

# All Saints' Church, Springfield



**Application for an  
Eco Church Gold Award**

**Supporting Evidence**

**We are an ECO CHURCH**  
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

**Q1. Your church's name, address, website and any Eco Church related web links (e.g. your green webpage or Eco Church webpage).**

All Saints' Church  
Springfield Green  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 7HS

Address for correspondence: c/o The Rectory, 4 Old School Field, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7HU

Website: [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk)

Contacts page: [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/get-in-touch/contact](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/get-in-touch/contact)

Eco Church page: [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church)

**Q2. Tell us a little about your church - its people, building, location and local community (500 words max).**

All Saints' Springfield is in a mainly residential area, just over a mile north-east of Chelmsford city centre. It is one of the larger churches in the C of E's Chelmsford deanery, with 185 members on the electoral roll and average attendances at Sunday services of 87 adults and 20 children ([2023 Annual Report](#)).



All Saints' is at the heart of the [Springfield Green Conservation Area](#), which was the historic centre of the medieval parish of Springfield. As well as the church, there are some exceptionally high quality eighteenth century houses and valuable open spaces and natural habitats.

The church is a [Grade II\\* listed building](#) with a chancel, nave and belltower. The oldest part of the nave dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the church was extended to its present size in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Attached to the church is the church centre, which was built in 1979 and extended in 1988. The church centre has a large hall, kitchen, toilets, and meeting rooms.

All Saints' churchyard has been closed to further burials since 1855. It has a varied character and a range of different purposes and uses. Its diverse habitats include open grass areas where outdoor services and community events are periodically held; areas of woodland character with mature trees and wild undergrowth; woodland path and wildflower areas which have been created to benefit wildlife; cultivated areas with shrubs and flowers; and the Pre-School Garden.

Most Sunday services in the church are *Holy Communion* or *Morning Prayer*. Once a month there is an all-age service in church: on all the other Sundays, *The Sunday Special Service* is held in the hall, which is an informal, interactive service with songs, prayers, talks and different activities for children, young people and adults. There is also a midweek *Holy Communion* service in church on Wednesdays, followed by a short service for *Children-in-Church*. There are more details on the website's [Services page](#).

The church centre is heavily used throughout the week for a wide range of groups and activities, for all ages, which connect churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike with the life and purpose of the church. For a fuller picture, please see the [Church Life pages](#) on our website.

Around 9,700 people live in Springfield parish. There are local shopping parades, surgeries, parks, playgrounds and pubs. The church has good relationships with the two care homes and the primary and secondary schools in the parish, and with the Bishops' primary school in North Springfield. Directly opposite All Saints' is the Priory Hospital which provides mental health care: patients quite often use the church or churchyard for reflection, and sometimes join our services or drop-in activities.



Springfield is blessed with some lovely green spaces including All Saints' churchyard, Springfield Green, Pollards Meadow, and the [Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve](#).

### Q3. Your Eco Church team

Tell us more about how your Eco Church team operates; for example, who is on it and their roles, how often you meet and how decisions are made.

We encourage involvement in Eco Church from everyone in our church, but these are the core Eco Church Group members and some of their current roles:

Roger McFarland, Eco Church Group Coordinator, Lay Minister

Rev Sally Croft, Rector, member of the Diocesan Environment Group

Dave Gauld, Chair of \*\*PCC's Fabric Committee, Authorised Local Preacher, churchyard volunteer

Ian Poston, PCC Treasurer, Deanery Synod member, churchyard volunteer

Nicky Morecroft, ECO leader at the Cathedral Primary School

Chris McFarland, Church Flowers Coordinator, leads on Churchyard Management Plan

Ann Salmon, Children-in-Church helper, and helps with All Saints' Pre-School Garden

Shirley Duggan, PCC member, churchyard volunteer

Beth Cornish, choir member, lifelong environmentalist

*\*\* PCC = Parochial Church Council*

The Eco Church Group meets every month on Zoom. All our meetings are grounded in prayer. From the outset we have maintained our own schedule of the answers given by All Saints' to the Eco Church Survey questions, which is updated every time a change is made. This schedule is used proactively to generate an Action Plan which identifies improvements we want to make and maintain in each of the five Eco Church categories, with timescales and lead responsibilities as appropriate. The Action Plan is updated after every Eco Church Group meeting.

The Eco Church Group makes its own decisions on behalf of the church where they are consistent with established PCC policies and practices, and the group provides a progress report to every PCC meeting.

Where significant decisions involving a new commitment are required, they are made either by the full PCC, or by its Standing Committee (for example, to approve a letter from the church to Chelmsford's MP).

Through All Saints' Eco Church community events which have produced income (primarily from refreshments sales) we have an Eco Church designated fund which we can use for small items of expenditure like the initial purchase of seeds for the wildflower area. Larger items are funded from PCC budgets, such as the church centre LED lighting project.

