HARPENDEN URC

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Creation care means caring for all of God's creation by stopping and preventing activities that are harmful (e.g. air and water pollution, species extinction) and participating in activities that further Christ's reconciliation of all of creation to God.

An environmental policy will help our church express its Christian commitment to caring for God's creation, through worship, stewardship, practical action and community witness.

Environmental decisions made today affect future generations and as a church we will teach children and young people about Creation Care, how to reduce Environmental harm, think Eco-terms to help us leave buildings in a better condition for the future.

Our Vision

As a Church we hope to show that:

- Our worship reflects God's love of Creation
- Our buildings and surrounding land demonstrate responsible stewardship
- Our lifestyles show fairness, living simply and caring responsibly for God's world
- Our voice helps local people inspire creativity and improve society

Carbon Reduction

We aim to:

- Measure and monitor our carbon footprint (energy, travel, all activities)
- Set annual reduction targets for building energy usage
- Work towards net zero emissions by 2030

Buildings and Energy

We aim to:

- Improve energy efficiency (insulation, heating and lighting)
- Support the transition to renewable energy resources
- Reduce overall energy consumption
- Consider environmental impact on building maintenance and upgrades
- Keep simple records of energy use, water use and waste reduction and display records on Church noticeboard

Travel and Meetings

We aim to:

- Encourage use of public transport, cycling, walking and car share, if possible
- Ensure cycle racks are available and areas for parking buggies and prams
- Reduce unnecessary travel through online meetings
- Use lower carbon travel options where possible for Church and Preschool outings

Use of resources

We aim to:

- Minimize waste and increase recycling
- Avoid single use plastics
- Use sustainable ethically sourced products such as recycled paper and eco-friendly cleaning products
- Reduce food waste and encourage low carbon diets - think food miles. Seasonal eating.
- Encourage low carbon and locally sourced catering where possible and avoid unnecessary consumption

- Use Fair trade and sustainable sourced products where possible
- Display simple guidelines asking groups using the church to follow these practices

Land and Biodiversity
Where applicable we aim to:
- Manage church land to support wildlife
- Plant native species, follow pollinator friendly planting and create habitats (Hedgehog houses, Bird boxes, Insect hotels)
- Avoid the use of harmful chemicals
- Use water butts to collect rain water and have compost bins strategically placed in the gardens
- Maintain church grounds as welcoming shared spaces

Worship, Teaching and Lifestyle
We aim to:
- Include environmental themes in worship, prayers and intercessions
- Have United Services with sister Churches and perhaps outdoor Services weather permitting
- Educate members about sustainable living
- Encourage lifestyle changes that reduce environmental impact
- Create a quiet prayer garden or a reflection bench
- Use worship to inspire practical discipleship
- Record church Services for viewing online

Litter
As a church on a town center site litter is a challenge for us. We want to respond to this problem in ways that reflect our Christian calling and stewardship as well as community care.
We aim to:
- Organize weekly or fortnightly litter picks
- Ensure safe removal of hazardous waste
- Maintain bins on site
- Use friendly signs such as “Please help us care for this shared space”

Ethical Investment
Where the church holds funds, we aim to:
- Avoid investments in fossil fuels where possible
- Support environmentally responsible and ethical investments

Advocacy and Community Engagements
We aim to:
- Support local environment initiatives and participate in national campaigns e.g. Climate Sunday
- Work with community partners on “Lights-up Sunday”
- Advocate for policies that address climate change and promote justice

Children’s Groups - Preschool and Playgroups - Environmental Commitment

The preschool/playgroup and children’s groups operating on church premises will support the church's environmental aims by:

- Encouraging children to develop an appreciation of nature through outdoor play, gardening, wildlife activities, and environmental learning.
- Reusing and recycling materials wherever practical for crafts and play activities.
- Minimizing waste and reducing the use of single-use plastics.

- Using environmentally responsible products, including cleaning materials, paper products, and art supplies where feasible.
- Conserving energy by switching off lights, equipment, and heating when not required.
- Conserving water and encouraging children to use water responsibly.
- Teaching children age-appropriate habits that support care for the environment, such as recycling, reducing waste, and respecting plants and wildlife.
- Working with parents and carers to support environmentally responsible practices.

Outdoor Areas

The Preschool / Playgroups will seek to:

- Maintain outdoor spaces in ways that support biodiversity.
- Plant and care for flowers, trees, herbs, or vegetables where space allows.
- Avoid the unnecessary use of pesticides and harmful chemicals.
- Create opportunities for children to observe and learn about local wildlife.

Purchasing Equipment

When purchasing equipment, toys, and consumable resources, the playgroup will, where practical:

- Choose durable products that can be repaired and reused.
- Consider products made from sustainable or recycled materials.
- Donate, recycle, or repurpose unwanted items rather than sending them to landfill.

The environmental policy applies not only to church activities but also to organizations using the building.

We will deliver this through the Church Eco committee.

June 2026