

Parish Eco Audit

To live sustainably, we need to examine the activities of organisations as well as our personal lifestyles. Many organisations and companies around the world now carry out environmental audits to identify ways to minimise their impact on the environment. Here are some questions to ask when doing an environmental audit of your church, with some suggestions for action. You will come up with others. And remember – your church’s collective life can model a life-style for its individual members in their daily lives. With some minor adaptations it may also be helpful to use in your home and workplace.

Adapted from



Church Property

*Good stewardship of energy and buildings can reduce a parish’s impact on the environment and save money.
Assess your stewardship of energy and natural resources, taking into account your Church / hall / all church buildings.*

Questions	Response / Comments / Notes	Potential Action	Time Scale	Person responsible	Review date
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Do you / could you:

Energy

- monitor energy consumption regularly to identify trends?
- Switch to a 'green' supplier/one that provides renewable energy sources?
- Regularly service equipment?
- Choose appropriately sized rooms for activities?
- Timetable meetings to minimise heat usage?
- Install timer / thermostat for heating/lighting?
- Commission an energy consultation?
- Fit draught excluders round doors / windows?
- Fit additional insulation?

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean windows to maximise light? • Encourage users to switch off unnecessary appliances and not use stand-by? • Replace cracked glass? • Use low-energy light bulbs? <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Water</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check water outlets for drips / leaks? • Install water-saving devices? • Collect rainfall for garden use? <p><u>Building maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose timber / materials from sustainable or reclaimed sources? 				
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Parish Management

Parishes are responsible for the good stewardship of money and a range of consumables.

Some parishes recycle printer and photocopier cartridges, milk cartons/bottles, batteries, greetings cards, stamps, old mobile phones etc. Identify your church's good practice and identify issues for action.

Questions	Response / Comments / Notes	Potential action	Time scale	Person responsible	Review date
<p>Does your parish:</p> <p><u>Finance and purchasing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the environment policy of your bank? • Have an ethical investment policy for savings? • Use environmentallyfriendly cleaning materials? • Use recycled paper / envelopes etc? • Use Fair Trade products? • Use local suppliers where possible? <p><u>Catering</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use crockery/glass rather than disposables? • Use farmers' markets and local suppliers? 					

Waste minimisation

- Offer recycling collection areas for church members, building users and the local community?
- Hold jumble sales / bring and buy sales / commodity exchanges etc to promote availability of goods at affordable prices?

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Parish Land

This is about assessing the ecological value of church land. Do you have a management plan to improve the community benefit or wildlife value of the land resource?

Many parishes are responsible for land, be it a tiny patch or something a bit larger.

Use this section to assess the ecological and community value of your land and its potential to be further developed

Questions	Detailed information Indicate everything you do to make your church land attractive and valuable to humans and wildlife.	Potential Action	Time scale	Person responsible	Review date
Does/could your parish: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage its land in a way that is wildlife friendly?• Select native plant species to benefit wildlife?• Offer varied habitats / protection and food sources?• Offer an area for prayer, contemplation outdoor liturgy and recreation?• Aspire to natural beauty?					

Personal Lifestyle

More people attend church each week than participate in any other voluntary body.

Parishes could publish green tips in their parish newsletter and the local community newspaper. Public events which highlight a particular aspect of ethical behaviour could be organised. Use this section to identify what is currently being done to encourage sustainable living, and what potential there is to develop this ministry.

Questions	Response / comments / notes Identify which of the questions you can respond positively to and add other things that you do	Potential action	Time scale	Person responsible	Review
<p>Do you / could you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish regular green tips? • Promote wider awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations? • Encourage wider recycling by providing collection points or informing people of local authority facilities? 					

Parish Outreach

Parishes can work with local communities to improve their neighbourhood. Assess the links that your church already has in the local community and the potential for further development

Questions	Response / comments / notes	Potential action	Time scale	Person responsible	Review

<p>Does your parish seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise building users of your environmental concerns and procedures? • Participate in local environmental initiatives? • Have links with environmental bodies? • Support community schemes with an environmental element (Litter pick up, Credit Union, food bank)? 					
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Overseas Concerns

Act locally to promote environmental care globally.

Living simply that others may simply live is a vital facet of Christian living and discipleship.

Some parishes develop Fair Trade / Trade craft stalls and sell these products in the wider community.

Questions	Response/ Comments / Notes	Potential Action	Time scale	Person responsible	Review date
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<p>How does your parish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the work of Christian development agencies like Caritas? • Promote Fair Trade • Explore environmental issues through linked overseas communities / churches / missions etc? • Support the work of international conservation and environmental agencies (A Rocha / WWF / Friends of the Earth etc)? 					
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Managing your Carbon Footprint

Questions	Response / Comments / Notes	Potential Action	Times scale	Person responsible	Review
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Does your parish:

- Read your meters to assess your energy usage
- Track your carbon footprint?
- Help members do the same at home?

Do your parish members:

- Acknowledge our role in climate change?
- Know where to find information about climate change?
- Understand that this is a discipleship/mission issue?
- Try to reduce the impact of their consumer choices?

Does your parish:

- Work with the community to help them live lightly on God's earth?
- Work with local environmental movements.
- Promote a deeper understanding of Church teaching on the environment (eg Laudato Si')