#### **Q4. How and why did you start on your Eco Church journey? (500 words max)**

Many of us have always seen caring for creation as a fundamental part of our faith and our human responsibilities as individuals. When we ask in our yearly [green lifestyle questionnaire](#) whether Eco Church activities have helped people, they occasionally respond, "We would have done it anyway."

What we lacked, however, was a commitment and a framework for concerted action by All Saints' church community as a whole. The specific prompt for starting our Eco Church journey was the C of E General Synod's decision in February 2020 to recognise the climate emergency as a crisis in God's creation and a fundamental injustice, and to call on all churches to aim to be carbon net-zero by 2030. Following discussions with the Rector and All Saints' Ministry Team, and after being delayed by Covid, a report was made to the PCC in November 2020 on '*The Climate Emergency – Caring for God's Creation*'.

The PCC approved a motion that:

- a) All Saints' Springfield PCC is committed to care for God's creation and to do it better, and
- b) we support registering as an Eco Church and plan to work towards a bronze award by the end of 2021, and
- c) we commit to making an annual donation of \*\*£100 to A Rocha UK for the work of developing Eco Churches.

\*\* (NB All Saints' has subsequently donated to A Rocha the offerings made at each of our annual Environment Sunday services, which have exceeded £100.)

Following this decision:

- The Eco Church Group was formed and began work on the five categories in January 2021.
- The website [Eco Church page](#) was created, and posts about Eco Church activities were made on All Saints' [Facebook page](#).
- An Eco Church article was included in every issue of All Saints' [monthly magazine 'in touch'](#), beginning with an [introductory article](#) in January 2021.
- The notice board at the well-used entrance to the church centre was converted into an Eco Church notice board.
- Plans were made for a preaching series in church and Sunday Special services, and for an all-age Climate Sunday service, during 2021.
- Our first '*Eco Action Day*' community event was held in September 2021.
- Eco Church became a standing agenda item for PCC meetings, and Sunday Special leaders' meetings.
- All Saints' engaged with other churches in the North Chelmsford Mission & Ministry Partnership to share ideas and experience.

This was the start of a journey which led to us receiving a bronze award in July 2021, and a silver award in November 2023.

**Q5. Share some examples of how Eco Church/ Creation care principles are embedded in your church life and community outreach. If a visitor walked into your church building/space on a Sunday or during weekday activities, how would they know you are an Eco Church?**

**You can also share here how you are promoting your Eco Church action via your website/ social media and other communication opportunities.**

Please include web links to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

In the four years since we registered as an Eco Church it has grown to become part of our core identity. For example, it is prominent in All Saints' declared [Vision](#), and in section 5.2.6 of our [Annual Report](#).



If someone is walking past or approaching the church, the first thing they will see is a notice board with the month's activities which carries the strapline:

**We are an ECO CHURCH**  
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

At the rear entrance, facing all the church and community users coming into the church centre, is our main **Eco Church Notice Board** headed 'Welcome to All Saints' Eco Church'. The front porch entrance to the church displays an Eco Church poster, our silver award certificate, and an encouragement to look at the main Eco Church Notice Board. Beside every light switch and every tap in both buildings are signs with the Eco Church strapline encouraging people to save energy and water respectively. Recycling signs in the kitchen also carry the strapline.

At different times Eco Church activities are publicised at both entrances, including community events, [green lifestyle questionnaires](#), and the 'One-And-All' Christmas Cards scheme (see [December's 'in touch'](#)). Our [weekly news sheet](#) (printed and online) sometimes includes Eco Church items, as in [this example](#).



All Saints' ['in touch' magazine](#) has been a very effective way of communicating about Eco Church. It can be read online, and printed copies are available in church or by home delivery: it's read by members of the wider Springfield community as well as church members. On top of publicising our activities, monthly Eco Church articles cover a broad range of topics: many encourage sustainable lifestyles, like those on [avoiding plastic](#) and [energy conservation](#); some are about [connecting with nature](#); some explore how Eco Church relates to our [Christian faith](#).



The [Eco Church page](#) on our website is the go-to place for anyone interested in finding out about our journey and our commitment. It emphasises the climate emergency and the nature crisis, and the ways that the UK-wide Eco Churches community is responding. It talks about the progress we are making at All Saints' and how people can get involved. Like the Eco Church Notice Board, it highlights what we call the 'Eco Church Top Ten': a simple checklist for incorporating Eco Church priorities into our daily lives. And it provides a complete back catalogue of all the previous 'in touch' Eco Church articles.



All Saints' Parish Administrator has recently taken over the role of Facebook editor. We already make some use of our [Facebook page](#) for Eco Church-related posts but we are hoping to increase this in the future.

