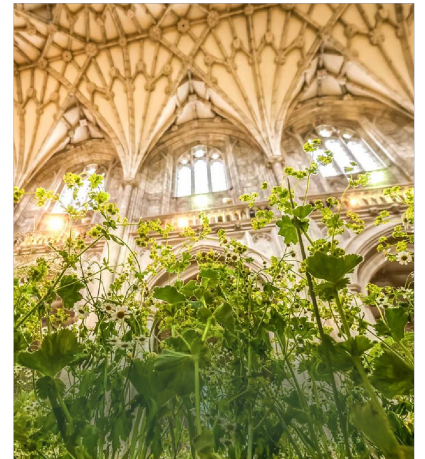




Getting started with Eco Church

Delyth Higgins, Eco Church Officer, Wales



Direction of travel

Photo credit: [Tom Wheatley on Unsplash](#)



Getting started

Getting started with Eco Church

Tips and suggestions to help you get started and make progress

Churches can arrive at Eco Church via many different paths: a desire to save money by bringing down energy costs, a heart for identifying wildlife in the churchyard and enhancing biodiversity, an active foodbank and community outreach, a concern about the climate and nature crises and conviction to act as a Christians. However you 'arrive', a good place to start would be meeting your church where they are and growing and developing from there. Once you have completed the online survey you will gain a better picture of the areas your church is already strongest – take time to recognise this and highlight how these actions contribute to Eco Church. Here are some more suggestions to help you get started and make progress with Eco Church.

1. Create spaces to grow

Coming to an understanding of the climate and nature crises and making the connection to faith and action can take time for churches, and individuals. Eco Church is designed to meet people where they are and can be used to prompt actions, step by step, to move forward. However, an important part of Eco Church is to grow together as a church community. Spending time learning, making connections, and listening to God is important, and, as a church, you will need to consider how you create spaces to do this, Sunday morning worship, small groups, special services, visiting speakers, chats over coffee. The first step may be to reflect on what you love about creation and your own 'Aha!' moment that awoke the urgency to act for God, nature and people. Remember, we are all developing our understanding of what it means to care for creation.

2. Gather a team

Have others around who can support, motivate you and hold you to account! In time this may be a committee or some other structure, but when starting out this might only be two or three people. An obvious start might be those already interested in 'green' things, but don't limit it to them, if you have a youth worker or a fabric officer for example, they can be involved too. As you will see, Eco Church will benefit from varied experiences.

3. Take ownership

The Eco Church survey is a self-assessment for churches across many different denominations and settings. Eco Church will look different depending on the church setting (urban, rural, size of congregation, facilities, building, finance, demographics – you name it!). We encourage you to engage with the survey in the most useful way for your church. So, even if the wording of a specific question doesn't cover your exact circumstances or practice, it is okay to interpret and answer it within your local context, as long as you do so with integrity, and aligned with the overall spirit of the question.

4. Make a commitment

The first question of every category of the Eco Church survey asks your church to acknowledge the climate and nature crises and demonstrate a commitment to taking action. Your commitment may start with a simple statement such as this:

'We recognise and teach that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship. We are committed to respond to this by participating in the A Rocha UK Eco Church award scheme.'

There are further notes about commitment on the [survey category overviews](#) on our [resources page](#).

5. Have a go

We always encourage churches who have not yet started a survey to 'have a go'. When you first fill in the Eco Church survey there will be lots you can complete, but also lots you 'need to find out'. However, making a start can help demystify the process and give you a first impression of how you are doing – it may be a pleasant surprise! However, if it feels overwhelming at this point, break down the survey into chunks and acknowledge where you are already making progress.

6. Prompt for action

Use the Eco Church survey as a prompt for action. Once you have completed the survey, you will have a sense of how you are doing and what areas are 'easier' than others. We encourage you to use the survey questions and themes to guide you to take incremental steps and make a plan. Perhaps choose one or two questions from each category to help you formulate goals for the coming year.

