

# Becoming an Eco-Church

*(Updated 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024)*

We believe that care for God's creation and urgent action to tackle climate change, form part of our Christian calling and responsibility.

At Wesley, we are committed to showing our care for God's creation in all we do. We embarked on our Eco-Church journey to help us learn more about how we can do this - as a community, in our building, in the city and the world around us, and in our own lifestyles.

We were delighted to gain a Bronze Eco-Church award early in 2021 and even more thrilled to achieve a Silver Eco-Church award in January 2024.

We are now working across all groups and generations in the Wesley community to raise awareness, to encourage and inspire change, and to do everything we can to care for God's creation.

We hope this will be transformative for us as a church community and also for the lives of our members, visitors to the church centre, the wider life of our city, and beyond.

November 2020	First meeting of Eco Group
January 2021	Church Council agrees to registering with Eco Church Joined MakeCOP26Count programme
February 2021	Initial Eco Church audit undertaken Greener energy tariff agreed for future contracts
March 2021	Training taken on political engagement with MPs prior to COP26 Talk given to Churches Together in Chester City Centre on Make COP26 Count
April 2021	Climate Service on 25th with talk by Deborah Tomkins of Green Christian Eco conversations with Splat
May 2021	Gained Eco Church Bronze award
June 2021	Church agrees to order eco cleaning materials and office supplies
August 2021	Online Eco survey on the website ready to complete.
September 2021	Meeting with Chris Matheson MP
October 2021	Eco Conversations mini-series on Zoom EcoHarvest service including talk about the new Greenway Grocer project and display of prayer boats for COP26

November 2021	UN COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow  Eco Conversations mini-series
December 2021	Church members shared greetings on symbolic 'tree' rather than sending numerous individual cards
December 2021 onwards	Weekly 'eco-tips' started to be contributed to the weekly church bulletin. From March 2022, these have also been shared with the whole North Cheshire Methodist circuit.
April 2022	Further meeting with Chris Matheson MP
May 2022	Two members of the group attended the Chester and Stoke on Trent Methodist District Synod as observers, and shared their experiences of the eco-church journey with others from across the District.  Beginning of process of tendering for professional consultation on reduction of carbon impact of whole Church premises.
July 2022	Further eco-service led by members of the group. This focussed on individual lifestyles and changes made.
September 2022	Joint meeting held with Church Council. The eco -group, joined by others from Churches Together, ran a stall at the sustainability fair in Grosvenor Park, which was part of Great Big Green Week.
October 2022	Church Council agreed to commission a professional energy and decarbonisation audit of whole Church premises.
November 2022	Eco-group leading mini-series of discussion meetings on zoom focussing on current controversial issues in the climate debate.
December 2022	Communal Christmas greetings among the congregation in aid of The Arches Wildlife and Wellbeing Garden
January 2023	Eco Group hosted vegan church lunch and conversation  Meeting with Cllr Delaney to discuss possible grant funding
February 2023	Meeting with Cllr Delaney and Georg Ablett, CWaC Energy Sector Specialist
March 2023	Report on Energy Efficiency and Zero Carbon received from Inspired Efficiency  First online meeting with Chester and Stoke Methodist District's Eco Network
April 2023	Vegan recipe booklet produced
June 2023	Inspired Efficiency report recommendations to Church Council

	Display in church foyer, focusing on Worship and Learning
Sept 2023	Eco Church stall at Sustainability Fair in Grosvenor Park and article in Tellus magazine (Eco Communities Project)  Informal meeting with Hoole Baptist Eco Group
October 2023	Eco group led Harvest service, followed by vegetarian/vegan bring and share lunch  Participated in District Eco Network online meeting
November 2023	Display in foyer on COP 28 and Make Polluters Pay petition  Meeting with rep from a cleaning company re-environmentally friendly church cleaning products
December 2023	Display for people to send a general Christmas greeting to the congregation and donations for Kimbilio, raising £140.
January 2024	Silver Eco Church award achieved!
February 2024	Celebrated gaining Silver award in morning worship and with display in foyer
April 2024	Held a public talk on Tax Justice jointly with Chester Quakers

A small eco-group began working in 2020 and this has led to some significant steps. As a first task, we undertook the audit of energy and fittings within the Church buildings, as well as of materials such as cleaning products used on the premises. We also analysed the frequency of themes of creation and environment within our services, as well as looking at issues of personal lifestyle and political engagement on environmental matters. On the basis of this audit, we were delighted to gain a Bronze Eco-church award early in 2021. After further work we were awarded a Silver Eco-church award in January 2024. We are trying to help members to think about the environmental impact of their own lifestyles. A survey was conducted in 2021.

The group have worked closely with SPLAT (the Church's children and young people's groups) and aim to involve them as much as possible in projects undertaken. SPLAT are very enthusiastic about this. We are also working with the support of the Church leadership team and the administrative committee.

2021 saw an important date with the COP 26 conference in Glasgow. The eco -group worked towards this with a Climate Sunday service held on April 25th, which had Deborah Tomkins of Green Christian as the speaker. An eco-harvest service was held on Oct 31st, just before COP 26. The convenor of the eco-group regularly attended training from the 'Make COP 26 count' organisation. Steps are now being taken towards a full professional audit of the Church premises, and the work of the group within the Church is becoming more widely known through Methodist, ecumenical and local channels.

Further details of Eco-Church can be found at <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>, and those of Make COP 26 Count at <https://www.uspg.org.uk/cop26>