

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This *Environmental Policy Statement* contains the environmental and sustainability commitments made by St Andrew's United Reformed Church.

2. Summary

- 2.1. St Andrew's URC is committed to improving the sustainability and environmental stewardship of its activities and operations for the benefit of all of God's creation.
- 2.2. The Church has the overarching goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.
- 2.3. St Andrew's has registered as an [Eco Church](#) to support its implementation of this goal.

3. Context

- 3.1. As Christians we are called to conserve the Earth's complex and fragile ecology and to be good stewards of its resources. We recognise that human beings have a special responsibility to care for God's good Earth so that human life and all God's creatures may be sustained in harmony.
- 3.2. The Church is called to demonstrate God's love for the whole world. We understand that the climate crisis is becoming more urgent and that its greatest impact will be on the most vulnerable people in our world; that irreparable damage is being done to ecosystems all over the planet, resulting in severe loss of biodiversity and shrinking the Earth's capacity to provide food for all of its inhabitants; that humanity's inability to address this crisis has diminished the biosphere for future generations; and that action can no longer be delayed.
- 3.3. The organisational context for this *Policy Statement* is the [Environmental Policy for the United Reformed Church](#), as adopted by General Assembly in July 2016 and updated by Mission Council (the URC's executive body) in May 2019. Mission Council is continuing to develop the denominations' environmental policies and actions through divestment from fossil fuel companies, guidance on single-use plastics, etc., as part of an on-going engagement with the environmental crisis.

4. Our commitments

- 4.1. St Andrew's URC is committed to making the Church Centre's premises carbon neutral by 2030, through the following actions:
 - i. To begin by reducing our carbon footprint by 5% each year, from 2020 to 2024, with the goal of achieving a 20% reduction: reducing energy waste (e.g., switching off unused lights); improving insulation; upgrading to more energy efficient lighting and appliances; etc.).
 - ii. By identifying suitable renewable energy solutions to meet a significant proportion of our ongoing energy needs (e.g., solar panels, etc.).
 - iii. By off-setting any remaining carbon footprint after 2030.
- 4.2. Care for the intricate web of life on our planet is a core value for our activities, affecting the way we worship, what we purchase (from loo rolls to cleaning materials and other consumables), eliminating our use of plastics and reducing our waste, and how we live our individual lives.
- 4.3. We will follow the A Rocha [Eco Church](#) guidance and accreditation scheme to help us achieve our environmental goals.

5. What this means in practice

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. In managing our **church buildings** (both church premises and manse) 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.
- 5.4. We will explore creative options for encouraging native wildlife on our church **land**, and commit to an eco-friendly management approach to church land.
- 5.5. 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.
- 5.6. We will support charities and campaigns to address the **global** impact of the climate crisis.
- 5.7. 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.

6. Involvement

- 6.1. We invite all members of the congregation and all users of the Church Centre to support us in implementing this policy. We welcome feedback and constructive suggestions for actions to help achieve our objectives (✉ ecochurch.standrews@gmail.com).

[St Andrew's URC, Eco Church Steering Group](#)