7. Make connections

Even though we structure the survey into categories, they are not truly distinct from one another and the issues the survey seeks to address are interconnected. For example,

- A citizen science action day in your churchyard might primarily seem to be about monitoring species (Land and Nature), but it will also build community (Community and Global Engagement)
- A special service during the Season of Creation might engage in worship (Worship and Teaching), but could also be a space to share information with the congregation about a local refill shop (Lifestyle)

Understanding the connections within the survey can be useful to consider how actions you take might collaborate

Church will be a richer experience and have a wider impact if it involves others who can be a plus form of support and encouragement. Use your local denominational Eco reps or Green is a resource and find out about the networks available to you. Explore the environmental or denominational website to find out more.

point to remember is that you are not doing this alone, there are thousands of churches from. Build connections and gain support from other churches, use the [Eco Church map](#) to Eco Churches near you as well as groups and other organisations in your local 'g. Friends of local parks, Wildlife Trusts, local council green groups).

her resources and tools

Church's resources and guidance, we have stories and examples where you can read es of other churches. But we do not have ALL the answers! There are a wealth of tools, schemes, projects and sources of information to make use of. Explore our ions and links.

we have emphasised the celebration of awards, as an important milestone. Churches to spend time in nature and celebrate creation; taking time to enjoy an act of worship but can help us make deeper connections from which to