**Q6. To help us understand the breadth of your Eco Church engagement, please share some examples of the impact being an Eco Church has had on your church and your wider community.** Please include web links to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

Raising awareness about the climate and nature crises has been a key impact. From the outset we put articles on the [website](#) and in '[in touch](#)' magazine, and have continued to do so (e.g. [this recent article](#)). We worked with the PCC, church leadership team, worship leaders, prayer leaders and music leaders to place Eco Church at the heart of our mission.

Our annual Environment Sundays and Harvest Festivals, and our celebration of the 'Season of Creation' for the first time in 2024, have been invaluable in raising the profile of pressing ecological concerns.

Over half of those responding to our [green lifestyle questionnaire](#) say they have been helped in living a more environmentally friendly lifestyle by our Eco Church activities including eco-centred services and talks, '[in touch](#)' articles, and community eco events. '[How I see it](#)' articles by church members in [June 2023](#), [May 2024](#), and [March 2025](#) show how caring for creation is deep-rooted in the life of the church.

Here are some practical examples of positive changes we have made as an Eco Church:

- We have stopped printing paper copies of documents for PCC and other meetings, and for the church AGM (except if anyone doesn't have internet access).
- For church services during winter when the church isn't full, people are encouraged to sit forward and the pew heaters at the back of the church are turned off.
- After consulting the flowers team at (gold award) Chelmsford Cathedral, All Saints' pedestal flower decorations are now arranged in a vase with wire, instead of using floral foam. Foliage, and occasionally flowers, are taken from what is growing in the churchyard rather than being bought.
- We have stopped using disposable cups, plates, and cutlery altogether (previously there was some limited use).
- In cooperation with the Social Committee, we have increased the use of L.O.A.F. ingredients in food served by the church (local, organic, animal-friendly, Fairtrade).



Our recognition as a Fairtrade Church was renewed in April 2023, and we use only Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar. We have highlighted the connection which the Fairtrade Foundation has made with [how climate change is affecting producers](#). We support the Chelmsford City Fairtrade Campaign, attending their AGM, and fielding an All Saints' team for their fundraising quiz nights. We have run Fairtrade stalls for them after church services during Fairtrade Fortnight and in the approach to Christmas.

Eco Church is an important part of our work with children and young people, and influences the programmes and activities of The Sunday Special Service, Children-in-Church, the Pre-School, The Boys' Brigade, Brownies and Guides. Examples are the involvement of [Sunday Special children](#) in eco activities, and the RHS award-winning [Pre-School Garden](#).

Through a teacher who is a member of our Eco Church Group we have a relationship with the Cathedral School, which is now in its 8th year as a [Green Flag Eco-School](#), and is rated 'good' for its [Modeshift STARS Travel Plan](#). The school has provided equipment and materials for our community eco events, and

some children have come with their parents. A different member of All Saints' Eco Church Group attends some of the school Eco team's meetings and supports their work.

We collaborate with the City Council's [Love Your Chelmsford \(LYC\)](#) environmental team, which is led by church member Mark Smith, and we promote their work through our notice board and website. Mark wrote an ['in touch' article](#) for us describing their work, and co-organised our 'Love Your Springfield' community event (see below).



Being an Eco Church has impacted the wider community too. The *Plastic Bottles Cross* is a unique sculpture which was made by one of our Eco Church Group using plastic bottles collected over a period of time which would otherwise have been recycled by our congregations. It stood in front of the church during June and July 2021, where it attracted a lot of interest from passers-by. Next to it there was a sign which read:

*"We are facing a climate emergency and a global environmental crisis. This cross, made from our plastic waste, is a sign of all that we must change to protect the future of the amazing but fragile world that God has given us."*

The cross was subsequently moved to the western churchyard, where it now stands in a clearing beside the woodland path. It continues to be a powerful stimulus to prayer, reflection and action.

Well-publicised community events have engaged large numbers of local people in different aspects of what we are doing as an Eco Church.

- **Eco Action Day** (September 2021). Children made a bug hotel, wildflower seed bombs, bird boxes and feeders, and signs for the new wildflower area which adults began digging. Other activities included eco-themed face painting, a green energy display, a freecycle board, a repair stall, Fairtrade refreshments, and litter-picking in the surrounding Springfield area.
- **All Saints' Open Day** (May 2022). Environmental activities at this event included a churchyard discovery trail, an Eco Church stall, a plant stall, a churchyard gardeners' stall, and planting a wildflower mini-garden.
- **Craft & Cake Day** (September 2022). The focus was on making things using recycled materials, including bird feeders, bird scarers, luminaries, Christmas decorations, card craft, Elmer elephants, pencil holders and wool weaving. There were also stalls selling pre-loved toys, home-made jams and marmalades, and Fairtrade products.
- **Fairtrade Fun Day** (March 2023). Held during Fairtrade Fortnight, the whole event was inspired by Fairtrade, with information displays and handouts, product sales, a raffle, a quiz and refreshments.
- **'Love Your Springfield'** (May 2024). Organised in partnership with the 'Love Your Chelmsford' (LYC) team, and advertised by giant litter sculptures in front of the church, this event was about practical ways to help the environment. There were LYC talks on recycling, home composting, using local seasonal food and avoiding food waste. Children's activities included recycling football, seed planting and making wildflower seed bombs. There are more details and pictures from the day in [this article](#).



