

South Bedfordshire Circuit Environmental Policy

The South Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit seeks to fulfil its responsibilities as commanded in the first chapter of Genesis to be good stewards and take responsibility for the earth and all its constituent parts. The Circuit affirms that Care for Creation is an integral part of the Methodist Way of Life¹, as well as being in line with the principles of a Justice-seeking Church².

Preamble

In 2009 The Methodist Conference received the report 'Hope in God's Future' which was commended for study and action and recommended the identification of realistic approaches to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life in line with the national goal of 80% reduction by 2050. However the situation has become increasingly urgent, particularly for some of our global partners, and at Conference in 2021 the Methodist Church in Britain agreed an aspirational target to become net zero by 2030, "and to use its assets, investments and influence to drive practical action to benefit people and planet." (Action for Hope, Faith Plan para 17)

At Circuit level we are committed to playing our part and have therefore produced this Policy Statement and Action Plan to demonstrate that commitment and work towards becoming an Eco-Circuit.

Policy Statement

- We will encourage all our members (constituent churches, staff members, post-holders and individual members) to fulfil their calling to care for creation and work towards the protection of the planet for the good of all people, in order to embed this principle in the life of our Circuit and its mission and ministry.
- We will help them to uphold this commitment by the ways available to us.
- We will measure, monitor and and celebrate the work done across the circuit towards this aim.

Ways of working

- We will seek, where necessary, to change policies so that they support creation care - by our involvement at local, national and global level.
- We will facilitate sharing of good practice and support between churches at different stages along the journey, as well as building relationships for wider support.
- We will encourage churches to become Eco-churches
- This will be a regular agenda item of Circuit Meetings in which we share good news stories and consider further actions.

¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/visit-every-station/>

² <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/social-justice/a-justice-seeking-church/>

- We will encourage ministerial staff, lay employees, officers of the circuit and churches, local preachers and worship leaders to consider creation care in their work and decision-making.
- We will consider that due consideration is given for creation care, environmental protection and energy efficiency in any maintenance and building works, purchase of new equipment etc.
- We will make ethical decisions that include creation care when determining grants, investments and use of finances.

Environmental Action Plan

Action	Current situation (Feb 2025)	Planned action and dates	Who by
Register for Eco-Circuit Award and achieve bronze award	Registered August 2024	Achieve bronze by	
To meet the Methodist aim to have 50% of churches registered with Eco Church by 2026 and 50% of those to have a bronze award and 20% a silver (Section T Action for Hope para 39 Conference agenda 2022)	Already exceeded. As a circuit of 18 churches we would need 9 registered, 4-5 with bronze awards and 2 with silver: Registered but with no award yet: High Street Leagrave Registered and holding bronze awards: Toddington, St John's and The Square Registered and holding silver awards: Trinity, Harlington, Eaton Bray, Strathmore Avenue, Aley Green	New target	
Facilitate churches to take advantage of the funded energy efficiency audits from the District	Funding available to those churches which are registered for eco-church (even if not awarded) and which have a mission plan that includes creation care	Refresh Circuit Mission Plan to include appropriate level of Creation Care by 30/4/25 Share information about audits – done March '25 Circuit process agreed with District 28/4/25> Trinity met process and setting up Audit June 25	Circuit Leadership Team Bursar and admin team Jenny Spouge with District (Steve Watson and Angela Brydon)

Set up a page on the Circuit website to share stories and ideas		Went live 5/3/25 See https://www.southbedsmethodist.org.uk/creationcare.htm	Admin team
Run a workshop or eco-day to offer practice sharing and support for those churches working towards becoming Eco-churches			
Review investments by Circuit and churches to ensure they are environmentally friendly			
Review manses and if possible, comply with Standing Orders (Book VI Part 2 Guidance Section 1C 3) which states that "Circuits should seek to provide manses to meet a minimum of a 'C' energy efficiency rating", or explain why not.			
Update Circuit grants policy (especially for maintenance and building works and white-good replacement) to reflect environmental concerns			
Review circuit office and admin functions to reduce eco-footprint		Printer paper purchase April 2025 of ecological brand Printing kept to a minimum – most communications by email	

Policy for Circuit events to include provision of refreshments that whenever possible are LOAF (Locally-grown, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fair-traded) and reduce waste		Lunch for Listening Day 26/4/25 included crockery rather than disposable plates and cutlery	
Consider travel by public transport and car-sharing to reduce emissions for Circuit and District events		Car-sharing used wherever possible for synod travel	
Offer training at the Worship Leaders and Preacher Meeting to facilitate preaching on these issues			
Link with other organisations working on these issues - eg Central Beds climate literacy training			
Encourage members to measure and reduce their own eco-footprint - working towards the target of one tonne per year by 2030. (Para 46 of Conference agenda 2022)			

Updated 15/7/25