

# St Mary's Emsay with Eastby: Gold Eco Church application

## 1 Worship

**Services:** We believe that Creation and the environment are strongly embedded in our Worship. Creation and social justice are often included in our prayers and sermons regularly refer to environmental themes, throughout the year. Services throughout the season of Creationtide, in September to October, for 2020, 2021 and 2022, had an Eco theme. We have invited a Christian speaker to talk to us about his work in tree planting and flood prevention locally. There is informal discussion of environmental and social justice issues during work with children in services.



**The Eco Group:** Our group meets at least bi-monthly and our minutes go to the PCC for information so the leadership of the church are fully informed and supportive of our work. Our vicar, Revd Marion Russell, often attends the meetings and encourages us to broaden the scope of our eco work across the church. New members very welcome!

**Parish Environment Officer:** The PCC formally appointed our Parish Environment Officer in September 2020. The PEO, by agreement, is not a member of the PCC and we have an eco rep who is one of the elected PCC members.

**Study groups:** We have had a small study group which included members of the wider community which explored issues about recycling, energy use, etc. This year, 2023, we have a study group, with the theme 'Living well', using poetry to explore how our living is enhanced by our relationship with God and Creation. This again is open to our wider village community, being held in one of the village pubs. At the beginning of 2021 and again in 2022, we had a whole church discussion after our service about our individual carbon footprints. In autumn 2022, we had a discussion, including the 'sermon slot,' about how we plan to change our church heating as part of our plan to get to net carbon zero.

Our whole church community is behind all this work, and we see all this action above as a part of our worship.



## 2 Buildings

**Energy use:** We measure our energy use and complete the Energy Footprinting Tool every year. Our current carbon emissions are around 10 tonnes. We are actively taking steps to reduce this. We have made a commitment to be net carbon zero by 2025, ahead of the Church of England's 2030 target.

**TCNCC:** St Mary's Emsay with Eastby has been leading a group of 5 local churches called 'Towards Carbon Neutral Churches in Craven' (TCNCC). We were successful in gaining a

grant from the governmental Rural Communities Energy Fund for a feasibility study on how the churches can get to zero carbon. We shared our findings with other churches nationwide in a webinar hosted by the Church of England in November 2022. We also produced a film about the process to inspire other churches to start on their own journey to net carbon zero, which was shown during the webinar. We have also spoken to other local churches and organisations, including the WI, about this work. Lots of information about this is on our church website.

**Reducing energy use:** After research, we have decided that the way forward for a small church with limited weekly use is to focus on 'heating the people, not the space'. We are currently trialling a number of electric heaters and plan to replace our gas boiler with electric heating by 2024. We are sharing lessons learned via our website and with support to other local churches and have also spoken to local organisations. We are planning to share this more widely across the Diocese with an open day for other churches, in March 2023. We are on a green tariff for our electricity and gas and will be offsetting our carbon emissions from spring 2023 (as agreed by our PCC in 2022), through the Green Journey scheme recommended by the Diocese of Leeds. In June 2023, we shall offset our carbon emissions for the first 6 months of the year, and in December for the second half. We have replaced most of our church bulbs with LED bulbs. The security lighting around the church is motion activated.



We have reduced draughts by ensuring the roof and windows are sound and are currently investigating how to instal a draught control for the main church door and the bottom of the tower.

Our vicarage has had environmental improvements: new double glazing and replacement external doors, recently increased loft insulation, and LED lights throughout.

We exclusively use recycled toilet paper and eco-friendly cleaning products. We have taken the decision not to use disposable plates and have a good stock of crockery. Our vicar and others involved in administration have reduced paper use and now use recycled paper and re-used paper.

**Solar PV:** We are also considering solar PV panels, but this will have to be after the south roof has been renewed. We are in ongoing discussions with various bodies, including the village and county councils about the possibility of having electric vehicle charging points in the church car park.

**Recycling:** we recycle pens and other writing equipment including crayons, felt tips and pencils, ink cartridges, used postage stamps and medication blister packs. The collection point is in the church porch, so available for the local community. A member of the Eco Group takes the recyclables to local collection points in neighbouring towns.

**Water use:** We are reducing our water use: we have a water butt for use in the churchyard and a notice by the outside tap which encourages users to take water from the water butt rather than the tap. One of our two toilets has water-saving flush.

**Cycle racks:** We do not yet have cycle racks but are actively researching these.



### 3 Land

**Encouraging biodiversity:** The churchyard around our village church and vicarage garden are both managed very sensitively for the encouragement of native wildlife.