Create spaces to grow



Gather a team

Photo credit: St Mary's Church, Llanllwch, Carmarthenshire



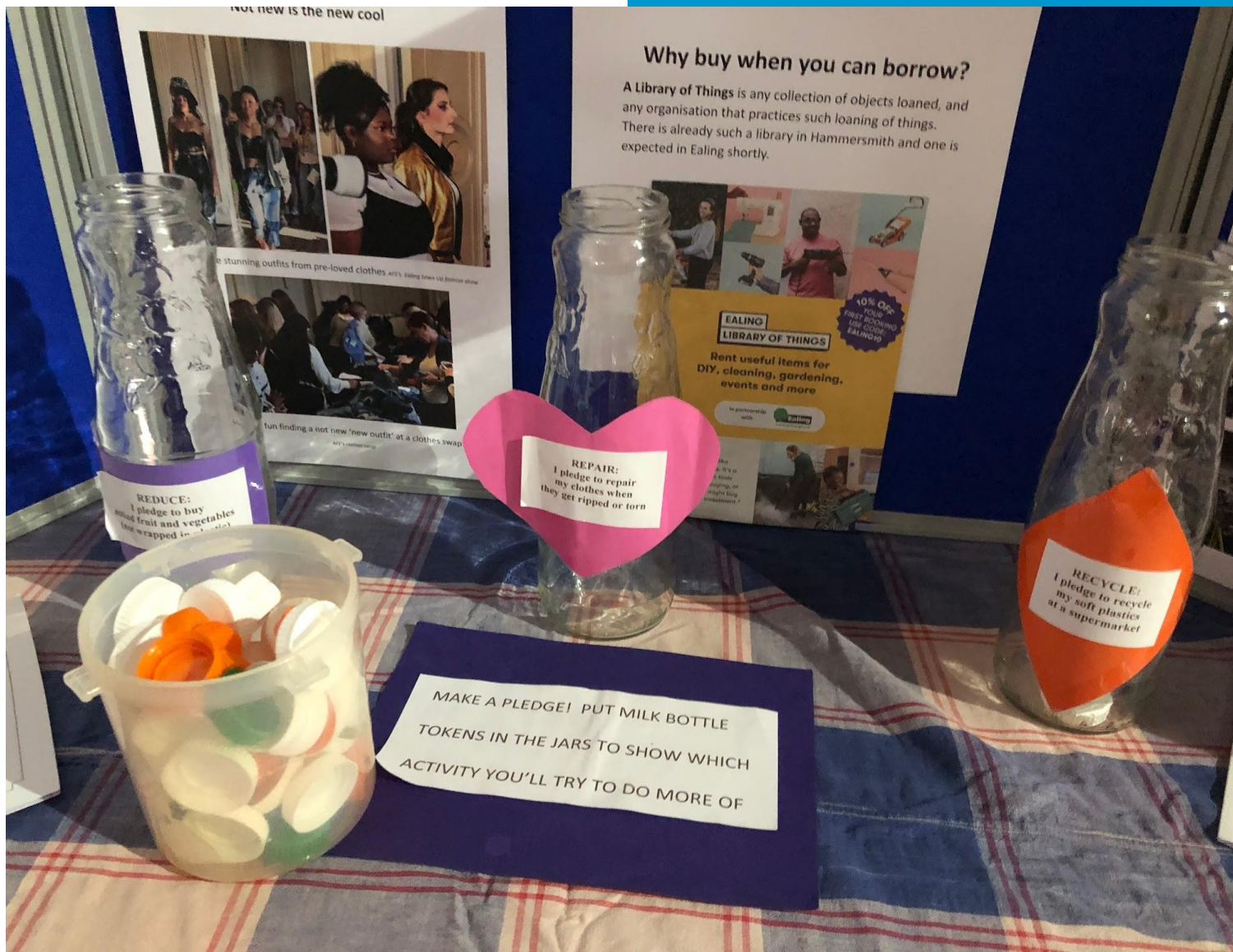
Take ownership



Photo credit: St Giles Church, Uley

Make a commitment

Photo credit : St Andrew's Church, Uxbridge





Have a go!

'To any other churches considering this journey, we encourage you to take that first step. Together, we can nurture a flourishing planet that reflects God's glory, one action at a time.'

St Andrew's Church, Uxbridge

Prompt for action



Photo credit: All Saints Church, Kettering

Prompt for action

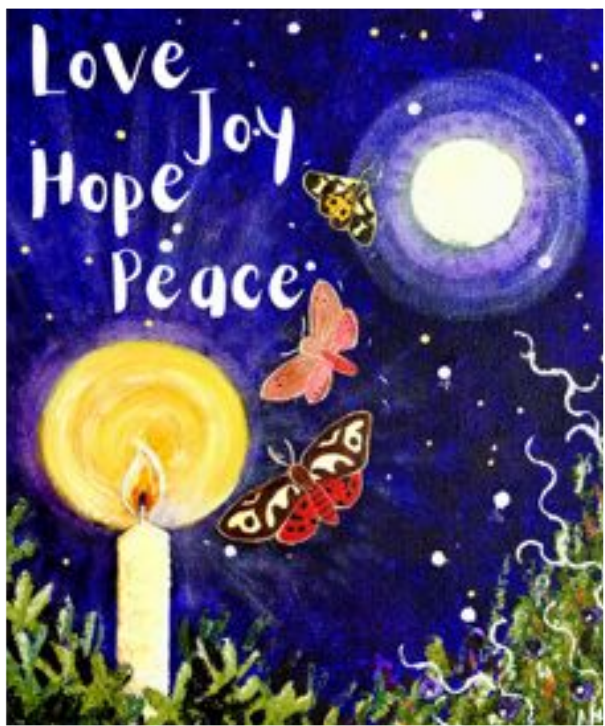


Photo credit: St Michael and All Angels Church, Flax Bourton, Bristol

Make connections



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
BE BOLD

Welcome to St Mary's Open Space

Watford Borough Council,
Town Hall, Watford
Hertfordshire, WD17 3EX
www.watford.gov.uk
enquiries@watford.gov.uk

To report any damage or
other issues please visit:
www.watford.gov.uk/report-it
or telephone: 01923 226400

