

## Stroud Deanery Environmental Ambassador report to Deanery Synod May 2025

5<sup>th</sup> mark of mission: *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

### Diocesan update

Sandra Millar continues to be the main point of contact for Deanery Ambassadors and at a meeting earlier this month she reported that there are plans to create a new role which will include support for the church's environmental agenda.

Erica Sidall the Net Zero 2030 project officer, who was appointed last summer, has a responsibility for clergy housing across Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester dioceses and she has a general Net Zero responsibility here. She leads this work at a diocesan level and with others is producing an ambitious strategy, together with an action plan, to help the diocese achieve the Church of England Net Zero 2030 target.

The diocesan offices are relocating from Church House to Hillfield House, Denmark Road, Gloucester later this year. Hillfield House was the original Church House for Gloucester when it was set up after the First World War. Sandra reported that environmentally responsible considerations are an important priority in the refurbishment that is taking place and that staff are also keen to improve the environmental impact of their workplace and behaviours – even small details like recycling.

### Helping churches reduce their carbon footprint C of E Energy Footprint Tool (EFT)

The C of E Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is open until June 30<sup>th</sup> and all churches are strongly encouraged to use it. It is available through the Parish Returns and takes about an hour to complete. The EFT deadline is earlier this year than last, to give more time to analyse the data and get the results to Diocesan Synods by autumn 2025.

### Stroud Deanery Eco Church

If your church has not yet registered for the A Rocha Eco Church Survey, I would strongly encourage you to do so. Here is the link

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

It is then entirely up to each church as to how much or little they do. Just reading the questions can prompt some reflection and this can lead to some positive action. Small steps really do count. The survey is not just a tick box exercise but a springboard to think about the values that shape our lives. These values are integral to each 'Mark of Mission' – not just the 5<sup>th</sup> one. *To safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth* is something we should be doing whether there is a climate crisis or not.

### Church Buildings and Energy.

There is a section of the survey that covers buildings and energy and church architects are beginning to include registering for Eco Church as one of the recommendations in their Quinquennial Report.

### Recent Deanery Eco events

#### Church yards

In March Rebecca Charley, Strategic Lead for Biodiversity and Nature Recovery for Stroud Council, together with Megan Adamou Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust led another very successful session on managing our churchyards. This was kindly hosted by St Mary's Woodchester. It was encouraging to see this group of twenty or so from seven churches, together with some parish and district councillors share knowledge, experience and challenges in this area. Full details have been in the diocesan weekly bulletin and the Church of England Environmental Bulletin.

Caring for God's Acre has amazing resources – expert advice on almost everything churchyard related

[www.caringforgodsacre](http://www.caringforgodsacre) They organise **Love Your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature/National**

**Cemeteries Week June 7<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>** Full details on their web site and to receive two free *Starter Guides* and their *Guide to Wildlife in Burial Grounds* in time for your event, which can be a very simple inhouse survey if this is something new to your church, register online ideally by 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

### Sustainable Church Flowers

Our worship resources have an impact on the environment and that includes our flower arrangements

Organised jointly with Cirencester Deanery, fifty flower arrangers had the opportunity to learn more about all aspects of sustainable church flowers from Sustainable Church Flowers Ambassador, Beth Bruce Gardner. The Sustainable Church Flowers movement aims to reduce pollution in our floral decorations by using carbon neutral flowers and less plastic 'Glorifying God Sustainably'. It is encouraging to see some PCCs adopting a Sustainable Church Flowers Policy for their church. If this is something your church would like to know more about, please get in touch with me.

**Cirencester Deanery Invitation**

Stroud Deanery Standing Committee have been invited to the next meeting of Cirencester Deanery Synod on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 7.15 pm at The Royal Agricultural College Cirencester. The evening will have an Eco Church focus. Tony Singer is planning to attend and I would like to encourage one or two others to join him. Please let me know if this is something you would be interested in and I can let you have further details.

I am always happy to help if I can or to try to answer any questions you may have – and if I don't have the answer to try to help find it! Please contact me using the email below.

Jennie South, Eco Ambassador Stroud Deanery

[jennie.south@btopenworld.com](mailto:jennie.south@btopenworld.com)

12<sup>th</sup> May 2025