

Environment Policy for the Diocese of Manchester

This is the text of a policy paper agreed in November 2003 by the Manchester Diocese

Introduction

This policy seeks to identify principles to assist the Diocese in translating into action its affirmation that mission includes 'caring for the earth' in the life of the Church at national and local level. This policy statement sets out to relate environmental issues to all relevant areas of the Church's life.

This statement attempts to:

1. spell out a commitment to act responsibly on environmental matters
2. identify ways in which this commitment is already being worked out in the Diocese and how this can be built on
3. identify the means by which progress can be measured

Caring for the earth

1. The Diocese affirms that Christian mission includes caring for God's earth and will endeavour to develop both the theology and practical implications of this on a continuing basis.
2. The Biblical creation stories give human beings privilege and responsibility in relation to the earth and every living creature. We are called to be partners with the rest of creation and co-partners in the ongoing creative and renewing activity of God. Such partnership goes wrong when human beings act as if the whole earth were simply for their present benefit. God's way, revealed in the Bible and particularly in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, is a generous sharing of the divine love to serve the needs of God's creation until it reaches its fulfilment.
3. Christian mission includes sharing in putting right the relationships within God's creation that have gone wrong, and growing towards the balance and good stewardship envisaged in the Biblical vision of the world as it is meant to be.

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Action in working towards

4. We are challenged and encouraged to care for the earth by following sustainable practice and taking into account global and local environmental considerations for present and future generations:

- in the conservation and use of resources in the Church and at home
- in helping to develop more sustainable lifestyles
- in active involvement in [Local Agenda 21](#) and other community initiatives
- in concerns for action on global environmental issues

5. To help us to fulfil this commitment, this policy identifies objectives relating to six aspects of the environment. The objectives are considered relevant to individual lifestyles, the ongoing life of the Church and to the construction, maintenance and use of church buildings.

6. This policy contains a commitment to co-operation and joint initiatives with other Churches, including the Eco-Congregation programme, and the work of other faiths.

NOTE: Agenda 21 developed out of the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit held in Rio, Brazil. Its name means 'an agenda for the 21st century'. Its aim is to promote development, which respects the environment and the needs of future generations. Much of the responsibility for the development and implementation of Agenda 21 is at national level but each Local Authority is also required to develop a set of Local Agenda 21 policies promoting sustainable development. Local Authorities are required to consult people and groups and this is where the churches can play a role.

Environmental policy objectives

Awareness and Commitment

- to promote awareness within the Diocese of these principles and objectives and of the values underlying them
- to ensure that Diocesan employees and office holders are familiar with and implement this environmental commitment and its objectives
- to ensure that Diocesan activities comply with all relevant environmental regulations

Energy and Water

- to ensure energy is used efficiently and wherever possible reduce its use
- to encourage the increased use of renewable energy
- to use water efficiently and with care
- to avoid pollutants entering the drainage system

objectives should have regard to:

- the challenge of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs
- the potential for harnessing the skills, expertise and enthusiasm of Christian people
- the opportunities for co-operation and joint initiatives with other Churches or environmental initiatives
- the effectiveness of the overall mission of the Church and the overall demands upon budgets
- the valuable contribution of small steps by individuals as well as major initiatives

Waste

- to reduce the production of material waste including unnecessary packaging
- to encourage re-use, repair and recycling of materials including organic waste
- to dispose of waste in a safe and responsible way Materials and Resources
- to buy products which are made in accordance with the principle of using material in a sustainable way and to use locally-made goods where practicable.
- to take into account the 'whole life' costs of materials when repairing, altering or rebuilding premises
- to maximise the proportion of paper used from sustainable sources and recycled materials
- to offer electronic communication as an alternative to paper for those who are suitably equipped
- to show concern for the environmental quality of food production systems and the equitable global distribution of food

Natural and Built Environment

- to take appropriate opportunities to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment
- to be aware of local planning developments
- to be sensitive to the impact of church activities on the local environment

Travel

- to make every effort to reduce air pollution and energy consumption resulting from the use of the car by avoidance of unnecessary travel and the use of energy efficient vehicles
- to explore undertaking the work of the Church in ways which reduce the need for travel particularly by car and allow for the possibility of and encourage access by public transport, cycle and on foot
- to share car transport where possible
- to support the expansion of good quality public transport, the provision of improved facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and local Green Travel Programmes.