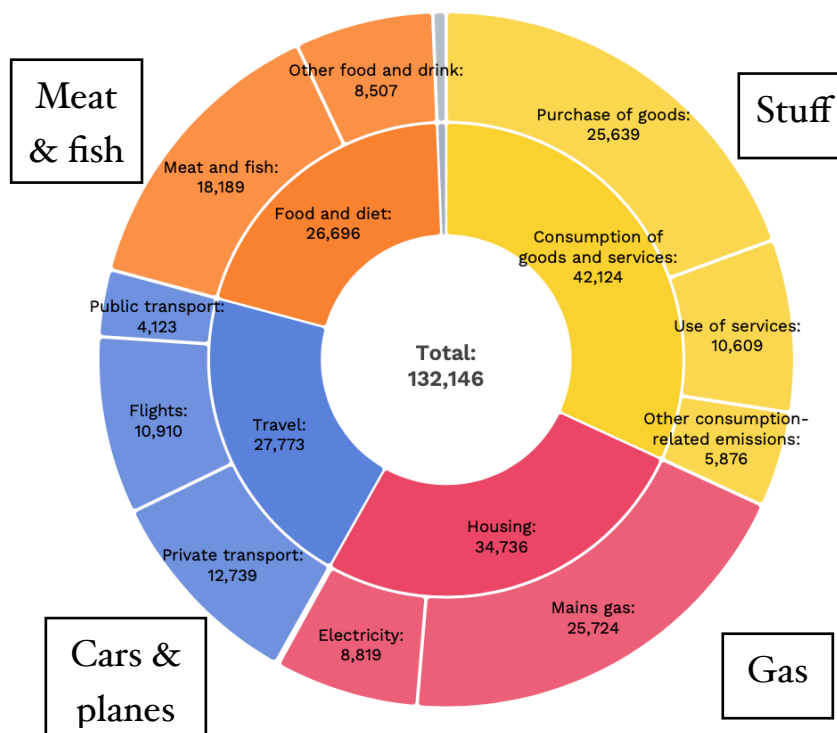
Newport Methodist Church

She had spoken at two schools on the Island on the previous day. Many schools had wished for a visit, and those present in Newport would wish for another!

Lifestyle

According to the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), the average annual carbon footprint of a household is 13 tCO₂e (tons of equivalents of carbon dioxide). This is comparable to many medium sized churches, and thus the large majority of the carbon footprint of a church is associated with the congregation. The Impact surveys of the CSE provide a breakdown of carbon emission sources for authority boundaries, with the one here being for the civil parish of Chandler's Ford. That parish has a slightly lower carbon footprint than the national average, attributed mostly to a 10% lower footprint for travel.

Centre for sustainable
Energy



Tring Baptist Church

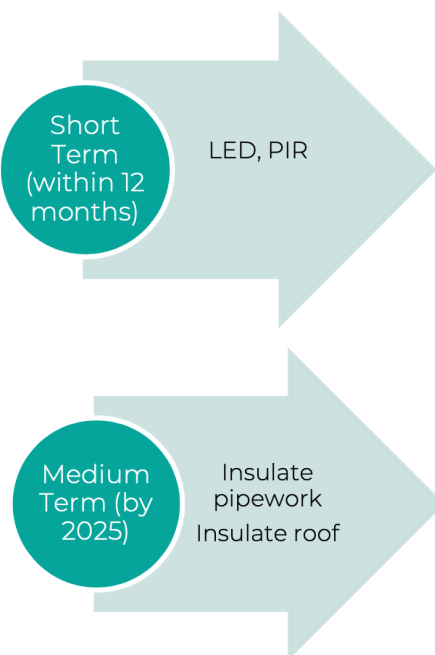
Creation Care

WWF-UK

Lifestyle is one of the one of the key areas for which Eco Church provides a framework and resources to a church. Churches are providing guidance in different ways.

Wesley Church Weeke have used a short questionnaire similar to that used by Tring Baptist Church **Romsey Church** have pointed their congregation to Creation Care. This is an Eco Church-like survey The areas include home, garden, travel, food and possessions. **Broadstone Church** have established an ongoing survey scheme for their congregation and the results compared to local and national averages. They have used the calculator of WWF-UK. The anonymised results are displayed on their notice board, and they intend to track changes

Energy audits



Yeovil Methodist Church by the Quedam shopping centre was the location of the Decarb Somerset event in January. Several advisory organisations relevant to supporting community buildings were present, including one used by the church to conduct an energy audit as it plans a New People New Places project. Asked for the benefits of having an independent energy audit, their property steward, Steve Watson, wrote:

The biggest impact for me if you get (or win) an actual independent audit is that they aren't trying to flog you something, or push a specific product. Also it's acknowledged that some changes whilst good for decarbing may not make financial sense.