**Q7. How are you influencing others around you (locally and nationally) to address the nature and climate crisis here in the UK?**

**Q8. How are you influencing others around you (locally and nationally) to address the nature and climate crisis globally?** Please include web links to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

*To avoid repetition, we have combined our answers to Q7 and Q8. The commitment and actions that are needed to address the climate and nature crisis here in the UK are interrelated with the commitment and actions which are needed globally, and the people we are trying to influence to show commitment and take action (locally and nationally) are in many cases, though not all, the same.*

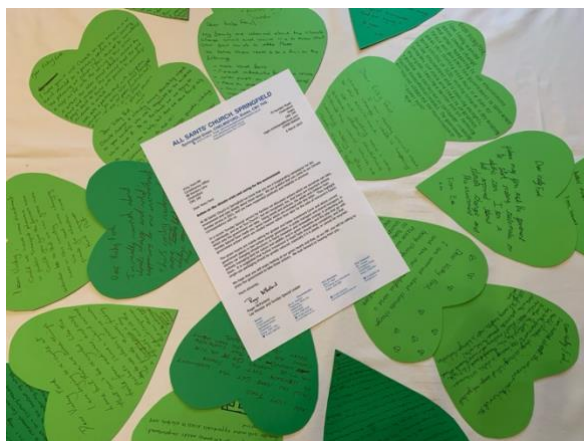
In 2021 All Saints' joined a national churches' programme called 'Make COP26 Count', organised by USPG and Hope for the Future in support of the Climate Coalition's 'The Time Is Now' campaign. Like Eco Church, the programme involved us in prayer, spiritual action, practical action, and political action.

The climax for us was our outdoor Climate Sunday service in July 2021, attended by Chelmsford's MP Vicky Ford, a Government minister and founder member of the Conservative Environment Network. She spoke during the service about her own commitment to climate action. Afterwards she took the written climate promises which everyone in the congregation had made, and passed them on to the Prime Minister, whose Communications Unit sent us a positive letter. Vicky Ford also forwarded a letter from All Saints' to the Chancellor asking for Government expenditure to be targeted to achieve net zero, copied to the COP26 president, and a Treasury minister replied to us describing the ways that this was already a central part of Government decision-making (at that time).



*Vicky Ford MP speaking on Climate Sunday*

In March 2022, following publication of the IPCC Working Group II's Sixth Assessment Report, All Saints' wrote to Vicky Ford stressing the urgency for Government action on climate change nationally and internationally as its presidency of COP26 continued. We received a lengthy reply explaining that she shared our concern, and detailing how the Government was responding.



In March 2023, as part of the Climate Coalition's 'Show the Love' campaign, our Sunday Special congregation made 'green hearts' with messages about the continuing need for Government action. [We sent these to Vicky Ford](#) with a covering letter summarising the key concerns. She replied with thanks and confirmation that environmental action remained a high priority for her.

In August 2024 All Saints' wrote to Chelmsford's new MP Marie Goldman supporting the Climate Coalition's call for all politicians to work together to tackle climate change and protect nature. In January 2025 we asked church members to write to her showing their support for the Climate and Nature Bill which was going through Parliament, and she replied detailing the progress which was being made (see page 14 of ['in touch' March 2025](#)).



At the local level, both Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council have action programmes to address the climate and nature crisis, and as an Eco Church we see our primary role as being to support and promote this work. We have links to their websites on our own [Eco Church page](#) (see 'How you can get involved'). We share information about their events and activities on our Eco Church Notice Board, Facebook page, and weekly sheet (e.g. [LYC's Recycling Open Day](#)).

We have promoted the [Essex Carshare scheme](#) and the [Carbon Cutting Essex app](#). Our good relationship with the City Council's [Love Your Chelmsford \(LYC\)](#) team has been described in **Q6** above. The County and City Councillors for our ward are very supportive of our Eco Church activities and normally attend our community events.

There is further evidence of how we are seeking to influence others around us (locally and nationally) in **Q6** above and **Q12** below.



Councillors Natacha Dudley and Richard Lee at All Saints' 'Love Your Springfield' event

### **Q9. Worship and Teaching (500 words max)**

Please elaborate on your survey answers with examples of how you have fulfilled the requirements of this category. For example, how Special Sundays relating to caring for God's earth are celebrated in your church, and how and when caring for God's earth featured in your preaching, prayers and teaching over the past year. (Please include weblinks to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate).

We have tried to make our love for creation as fundamental in our worship and teaching as our love for God and our love for our human neighbours. This was agreed from the outset with our worship leaders, preachers, prayer leaders and musicians. As a result, caring for God's earth is a consistent thread running through our worship. Some new hymns have been introduced, and creation-care hymns are sung regularly and not only in eco-themed services. We also encourage people to include caring for God's earth [in their own personal prayers](#).

