

# Environmental Policy

June 2024

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<b>Sign-off date</b>	
<b>Renewal due date</b>	
<b>Scope</b>	<p>The Northampton Methodist District is committed to growing a flourishing, sustainable network of circuits of worshiping communities which are growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, and inclusive in their outworking of the mission of God.</p> <p>As such, this policy covers the actions of District and encourages both Circuits and churches to be a Justice seeking church that embraces its environmental commitment.</p>
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>The Northampton Methodist District of the Methodist Church affirms the 2019 Methodist Conference's recognition of a Climate Emergency and its call for the UK to achieve net zero emission well before 2050.<sup>1</sup> The District embraces the aspirational target of the Methodist Church to become a net zero carbon emissions church by 2030.</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>This policy seeks to provide framework that applies to all activities within the District. In addition it signals the intention of the Northampton Methodist District to embed this work into our Missional Development Plan and see the embodiment of this policy to all relevant aspects of the church.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>To enable and support a Flourish: Action Hope For Hope Working Group to maintain this policy, monitor, collate feedback, and report on the District's progress towards its environmental objectives.</p> <p>To support Circuits and Churches in working towards reducing environmental impact and meeting the objectives of this policy.</p> <p>To define Environmental Targets for the District, Circuits and Churches</p>

**“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).**

**Vision-** In recognising our role in supporting the care and protection of God’s wonderful World. The District will seek to meet the aspirational target of the Methodist Church to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030. In parallel with reducing our Carbon Emissions we will also work towards embracing the wider aspect of protecting the environment and become an Eco Church.

**The aim of this environmental policy seeks to encourage Circuits, Local Churches and Church members in the District to:-**

- (a) Recognise that Christians are responsible for the good stewardship and care of God’s earth by embedding sustainability in our activities and reflecting on the environmental consequences of our decision-making.
- (b) Make care for the environment integral to our worship of God and teaching.
- (c) Actively progress the implementation of sound environmental practice in all our activities.
- (d) Reduce the environmental impact of church buildings and activities.
- (e) Develop church land to benefit the environment and the local community.
- (f) Engage with local and global agencies to seek a fairer, more environmentally friendly world and with the political process to generate action to protect and restore the planet.
- (g) Develop lifestyles that reflect the aims and objectives of this environmental policy.

**In order to support the path to our Environmental Vision, the District:**

- (a) Has registered as an Eco District with A Rocha and will work towards achieving the Gold Standard.
- (b) Will appoint a Working Group to coordinate progress within the District to encourage and support Circuits, Churches, and Members to achieve the aims of this policy. Further, to provide guidance in meeting the aims of this Policy and guiding them to helpful resources.
- (c) Encourage all Circuits and Churches to become Eco Circuits/Churches.

**To become an Eco District, the District will:-**

- (a) Encourage all Circuits to appoint an environmental officer/representative or small group to act as a focus for environmental action in the Circuit and to liaise with the District, including participation in Eco-Summit gatherings.
- (b) Propose and annually review time-bounded aspirational targets for Circuits and Churches to:
  - I. Register as an Eco Church and work towards the Gold Standard.
  - II. Monitor their Carbon Footprint and work towards year on year reductions with the aim of reaching Net Zero by 2030.

- (c) To commit to embedding an environmental grant stream to support environmental projects.
- (d) Provide materials to enable theological reflection on environmental issues. With the aim of including such materials in the support given to local preachers and worship leaders in training and practice.
- (e) Work with other Districts, denominations, and faith groups to encourage environmental action.
- (f) Record and celebrate individual environmental initiatives within the District through our Digital channels.

**To promote greater awareness of environmental issues, the District Synod:**

- (a) Invites circuits and local churches from time to time to hold special services that focus on environmental issues.
- (b) Encourages public transport or car sharing wherever possible to attend District Synods and other District meetings. Consider the location of meetings to minimise travel as far as reasonably possible.
- (c) Will use Zoom video conferencing for District meetings, wherever possible to minimise carbon emissions, and generally use electronic communications in preference to paper.
- (d) Seeks to ensure catering at Synod and district meetings use LOAF foodstuffs, especially fairly traded tea, coffee, and biscuits. (LOAF is an acronym for Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly, Fairly traded.)
- (e) Promotes the principle of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in the provision of catering, and encourages the use of environmentally friendly cleaning materials.
- (f) Encourages District meetings prayerfully to consider our human impact on the environment as an integral part of their agenda.
- (g) Encourages Local Churches and Manses to consider switching to a renewable energy provider.
- (h) Invites circuits and local churches to adhere to the above principles and develop their own environmental policy.

Policy to be presented for adoption at the District Synod on 7th September 2024

Policy to be reviewed by the District Environmental Group before September 2025

## Appendix

### 1 Environmental Targets

The following targets are intended to provide a baseline against which we can monitor our progress towards reaching our environmental vision. These targets are to be reviewed and updated along side the annual review of the Policy.

- a) Circuits by 2025 will appoint an environmental officer/representative or small group to act as a focus for environmental work in the Circuit and to liaise with the District, including participation in Eco-summits.
  - To act as a focus for environmental work in the Circuit
  - Act as liaison for Action for Hope grants
  - To develop and share knowledge with the District through Eco-summits.
- b) 50% of Circuits and 25% of churches to adopt an environmental policy by 2026, with the aim that all Circuits and 50% of the Churches adopt an environmental policy by 2027.
- c) District to achieve Silver Eco Church Award by September 2025 and Gold by 2027
- d) All Circuits to register a commitment to become an Eco Circuit with A Rocha. For 25% to achieve Gold, 50% silver and 100% bronze by 2027
- e) 75% of Churches within the District to register to become an Eco Church and 10% to achieve gold standard by 2027.
- f) The District, Circuits, and Churches will establish and report their carbon footprint each year. They will work towards year-on-year reductions, with the goal of a 50% reduction by 2027 and achieving net zero by 2030.
- g) An energy survey is recommended to help Circuits and Churches reduce their carbon footprint. By 2027, 50% of Circuits and 25% of Churches must have completed a survey.