As a consequence of achieving a Bronze Eco Circuit award, the District is close to qualifying for an Action for Hope grant which targets projects to advance towards the goal of Net Carbon Zero. So it may become plausible to fund energy audits for churches across the District. The District Policy Committee is giving its consideration to such a scheme.

Starting from energy profiles provided by the church from their records, the auditor would visit and provide a report on a stepwise approach to reduce the carbon footprint of that specific church. As an example, taken from an Anglican Church, short and medium term steps were proposed which will reduce lighting and heating recurrent costs. These may pave the way to longer term investments for electrification of heating and travel in line with achieving a Net Carbon Zero goal.

This carbon plan may be incorporated into church and circuit mission plans and reduce the calls for funding emergency replacements of condemned heating systems.

The Eco District group are considering how best to help churches raise external funds to enable ambitious schemes. Events like Decarb Somerset and the upcoming Wiltshire Climate and Environment Summit are examples of county-based opportunities. There will be others in the the differing forms of local and regional government.

Please do share opportunities that you see as we consider ways to advise and support the steps in enabling renewal.

How are we doing?

The 360°carbon calculator

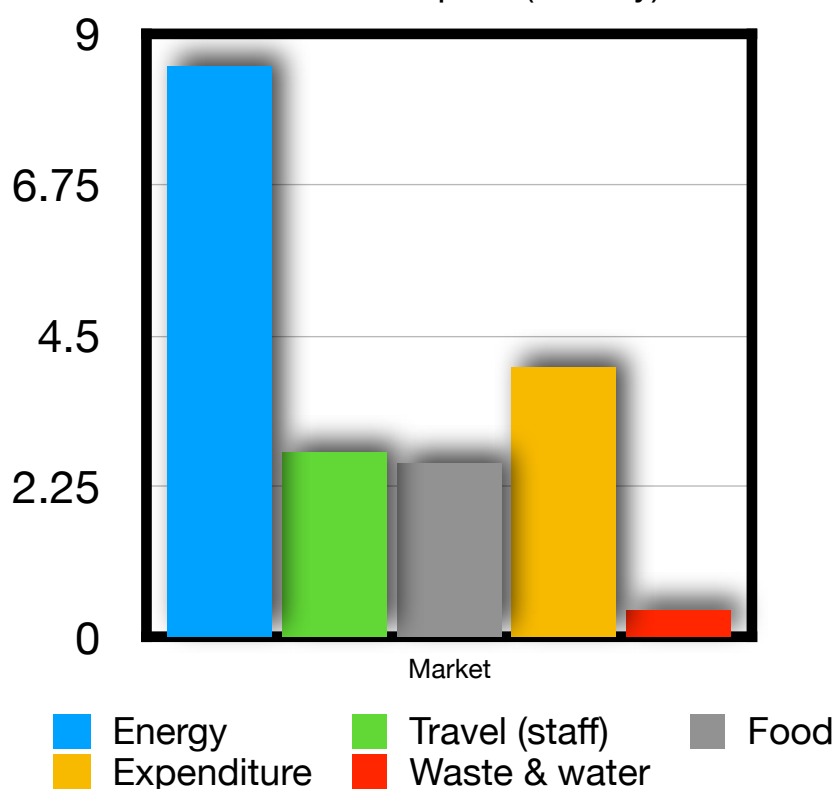
[Climate Stewards](#)

[360°carbon](#)

Climate Stewards is one of the A Rocha family of Christian environmental charities. They have designed a carbon calculator covering church activities called 360° carbon and this is accepted by Action for Hope and required by A Rocha UK for churches seeking Gold Eco Church awards.

Here is an example from a Gold award church for 2024.

Carbon footprint (tCO₂/y)



Energy for heating and lighting is generally the largest item. This church, Romsey Methodist, had increased expenditure in 2024 to complete their double glazing programme. A church does need to decide on the scope for travel and food. The choice of 'Staff' matches Action for Hope, but A Rocha may expect the congregation's travel to be included.

The Romsey Church Council chose to offset their footprint by investing in Climate Stewards projects sufficiently to attain Net Carbon Zero overall.

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/>

Facebook:

[southampton.ecodistrict](https://www.facebook.com/southampton.ecodistrict)

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