In 2021 we had an eight-week preaching series in our church services and our Sunday Special services called '[Caring for God's World](#)'. This included a [Climate Sunday](#) service attended by Vicky Ford MP (see **Q7/Q8** above).

In 2024 we celebrated for the first time the *Season of Creation*. The Rector introduced this in [September's 'in touch'](#) (see page 1). Throughout this season we used special prayers in all our church services, and some of the [sermons and talks](#) were focused on caring for God's world.

We began the celebration with a '[Days of Creation Walk](#)' around Springfield and the Chelmer Valley, pausing in each of seven green spaces for the relevant Bible reading from Genesis, and a prayer for God to help us respond with praise and thanks and a renewed commitment to care for the whole of creation. The experience was shared in Chelmsford Diocese's environment newsletter, '*Climate Action Now*', and featured on the first day of the Diocese's *Environment Advent Calendar*.





Simon Brown from A Rocha on Environment Sunday

We will continue to celebrate the *Season of Creation*, including the *Days of Creation Walk*, in future years. We are also planning an annual walk for Rogation Sunday. The wider community and other churches are invited to join these walks.

Our annual Harvest Festival has always had a focus on God’s generosity and how we should respond. Since 2021 we have held an annual all-age Environment Sunday service too. In 2023 we welcomed Simon Brown from A Rocha as the speaker at this service, and in 2024, Linda Percival, Environmental Advocate for Chelmsford Deanery.

In 2021/22 our three home groups studied a course called '[Caring for Creation](#)'. We only have one home group now, but the Rector is starting to lead some small group studies, which will provide opportunities for creation-focused studies in the future.

The majority of our children and young people come to The Sunday Special Service, and from the outset we have been keen to involve them and their families in caring for creation. This is a regular focus in the talks, prayers and songs, and there have been specific eco-themed services, outdoor services with treasure hunts in the churchyard, and practical activities like sowing the wildflower area, making bird-scarers for it, and planting wildflower seeds and bulbs to grow at home.



We have explained in **Q5** above how we use the church’s communications – website, notice boards, monthly magazine, weekly news sheet, Facebook – for items related to caring for God’s earth.

**Q10. Building management (500 words max)**

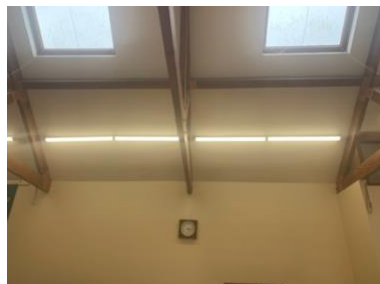
Please elaborate on your survey answers with examples of how you have fulfilled the requirements of this category. For example, what you learned from measuring your carbon footprint, how you have reduced it and how it has influenced your actions, tell us more about how you have improved energy efficiency and your future plans to reach net zero. Please include web links to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.



Our [Carbon 360 footprint](#) measurement and [Energy Footprint Tool](#) show that energy consumption is the primary source of our carbon emissions, and that we are a relatively high-energy use church. This results from our building usage. The church is mostly used for Sunday and Wednesday services, but the church centre is used daytime and evenings throughout the week. The approximate breakdown of the combined buildings’ usage, by hours of use, is:

- 5% church services
- 10% mainly church groups
- 85% mainly community groups, and casual room bookings

The church nave has electric pew heaters, the chancel and the church centre have radiator heating powered by gas boilers, which also heat the tap water. Octopus Energy is our supplier, which purchases 100% of its electricity from renewable sources, and offsets its gas supply emissions by investing in renewable energy generation. However, with less than half the UK's electricity currently coming from renewables, it is still essential to conserve energy and to transition away from gas.



Between 2019 and 2023 our gas consumption reduced by 34% and our electricity consumption by 40%, although usage levels are still a little lower than pre-pandemic. The most significant contributors have been precise scheduling and management of heating controls, and the conversion of the church centre lighting to LEDs (the church already had LED lighting). Raising awareness of church members and other church centre users about the importance of saving energy and water has also undoubtedly helped.

Going forwards, our [Energy Management Plan](#) provides a clear pathway to net-zero by 2030, including:

- new, far more efficient pew heaters in the church;
- air-to-air heat pump systems in the church centre;
- point-of-use water heaters in the kitchen and toilets;
- increased loft and cavity wall insulation;
- the potential for a small array of solar panels on part of the church centre roof.

In November 2023 the PCC agreed that any future building/refurbishment project would need to meet the BREEAM (or similar) standard.

