



Launch of Eco Church on January 26, 2016

# Creation Matters

## Newsletter of the Southampton Eco District

**Eco Church's Tenth Anniversary** was on January 26 marking when A Rocha UK launched its survey-based scheme as a successor to Eco Congregation in England and Wales. This took place in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. The address was given by Rowan Williams, seen here with Ruth Valerio, then Theology and Churches Director of A Rocha UK. Dr Williams presented the first Eco Church award to St Paul's. In our District, Hart Plain Church was so enthused by this that their registration was lodged just after 8 pm on the following day!



About 9000 churches are now registered with the number of awards close to 4000. There are over 100 gold awards. In our own District, 54 churches have registered, with 33 having received awards (23 to bronze, and 10 to at least silver). Hence over a third of our churches are directly involved with the Eco Church journey.

The pathway taken by one of our churches was captured by a Connexional video and this also features on the Eco Church website as a guide to churches.

One church's approach to launching an Eco Church pathway, on <https://youtube.com/@methodistgb>

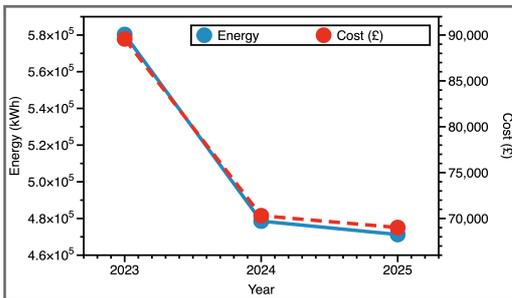
# Independent energy audits

## Action for Hope (AfH) grant

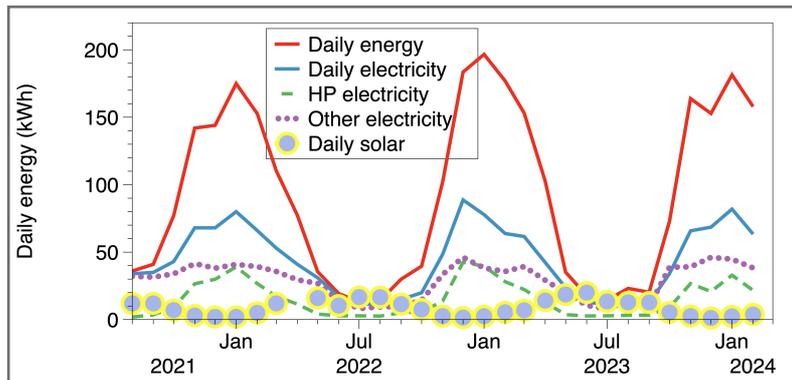
The steps taken to gain the Eco District bronze award have largely qualified the District for receiving a Methodist Action for Hope grant. These grants are targeted to help the Church take steps towards Net Zero Carbon, the aspirational Connexional target for 2030. The first Action for Hope step is **Assess where you are**. In 2022 the Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit began this step by collecting the annual consumption and generation energies and expenditures of all churches. The reduction has largely been due to avoiding energy-hungry devices and tighter control of heating.

The next AfH step is **Green your energy** and plans are underway in the District to provide churches and circuits with independent energy surveys of church buildings and manses. Independent assessments like this can be used in grant applications to external bodies.

The assessors will ask for details of the energy use of the building in question. In addition to the annual figures, monthly or seasonal ones can help analyse what may be an appropriate for the particular use of the building in question. The daily use is also important. The best solution might be different for a church used only on Sundays to one with almost continuous use.



Net energy consumption and cost for churches in the WER Circuit over a 3 year period



Daily energy consumption averaged for each month of an all-electric house in Hampshire. [➡](#)  
From November 2022 the 'Other electricity' line included charging of an electric car.

For our own house, occupied throughout the year, it was clear that a possible 2kWp solar installation would match the average electricity consumption for about 5 months of a year, but this is a tiny proportion of our annual load. However an air source heat pump reduces consumption in the colder months very considerably. Improvements in the insulation of the house made this a viable option, and could have been beneficial earlier. A survey would really have helped us take sensible steps to remove our reliance on heating oil rather than learn on the hoof.

## Newport Methodist Church



In 2020 during lockdown, Tearfund’s ‘Reboot’ campaign encouraged one of our small groups, meeting online, to think about building a better post-coronavirus world. An immediate step was to write to the prime minister calling for government action to rebuild to create a better, fairer and more sustainable world for everyone.