We have bird and bat boxes and a lovely bug hotel, which was made in a children's workshop. We have recently installed a hedgehog box, after discussion with our local hedgehog rescue team, and are installing 'Hedgehogs: slow' warning signs at the vicarage and church as we have seen hedgehogs in both locations. We leave water out for hedgehogs to drink. Piles of brash are left as shelter for small mammals and insects.



We have decided not to include stocked wildlife feeding stations because of the need to keep these adequately clean, but we do encourage native plants which provide seeds and nectar for birds and insects.

As well as encouraging native species, we grow plants around the church which benefit birds, bees, butterflies and other species, including herbs and a wide variety of flowering plants. There are also snowdrops and primulas for early nectar.



The churchyard is surrounded by dry stone walls which are good for birds (eg wrens), insects, moss, lichens, etc.

We have a very careful mowing regime in which swathes of wildflowers and grasses are left uncut through the spring and summer and pictures are on our website.

We do not use harmful chemicals in the management of our land. Our churchyard is managed organically. Our vicarage garden is managed in a sensitive way, with good practice of leaving habitats wild. No chemical fertilisers are used and house and garden

waste is composted, with an additional leaf mould and grass clippings pit, all to be used as natural fertiliser.

**Tree planting:** We have planted some native trees, with guidance. Our latest was a crab apple planted for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, part of the Queen's Canopy. We also allowed the local WI to plant a mountain ash in our church car park. There is a yew sapling



which we have planted in case we need to replace the yews by our path. However, our churchyard is still an open, functioning graveyard and so we are not able to plant trees in a large part of it. We therefore have planted trees around the edge of the churchyard and in the car park edge.

**Wildlife surveys:** We undertake wildlife surveys. We take part in the Churches' Count on Nature and have compiled lists of the biodiversity recorded (see appendix). We held 2 very successful Lichens workshops in 2022 and produced a coloured handout on the lichen species for visitors to encourage them to look for 10 lichens in the churchyard and car park.



**Vegetable, fruit and herb planters:** In 2022, we commissioned some specially designed planters to fit around the church building in which we can grow herbs, fruit and vegetables and these were installed in the spring of 2022. We are planning to continue and expand on these in the future. We are planning a small memorial garden, to include a bird bath and lavender hedging for bees and other insects.

**Compost making:** There are both a compost heap and a leaf mould bin in the churchyard.

**Welcoming people:** We have benches outside the church and members of the church and the local community are encouraged and welcomed to use the space respectfully for recreation and contemplation. The churchyard is always open, and many people do come in and spend time in the space. We also use the churchyard for some events, for example our tea party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

**Land management plan:** There is a land management plan for the churchyard and car park, which includes the walls, footpaths and tree care.

#### **4 Community and Global engagement**

We are active in our local community, speaking to other churches and organisations, including leading the Towards Carbon Neutral Churches in Craven group since 2020. Members of the church are part of the village Fairtrade Group and other environmental organisations, including Garden Organic, RSPB, WWT, etc; one member has a plot of land on which she is planting a woodland; some members of the church take part in the twice-yearly village litter pick.

**How green is our village:** We will be taking part in a Green Fair in the village, in March 2023. This will bring together various groups in the village, including our Eco Church group and Carbon Zero group.

**Allerton Recycling Facility trip:** We are planning a trip to the Allerton Recycling Facility, in March 2023, which is open to members of the village community.

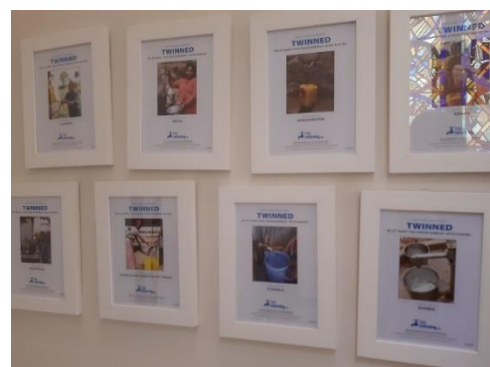
**Walks:** We have organised walks, often between Bolton Abbey and our church, or which have historical links, or across the local moor. Pre-Covid, our 'historical walks' used to finish in the school.

**Promotion of Eco Church:** We actively promote Eco Church to other churches.

**Campaigning:** We have taken part in campaigns concerning national and global environmental issues. For example, we took part in the 'Moths to a flame' project, sending moths and messages to COP26 in Glasgow. We joined the Wave of Hope, organised by CracktheCrisis.org and decorated hands with messages of hope which were displayed in windows around the village. We planted a tree for the Queen's Canopy project in 2022, and also enabled the local WI to plant a tree on church land. We take part in Fairtrade Fortnight every year, including during the 2020 Lockdown. This is linked with our work with the school which is a FairAchiever School.