Initiatives to reduce emissions from other sources include:

- We have provided recycling facilities in the church centre for food waste, glass bottles and jars, drinks cans, food waste, paper and card. Users are asked to take any other recyclables home and put them in the Council's kerbside collections.
- We don't use any disposable cups, plates, cutlery or single-use plastic bags.
- We have updated the [Guidelines](#) which all Church Centre Users are expected to follow. They now say that, in accordance with our Eco Church values, they should save energy and water, use the recycling facilities, and avoid the use of disposables.
- All the toilet cisterns have been fitted with water-saving devices, and installing two new water butts has eliminated the need for any mains watering in the churchyard.
- We have secure bike racks, and encourage sustainable travel – please see **Q13**.



The Rectory is a Diocesan property – 4 Old School Field, CM1 7HU. Built in 1997, it has loft and cavity walls insulation, full double glazing, and full LED lighting. It also has solar panels.

### Q11. Land: Protecting and restoring nature (500 words max)

Please elaborate on your survey answers with examples of how you have fulfilled the requirements of this category. For example, tell us more about how you created your land management plan/ your church's plan for nature - who did you consult/local partnerships/research undertaken? We'd also like to hear more about your wildlife surveys and how others from your community are involved too. Share with us if and how you are supporting [A Rocha UK's Target 25](#) or similar projects to help declining species, taxonomic groups and habitats. Please include weblinks to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

Much of the supporting evidence for **Q11** can be found in our *Land Management Plan* which we call the [Churchyard Management Plan](#).

The churchyard has a varied character with diverse habitats and a range of different purposes and uses. When we started work on our first Churchyard Management Plan in 2021, we recognised that the churchyard was already contributing positively to our mission and environmental objectives in many ways. It was important to create a plan which would make some real, visible improvements.



We looked at A Rocha's [Land and Nature resources](#), and how we could incorporate features recommended in the [Eco Church Survey](#). We also looked at what other churches were doing. Through church members, we discussed ideas with those volunteering at the [Chelmer Valley Nature Reserve](#). We consulted a range of resources from organisations like [Caring for God's Acre](#), [Essex Wildlife Trust](#), [RSPB](#), and [RHS](#). One of the Eco Church Group attended a *Caring for God's Acre* webinar. And we talked to people at All Saints' about the possibilities, from both our church and our Sunday Special congregations, Children-in-Church, the Pre-School, and other church groups.



We eventually agreed upon two main projects for Phase 1 of the plan (2021-2024): to create a **Woodland Path Area**, including many new features beneficial to wildlife, and a **Wildflower Area**. The projects were launched at an Eco Action Day community event in September 2021, which involved many people from the wider community as well as the church. Introducing the woodland path area and the wildflower area has visibly increased the number of people connecting with nature by spending time in the churchyard, which is well-used by church members and their children, by those coming to groups meeting in the church centre, by the Pre-School, by patients from the Priory Hospital, and by members of the wider community.

Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the [Churchyard Management Plan](#) contain the results of our nature surveys.

- The creation of the wildflower area has dramatically increased the quantity and diversity of flora, providing new habitat for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Appendix 1 lists 57 wildflower species recorded in two surveys of the churchyard.
- The survey of trees and major shrubs in Appendix 2 recorded 50 trees and shrubs from 23 different species, showing the significant contribution which the churchyard is making to the conservation of valuable woodland habitat.

- The *RSPB Birdwatch* survey in Appendix 3 counted 31 birds from 10 different species in one hour, which indicates the attractiveness of the churchyard for birds, despite its urban location and the disturbance from nearby traffic and pedestrian movements.

Objectives for Phase 2 of the plan (2025-2028) include increasing overall biodiversity, and helping [Target 25's](#) woodland habitat, wildflowers, bees and butterflies. Projects and initiatives will include additional pollinator-friendly planting in a border for the proposed area for cremated remains, and in the north-east corner bed; a trial 'No Mow May' area; and sowing wildflowers along the churchyard's road frontage.



## Q12. Community and Global Engagement (500 words max)

Please elaborate on your survey answers with examples of how you have fulfilled the requirements of this category. For example, how you have engaged your local community, local leaders, and/or your MP on local environmental issues, about any links with local sustainability movements and local conservation groups, what resources you have found helpful to pray around the climate and nature crises nationally and internationally, and any campaigns concerning national and global environmental issues you have participated in. Please include weblinks to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

Evidence related to some of these issues is included in **Q5**, **Q6**, and **Q7/Q8** above. In addition:

