



*St Albans*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Environmental Policy

## Playing our part in Sustaining God's Creation

Adopted 29th October 2023

(Reviewed and amended November 2024)

### **Affirmation**

1. As St Albans United Reformed Church (URC), we affirm that caring for God's Creation and protecting the environment are fundamental Gospel commitments and central to our Missional Discipleship, as outlined in the United Reformed Church Environmental Policy (adopted by General Assembly 2022).
2. St Albans URC acknowledges that humanity has and is causing grievous harm to the natural environment of which it is part and on which it depends. Humanity is now confronted by multiple environmental crises of its own making, chief of which are: climate emergency, the ecological emergency (loss of biodiversity), environmental sustainability and the pollution of sea, land and air. Synod recognises the urgent need to respond to these crises, working within the wider church and in partnership with other organisations, to interact with the planet in ways that are environmentally sustainable and do not jeopardize the lives and well-being of today's poorest communities and of future generations.
3. St Albans URC recognises that the impact of these crises is being, and will be felt, hardest by the world's poorest nations, communities and people (including those within our own nation and area) and that it needs to give special attention to this injustice and this suffering, by generous giving, campaigning and supporting the vulnerable.
4. St Albans URC recognises the significance and hope of the 2015 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the imperatives of the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C and the 2019 Food and Agriculture Organisation report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. It notes the 2021 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, produced in preparation for COP26, which UN secretary general António Guterres described as a 'Code Red' for humanity and shows the vital need for the full implementation of the international agreement for the good of the planet.

## Our commitments

1. St Albans URC is committed to making its Church buildings carbon neutral by 2030. To achieve this, we plan to use [A church's practical route to net-zero emissions - United Reformed Church](#). A PDF of the guidance will be highlighted with progress made at each site by the site management teams and updated on at least an annual basis. Initial assessment to be made in January 2025(See appendix 1)
2. St Albans URC will care for the intricate web of life on our planet, this will affect the way we worship, what we purchase (from loo rolls to cleaning materials and other consumables eg paper and craft materials ), eliminating our use of single use plastics and reducing our waste by adopting a practice of – repair, reuse, recycle.
3. St Albans URC acknowledges its responsibility to care for the grounds in which our premises stand. We will seek to work with others (such as local wildlife organisations) to manage our grounds in ways that are beneficial to the biodiversity of the site and the wider community. Each site management team will produce a 'land use plan' giving details on how this is to be achieved.
4. St Albans URC will follow the A Rocha Eco Church guidance and accreditation scheme to help us achieve our environmental goals. (See Appendix 2 – **What it means in practice to be following the guidance of A Rocha Eco Church**)

## Involvement

We invite all members of the congregation and all users of the Church premises to support us in implementing this policy. We welcome feedback and constructive suggestions for actions to help sustain God's creation. (Email: [stalbanurcgreenteam@outlook.com](mailto:stalbanurcgreenteam@outlook.com))

## Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed Annually. The next review will be November 2025

**Appendix 1:** [A-churchs-practical-route-to-net-zero-emissions.pdf](#)

**Appendix 2: What it means in practice to be following the guidance of A Rocha Eco Church**

1. In our worship life we will make opportunities for special celebrations of Creation; and we will incorporate into our regular services preaching, prayers and songs about caring for God's Earth.
2. Our human responsibility of caring for the Earth will be included in teaching for children, youth, and adults, including exploring related themes in small groups.
3. In managing our church buildings, we will find ways to reduce our consumption and to meet our energy needs from renewable sources. We will endeavour to make environmentally positive choices in all aspects of our work, including using eco-friendly products; reducing waste; improving energy efficiency; and encouraging environmental awareness among all users of the Church Centre.
4. We will measure our carbon footprint using [Carbon Calculators – Climate Stewards](#) in order that we can consider how to offset our carbon emissions by 2030. The first year of measuring using all areas to be 2025 – Each site management team to take responsibility for collecting the required data and entering into the Carbon calculator.
5. We will explore creative options for encouraging native wildlife on our church land and commit to an eco-friendly management approach to church land.
6. We will create opportunities for our local community to engage with environmental issues. We will be an example in our neighbourhood of how to make a meaningful response to the challenges posed by climate change and the need for a more sustainable lifestyle. We will work with others in our local community to identify environmental issues which should be addressed in our area and help develop actions to tackle them.
7. We will support charities and campaigns to address the global impact of the climate crisis – e.g., Christian Aid and Commitment for Life
8. We will encourage individual members of our congregation to examine their own lifestyle and take actions in their personal lives to complement and supplement the actions of the church community, including: promoting walking and cycling to reduce car use; encouraging the use of ethically sourced food that follows the LOAF principles (Locally grown, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairtrade); managing each household's carbon footprint.