We have kept our congregation very informed about environmental issues, including the issues arising in other countries from climate change, particularly through our Carbon Zero project.

**Toilet twinning:**  
Our toilets, taps and bins are twinned and have at least 8 certificates!



**Charity support:**  
Our church

supports a number of environmental charities each year. We regularly support 'Mary's Meals', Christian Aid, Tearfund and Transform Trade (formerly Traidcraft Exchange). We also support emergency appeals, usually via the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

**Fairtrade Church:** We have been a Fairtrade church for nine years. We were a pilot for the recently introduced renewal process for Fairtrade churches. We serve Fairtrade tea and coffee, with Fairtrade sugar, after church and regularly hold Fairtrade stalls after our morning services and at village events. During the restrictions of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, we held Fairtrade stalls outside or in the church porch and an online Fairtrade dinner and quiz via zoom. The church Fairtrade stall is taken to community events in the village (we are a Fairtrade village) and we work collaboratively with the Fairtrade village group and school to plan events enhances our outreach into the community.

**'LOAF' principles:** Although we are a very small church and very rarely provide meals for people, we try to use Local, Organic, Animal-friendly and Fairtrade products when we do have food at events. We always provide a vegetarian/ vegan option. We try to reduce food waste at all events. We compost our coffee grounds.

**Food bank:** We are a local collection point for the Skipton Food Bank. Members of the Eco Group take the food to the hub in the town each week. We have a note in the newsletter to say what items are needed each fortnight.

**Ethical investment:** We have switched our church current bank account to a Co-op account, so our funds are ethically invested.

## 5 Lifestyle

**Parish Environment Officer:** We have a very active Parish Environment Officer, appointed by the PCC in September 2020 who regularly liaises with the Diocesan Environment Officer. As our PEO is not a PCC member, we also have an Eco Champion on the PCC who regularly speaks to the PCC Eco Group reports. The PEO is invited to speak at the PCC on a regular basis when required.

**Eco tips:** We have an eco-tip in every edition of our fortnightly news sheet and have done since September 2020 (and they are collected on our church website). We formalised this with monthly eco themes from January 2021, with eco tips focussing on this theme each month, and this has continued through 2022 and into 2023. These have included ideas about reducing car use, ethical investment, water saving, refuse/ reduce/re-use/ recycle, Fairtrade, climate action, social justice, reducing food waste, gardening, travel and tourism, energy use and how to reduce our personal energy use, sustainable Christmas ideas, clothing and fashion.

**Car sharing:** Car sharing is encouraged - when planning trips, car sharing is part of the organisation. Members of the congregation, including the band, regularly share journeys to church, or walk.

**Environmental lifestyle audit:** In January 2021, during lockdown, all members of the congregation were encouraged to work out their carbon footprint and do an environmental lifestyle audit using the WWF calculator. We then had an after-church online discussion about what we had discovered. We repeated the audit in 2022 to see if we had made any improvements in our individual carbon footprints over the year. We are planning to repeat this in 2023.

**Recycling:** As well as our eco tips on refuse/ reduce/ re-use/ recycle, we offer a number of recycling options. Most of these are in the porch so that they are accessible to members of the public but are kept out of the rain. Currently, we offer collection of ink cartridges, blister packs from medication and pens and other stationery, which members of the congregation take to collection points in neighbouring towns. We also collect used postage stamps.



**Sharing resources:** We regularly have a stall for used books and jigsaws at our church fairs. We also regularly have a plant stall where people can donate and buy locally grown plants. We have a free 'Seed swap' in the church porch which we started in 2022 and will continue from spring 2023. This is used by all members of the village community. We have a communal Christmas card scheme in the church and cards are displayed on a board.

**Fairtrade:** We use Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar after services and have a regular Fairtrade stall. Members of the congregation are encouraged to use Fairtrade products. We held an online Fairtrade dinner and quiz during the lockdown in 2020, with recipes and ingredients available from our Fairtrade co-ordinator, which was attended by members of the wider village Fairtrade group as well as members of the church.