- The Eco Church Group takes a keen interest in local, national and international developments concerning environmental issues and the climate and nature crisis. It tries to be a channel and a catalyst for information-sharing, discussion, prayer and action on these issues within the church and the wider community.
- We have been supported on our [Eco Church journey](#) by Linda Percival, Environmental Advocate for Chelmsford Deanery, and an A Rocha assessor for gold awards.
- We have used a range of helpful prayer resources at different times, including some from [A Rocha](#), [the C of E](#), [Green Christian](#), [Christian Aid](#), [CAFOD](#), and [Tearfund](#).
- In addition to the environmental resources which those organisations provide, we keep abreast of environmental issues and current developments through [Chelmsford Diocese](#), [The Climate Coalition](#), [Wild Christian](#), [Fairtrade](#), [WWF](#) and the [UN Environment Programme](#), as well as learning from general news media and TV programmes.
- We encourage church members to support environmental charities such as [Essex Wildlife Trust](#), [RSPB](#), [RHS](#) and [National Trust](#), which all have sites in Chelmsford and Essex. We have links to their websites on our own [Eco Church page](#) (see 'How you can get involved').
- Some church members volunteer for environmental conservation, such as litter-picking and work in the nearby [Chelmer Valley Nature Reserve](#).
- We participate in sustainability initiatives:
  - [Earth Hour](#)
  - [The Big Plastic Count](#)
  - [Great Big Green Week](#)
- Church members have supported campaigns including:
  - The Climate Coalition's ['The Time Is Now' campaign](#) (July 2021)
  - Fairtrade's Community Declaration (March 2023)
  - The Climate Coalition's [call for action](#) (summer 2024)
  - Christian Aid's open letter to the Government (November 2024)
  - The Climate and Nature Bill (January 2025)
- In Christian Aid Week we raise funds for their work among poor communities, some of whom are among the worst affected by climate change.

- We support Chelmsford Foodbank with a year-round collection of donated items. Instead of ‘giving up’ something for Lent we ‘give to’ the Foodbank. Our Harvest Festival donations are for them too.
- Our congregations are [encouraged to pray regularly](#) for the tree planting programme in Chelmsford’s link diocese of Marsabit, Kenya which is vital for restoring the environment and improving people’s lives.
- All our toilets have been twinned through Tearfund’s [Toilet Twinning](#) programme.
- In March 2021 All Saints’ arranged a meeting for churches in the North Chelmsford Mission & Ministry Partnership, to stimulate Eco Church involvement. Three of those churches have since progressed to receive awards: North Springfield and Boreham (silver), Broomfield (bronze). More recently we have shared some of our Eco Church experiences with other churches through Chelmsford Diocese’s environment newsletter, ‘*Climate Action Now*’.

### Q13. Lifestyle (500 words max)

Please expand on your survey answers with examples of how you have fulfilled the requirements of this category. For example how you have encouraged your congregation to undertake a personal carbon footprint audit/ an environmental lifestyle audit, what were the outcomes, and how your church is encouraging a more eco-friendly/ sustainable lifestyle. Please include web links to online content/screenshots/ embed digital photos as appropriate.

Our yearly eco questionnaire, '[How Green is our Lifestyle?](#)', has become a significant event in the church’s calendar. Following the Season of Creation, throughout October it is handed out at church services, and it is prominently available at both church entrances, in '*in touch*' magazine and on the website, with reminders in every weekly news sheet. There is a good response with over 70 completed, and it is likely that more people look at it in addition to those who fill it in.

The questionnaire includes all the main areas from the Eco Church Survey, and related questions such as wildlife-friendly gardening and a more plant-based diet. The results show areas where we are doing well, like recycling and saving energy, and areas where we can improve. Just as importantly, the questionnaire provides a twice-yearly checklist of practical things everyone can do to live a more sustainable lifestyle, first when questionnaires come out in October, and again when results are fed back in [January's 'in touch'](#).

Through the questionnaire and an '[in touch](#)' article we encourage our congregations to audit their personal environmental footprint though less than 20% do so. Our own eco questionnaire, however, replicates most of the suggestions which the footprint calculator tools recommend.

### The Eco Church Top Ten

- 1 Enjoy **green spaces and wildlife**, and take care of them in practical ways
- 2 Travel greener when we **walk, cycle**, use **buses, coaches, trains** or **car-share**
- 3 **Use energy efficiently** for heating and electrical items, and use **LED light bulbs**
- 4 Enjoy some **vegetarian meals**, and eat less meat and dairy food
- 5 **3Rs: reduce** how much we buy, **re-use** what we’ve finished with, and **re-cycle** what we can’t re-use
- 6 Try to buy things which are **Fairtrade, eco-friendly and ethically-produced**
- 7 **Improve home insulation** where possible – loft, walls, windows and doors
- 8 **Support charities** who care for the environment, and **campaign** for climate action
- 9 Find out how to **improve our environmental footprint** – go to [footprint.wwf.org.uk](http://footprint.wwf.org.uk) or to [climate-calculator.climatehero.me](http://climate-calculator.climatehero.me)
- 10 **Go green with money** through ethical banking and savings – see [justmoney.org.uk](http://justmoney.org.uk)

[allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church](http://allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church)

‘*The Eco Church Top Ten*’ on our notice board and our website is a constant reminder of key ways that we can all live more sustainably.