This area forms part of the
St Mary's Conservation Area

Points of interest

- Garden of Remembrance
- Sensory Garden
- St Mary's Church
Grade I listed building
- Elizabeth Fuller Free School
Grade 2 listed building
- Bedford Almshouses
Grade 2 listed buildings
- St Mary's Square
- Tombs
- Sculpture: Man And Woman
by Andrew Piper
- Sculpture: Feet Friendship Columns
by Philip Bennett, Diana Grayson
- Sculpture: Spiral by Adrian Mookes

George Street
Church Street
High Street

Mary's Open Space

St Mary's Parish Church
The Church of St Mary is Watford's oldest building. It mainly dates from the 15th Century, though the chancel arch and part of the nave survive from the 13th Century Church, while the north chancel chapel was added in 1597. The interior was restored in 1893.

Sensory Garden
The churchyard became a Garden of Remembrance for the fallen of WW2 in 1951. The Sensory Garden was added as a Millennium feature.

Bedford Almshouses
Constructed in 1580 by the 2nd Earl of Bedford, these are the oldest buildings in Watford, and were built "for eight poor women".

Collaborate

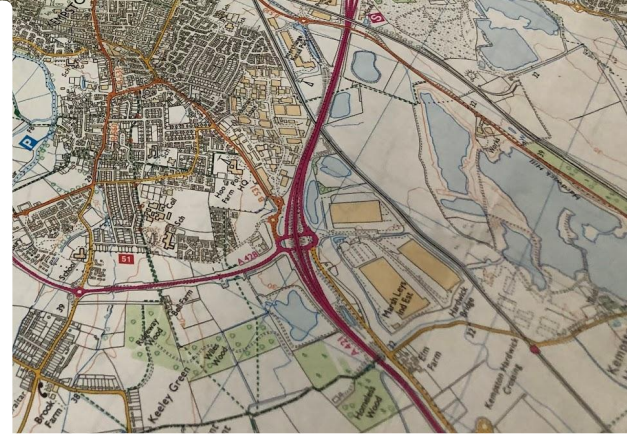
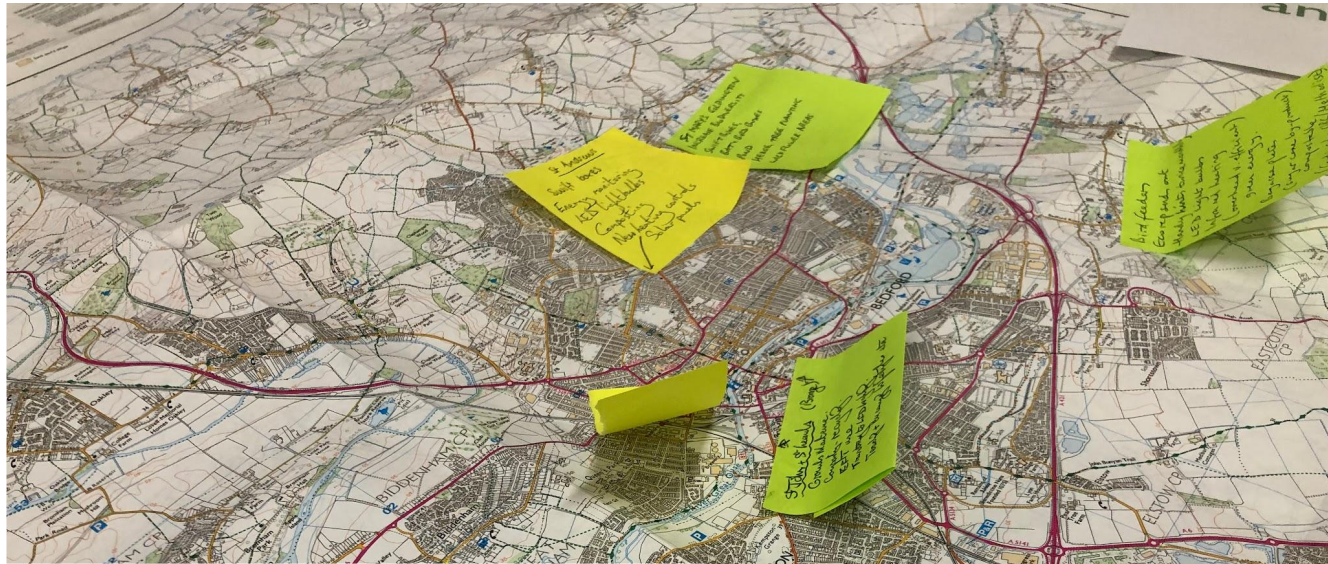