APPENDIX

**Species recorded in St Mary's Churchyard, Emsay with Eastby**

Recorded during the Count on Nature June 2021 and 2022, the Lichens workshops in May 2022, the moth counts 2021 and 2022 and the land management plan update February 2023

<p><b>WILD FLOWERING PLANTS</b>                      Alpine Strawberry                      Bistort                      Bitter Dock                      Bluebell                      Burnet saxifrage                      Bush Vetch                      Buttercup (Creeping)                      Buttercup (Meadow)                      Celandine                      Centaury                      Chickweed                      Cinquefoil (Creeping)                      Clover                      Cornflower                      Cow parsley                      Cranesbill                      Cuckoo pint/ Lords and Ladies                      Daisy                      Dandelion                      Devils bit Scabious                      Dock                      Ferns (more id needed)                      Forget-me-not                      Foxglove                      Geranium                      Germander Speedwell                      Geum                      Groundsel                      Hawk weed                      Herb Robert                      Ivy                      Knotweed                      Meadow Cranesbill                      Meadow Wort                      Moss (more id needed)                      Nettle                      Oxeye Daisy                      Poppy                      Primrose                      Purple Vetch                      St. John's Wort                      Sedum                      Self heal                      Sorrel                      Speedwell (eyebright)                      Thistle</p>	<p><b>MOTHS</b> (surveys carried out on far side of churchyard wall)                      Barred straw                      Bright-line brown-eye                      Brimstone                      Broom                      Buff tip                      Burnished brass                      Common carpet                      Common Quaker                      Common wainscot                      Common wave                      Common white wave                      Dark sword grass                      Double square-spot                      Double-striped pug                      Dusky brocade                      Early thorn                      Elephant hawk moth                      Small elephant hawk moth                      Eyed hawk moth                      Fan foot                      Flame                      Flame carpet                      Flame shoulder                      Flounced rustic                      Garden carpet                      Green arches                      Green carpet                      Grey scalloped bar                      Heart and Dart                      Knot grass                      Ingrailed clay                      Knot grass                      Large yellow underwing                      Lesser yellow underwing                      Light emerald                      lychnis                      Map-winged swift                      Marbled minor                      Middle-barred minor                      Miller                      Ni moth                      Ochreas pug                      Pale-shouldered brocade                      Pale tussock                      Peach blossom</p>	<p><b>TREES</b>                      Ash                      Beech                      Elder                      Lime                      Oak                      Sycamore                      Yew</p> <p><b>GRASSES</b>                      Annual meadow grass                      Cocksfoot                      Couch grass                      Creeping bent grass                      Crested Dog's Tail                      False Oat grass                      Hair grass                      Meadow Foxtail                      Red Fescue                      Rough Meadow grass                      Rye grass                      Sweet Vernal grass                      Wall barley                      Yellow Oat grass                      Yorkshire Fog</p> <p><b>LICHENS</b>                      Caloplaca flavescens                      Lecanora                      Melanelixia fuliginosa (Stony brown shield)                      Ochrolechia parella (Crab's eye)                      Parmelia saxatilis (Stony rag or crottle)                      Psilolechia lucida (Sulphur dust)                      Physcia tenella (Little ciliated lichen)                      Porpidia tuberculosa (Cigarette Ash)                      Ramolina farinofa                      Rhytidia delphus squatois                      Spongy turf moss                      Xanthoria parietina (Yellow bird perch)</p> <p><b>INVERTEBRATES</b> (more id needed)                      Ants</p>
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<p>Violet  Vipers Buglass  Water Avens  Welsh Poppy  Wild Arum  Wild Garlic  Wild Strawberry  Willowherb</p> <p><b>GARDEN PLANTS AND HERBS</b></p> <p>Anemone  Centaurea montana  Cornflower  Crocus  Daffodil  Hellebore  Marjoram  Mint  Montbretia  Rambling rose  Sage  Snowdrops  Thyme</p> <p><b>PLANTERS (2022)</b></p> <p>Cucumber  Pak choi  peas</p>	<p>Plain golden Y  Pretty chalk carpet  Purple bar  Purple clay  Rosy minor  Rufus minor  Setaceous Hebrew character  Short-cloaked  Silver ground carpet  Silver Y  Single dotted wave  Slender pub  Small angle shades  Small square spot  Small white  Snout  Spectacle  Tawny marbled minor  True lover's knot  White Ermine  Willow beauty</p>	<p>Bee  Bumble bee  Beetle (gold/black)  Black beetle  Crane fly  Green aphid  Green caterpillar  Ladybird  Midge  Slug  Spider  Woodlouse  Worm</p> <p><b>BIRDS</b></p> <p>Blackbird  Chiffchaff  Collared Dove  Crow  Jackdaw  Magpie  Pigeon  Robin  Rook  Sparrow  Swift  Thrush  Wren</p>
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