

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OF THE**

**BEDFORDSHIRE ESSEX & HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT**

1. The Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire 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 2050.1 The District embraces the aspirational target of the Methodist Church to become a net zero carbon emissions church by 2030.2

2. To achieve this vision, the District Synod:

(a) Affirms its commitment to being an Eco District registered with A Rocha UK.

(b) Encourages circuits and local churches to become Eco circuits/churches.

(c) Appoints an environmental group to monitor, encourage and report to the Synod on progress within the District towards fulfilling the objectives of this environmental policy.

3. As part of its commitment to being an Eco District, the District Synod will:

(a) Manage the District manse and District office in a manner which is mindful of environmental issues.

(b) Provide information and materials through the District website to enable ministers and church members to reflect theologically on environmental issues.3

(c) Maintain its finances through the ethical funds provided by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

(d) Work with other Districts, faith groups and civic agencies to encourage environmental action.

(e) Record and celebrate environmental initiatives within circuits and local churches.

(f) Encourage circuits to appoint an environmental officer or small group to act as a focus for related work in the circuit and to liaise with the District.

(g) Aim to achieve the Methodist Church Targets of having 50% of churches registered for Eco Church, by 2026. With 50 % of registered churches to have bronze awards and 20% to have silver.

4. 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 the use of public transport or car sharing wherever possible to attend District Synods and other District meetings. Consideration will be given to the location of meetings.

(c) Will make use of Zoom video conferencing for District meetings, wherever possible to minimise carbon emissions, and generally use electronic communications in preference to paper.

(d) Intends catering at Synod and district meetings to 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 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.

5. The aim of this environmental policy is for 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 in ways that benefit the environment and the local community.

(f) Engage with local and global agencies in seeking a fairer, more environmentally friendly world, and with political process to generate action to protect and restore the planet.

(g) Develop lifestyles which reflect the aims and objectives of this environmental policy.

Policy to be presented for adoption at the District Synod on 16 September 2023

Policy to be reviewed by the District environmental group before September 2024

Notes:

1[Methodist Church recognises a climate emergency](https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/methodist-church-recognises-a-climate-emergency/)

2[Methodist Church to become zero emissions church](https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/environment-and-climate-change/)

3District Website