‘*in touch*’ magazine articles explore these issues in greater depth, and all previous articles can be viewed [on our website](#). They include articles on [green travel](#), [saving energy](#), [recycling](#), [Fairtrade](#), [food choices](#), and [ethical investment](#). [Articles by church members](#) can also inspire others.

At the end of each article are two bullet points with ‘*This month’s eco suggestions*’. These ensure that readers are reminded at least once a year of all the main elements in ‘*The Eco Church Top Ten*’ and the [green lifestyle questionnaire](#) checklist.

All Saints' sends a monthly email to about 250 people which highlights special features in the latest issue of 'in touch' magazine. The Eco Church article is always included in the highlights.

Sermons, talks and activities in church services are further opportunities to promote sustainable lifestyles. For example, at our all-age Environment Sunday service in 2022 children were involved, firstly, in sowing seeds and thinking about the implications for how we care for creation, and secondly, in using five objects in a wheelbarrow as stimuli to talk about ways we can live well – a crash helmet (travel), a torch (energy), a recycling sack (waste), a large saucepan (what we eat), and a birdbox (caring for nature and wildlife).

*"I see living a 'green' lifestyle as an important part of my Christian faith."* This is the first question in All Saints' eco questionnaire. It is the foundation for everything we try to do.

#### Q14. Growing beyond gold (500 words max)

How is your church planning to continue its Eco Church journey?



Eco Church runs through every aspect of our church's life. We feel that what we have done so far has made a real difference, but there is more that we want and need to do.

Reviewing our Eco Church journey for this gold award application has been uplifting, and it has also stimulated a lot of ideas and discussion about next steps. We are looking forward to hearing the views of A Rocha's award assessors on the progress we have made, and their recommendations for ways that we can improve.

We will then evaluate our status in relation to the new Eco Church Survey and, as we did with the previous survey, we will use that evaluation to provide the framework for an Action Plan, setting priorities and focusing our efforts.

Implementing our [Energy Management Plan](#) will be transformative in the **buildings and energy** category. We do not underestimate the challenges involved, particularly in funding, design, obtaining approvals, and project management. This will all be worthwhile, however, if it will make us more energy-efficient for the long term and if we can become a carbon net-zero church.

Our [Churchyard Management Plan](#) gives us a clear way forward in the **land and nature** category, with some exciting projects and initiatives to make the churchyard even better for the community and for nature and wildlife.

In the other three categories – **worship and teaching, community and global engagement, and lifestyle** – we will build on what we are doing already as we seek opportunities for further growth and improvement.

Above all, we will pray for God's guidance and inspiration as we continue to discover His will for us as an Eco Church.



### Q15. How would you celebrate a gold award?

Achieving a gold award is a cause for celebration and an opportunity to champion all that you are doing around the climate and nature crisis - how would you promote your achievement locally and help spread the message and ethos of being an Eco Church?

If we are given a gold award, the whole church must be involved in the celebrations because we have all worked together to make Eco Church a living reality at All Saints'. If appropriate the assessors' feedback will be shared through an *'in touch'* article.

To celebrate the award, we will hold an **Eco Open Day** in the church and the churchyard, organised and run along the same lines as our previous very popular community events. There will be displays and activities for all ages, showcasing how we are responding to the climate and nature crisis as a church, and encouraging the community to get involved in saving energy, caring for nature, waste reduction and recycling, local and global engagement with environmental issues, and so on.

The Open Day will be for the whole Springfield community, and we will also invite Chelmsford churches, church leaders – our Bishop, Archdeacon and Area Dean – and community leaders – our MP, County and City Councillors.

We will hold an all-age **Celebration Service** on Sunday 31st August this year, which will be an outdoor service in the churchyard, led by the Archdeacon of Chelmsford – our outdoor services are always a strong public witness to what we stand for as a church. At this service the Rector will receive the gold award on behalf of the church. The congregation will be invited to make their own personal commitment to continue the work of being an Eco Church through the words of the *Climate Promise Prayer* (see below) which we used first at our Climate Sunday service in 2021.

Photographs from the Eco Open Day and/or Celebration Service will be used to accompany a news release which will be sent to local media and shared on [Facebook](#), promoting the importance of action for the climate and nature, and the valuable contribution which Eco Churches can make. A separate article will be written for the Diocese's environment newsletter, *'Climate Action Now'*, sharing our experience and offering encouragement and support to other churches. We will also offer to give a presentation to the Chelmsford Deanery Synod as a way of spreading the message more fully.

We will order two Eco Church Gold Award wooden plaques to display at the entrances to the church and the church centre.



#### ***A Climate Promise Prayer***

*Lord of life and giver of hope,  
forgive us for the damage we are doing  
to your world and its climate.*

*We promise to cut our greenhouse gas emissions;  
to consume less and to waste less;  
to care for the environment and all forms of life;  
to share the world's resources more fairly;  
to act now to bring about*

*local and global changes that are essential  
for the world today and for future generations.*

*May the promise we make today  
be matched by our faithful living.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.***