During Lent 2021, we continued online sessions for the wider congregation based on the excellent series [Christianity and Climate Change featuring Katherine Hayhoe](#); the final session was ‘What can we do as church?’.

We registered with [Eco Church](#) in 2022. ‘Worship and Teaching’, through the Bible studies we had done, was the spur for action and fundamental in our thinking.

The ‘Land and Nature’ criteria were challenging in our urban ‘concrete and gravel’ site! We asked for suggestions via a display set up for several Sundays and a management plan ‘People for nature, nature for people’ was developed. ‘Windowsill growing kits’, (seeds ready planted in pots filled with compost) allowed anyone to join in. Donations of plants and planters and offers of practical help followed, and there has been a display of all round colour this year. Messy Church’s vegetable growing has added to the effort. A bring and share of seasonal produce from ours gardens has been a great success.

The ‘Buildings and Energy’ criteria encouraged us to undertake a baseline Carbon Footprint survey and over 12 months we reduced our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Property and Finance team has prepared a Net Zero Carbon Plan which has now been adopted and is being implemented.

The ‘Lifestyle’ section prompted us to produce information on ‘Carbon Footprint’ and ‘Net Zero’ and encouraged households to use a Carbon Footprint tool.

In January 2026 we were ready to apply for an award to encourage the congregation that, together, we really are making a difference: we received a Bronze award.

We are continuing our actions by taking part in the Big Plastic Count in March, aiming to reduce single use plastics. The ‘Coat of Hopes’ has arrived on the Island, and we are encouraging people to see it and embrace the ideas it represents. Both of these initiatives fit into ‘Community and Global’ criteria.

Keith Marston, church senior steward, tells us about the pathway of Newport Methodist Church to a bronze award this year.



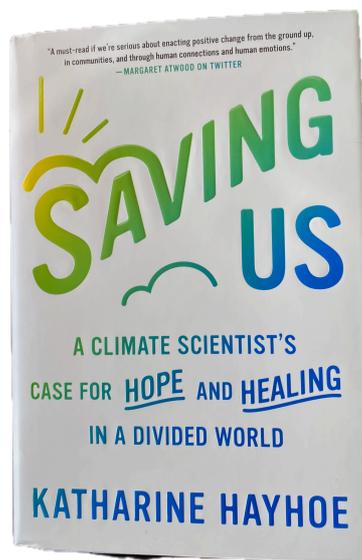
And Keith shows us the change in their outdoor space from August 2023  to September 2025 .



# How are we doing?

## Talking Climate with Katharine Hayhoe

Katharine Hayhoe, author of 'Saving Us' (2021), distributes this weekly newsletter by email. It includes sections of 'Good news', 'Not-so-good news' and 'What you can do'. As an example, here is an extract of the 'Good news' which I received on February 21. It has a different accent to mainstream news outlets.



*The United States is the world's largest source of cumulative carbon emissions, responsible for about 25% of the total. On an annual basis, however, China's emissions passed those of the U.S. in 2006 and have grown substantially since then. That is why a recent CarbonBrief analysis showing that, over the last two years, **China's emissions have flattened out—and may even have begun to decline!**—is such encouraging news.*

*In 2025, most sectors in **China saw a decline in emissions**, with transport down 3%, power generation falling 1.5%, and building materials dropping 7% compared with the previous year. Why did that happen? **Mostly because of clean energy.** Compared to 2024, in 2025 China produced 43% more solar, 14% more wind, and 8% more nuclear energy, with coal power generation dropping by 2%.*

*To put this in comparative terms, in both 2024 and 2025 China added more new solar capacity in one year than the United States has installed over its entire history; **and they're not slowing down.** And as I mentioned **last August**, in 2024 alone, China's exports of clean-energy technologies are estimated to have **slashed global carbon emissions by 1 percent.***

*None of this means the job is done—far from it. But it does show that when countries scale clean energy quickly, **emissions start moving in the right direction.** That's cause for hope.*

John Evans ([ecodistrict@sdmc.org.uk](mailto:ecodistrict@sdmc.org.uk))

**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/>

The full format will be published in March and September.

'Monthly notes' are now being distributed through the Southampton District. Each issue will comprise an image, text and these as a one page article. You are invited to use these in your local newsletter or website; or you can use the image and text for social media posts.

**To order your own copy and to provide news items and views contact**



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