Photo credit: St Andrew's Bedford

Collaborate

Photo credit: St Michael's in the City, Liverpool



Collaborate



Photo credit: Abergavenny Churches

Collaborate



St James' Church, West End, Diocese of Winchester

Make use of other tools and resources



Make use of other tools and resources

Climate Stewards Our Projects Consultancy Carbon C

Resources

Carbon Fast for Lent

Learn more about the Carbon Fast for Lent

Carbon Fast Resources

Downloadable resources for the 2026 Carbon Fast for Lent

Duplo Footprint

Your footprint in bricks! A simple way to understand your carbon footprint

Low Carbon Living

A quick look at ideas for reducing your carbon footprint – the quick wins

2026 Environment Days & Key Events

We believe that responding to the climate crisis is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation and achieve a just world. Climate change already hits hardest the poorest countries and poorest people of the world but it's now hitting us harder too.

Meantime, the widespread destruction of the natural world is a crisis for creation and our single planet island home. Our Environment Programme exists to enable the whole Church to address these threats — in faith, practice and mission. It includes tackling our own carbon emissions (aiming for Net Zero Carbon by 2030) and our wider environmental work — we all have our part to play. Find out more: [churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme](https://www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme)

January	February	March	April
10 National Cut Your Energy Costs Day	2 World Wetlands Day	3 World Wildlife Day	2 Maundy Thursday
11 Plough Sunday	20 World Day of Social Justice	18 Global Recycling Day	3 Good Friday
17-23 Big Energy Saving Week		17 Mar - Great British Spring Clean	3 National Walk to Work Day
24 World Environmental Education Day		2 Apr	4 Holy Saturday
23 - 25 RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch		21 International Day of Forests	5 Easter Sunday
6 Jan - 13 Feb RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch		22 World Water Day	22 Earth Day
28 International Reducing CO2 Emissions Day		28 Earth Hour	29 Palm Sunday
		29 Big Plastic Count	29 Stop Food Waste Day
May	June	July	August
3 - 9 International Compost Week	3 World Bike Day	4 - 10 Net Zero Week	10 - 16 National Adjustments Week
10 - 16 Christian Aid Week	5 World Environment Day	17 Jul - The Big Butterfly Count	29 - 30 International Bar Night
15 Endangered Species Day	6 - 14 Love Your Burial Ground and Churches Count on Nature Week	24 Jul - Love Parks Week	
20 World Bee Day	5 - 14 The Great Big Green Week		
TBC Water Saving Week	7 Open Farm Sunday		
22 International Day of Biological Diversity	8 World Oceans Day		
24 Pentecost	16 World ReFill Day		
	20 National Clean Air Day		
	22 World Rainforest Day		
September	October	November	December
1 Sept - Creation/Season of Creation	4 International Walk to School Month	9 - 20 COP 31	5 World Soil Day
4 Oct Zero Waste Week	4 St Francis Day	28 Buy Nothing Day	25 Christmas Day
21 Sept - Fairtrade Fortnight	14 No Disposable Cup Day	25 Fuel Poverty Awareness Day	25 Dec - 12 Days Wild
4 Oct International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone	14 International E-Waste Day	29 First Sunday of Advent	5 Jan
16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone	22 Water Night		
20 World Clean Up Day			
22 World Car-Free Day			
27 World Rivers Day			
18 - 27 Great British Beach Clean			
TBC Recycle Week			

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Environment Programme

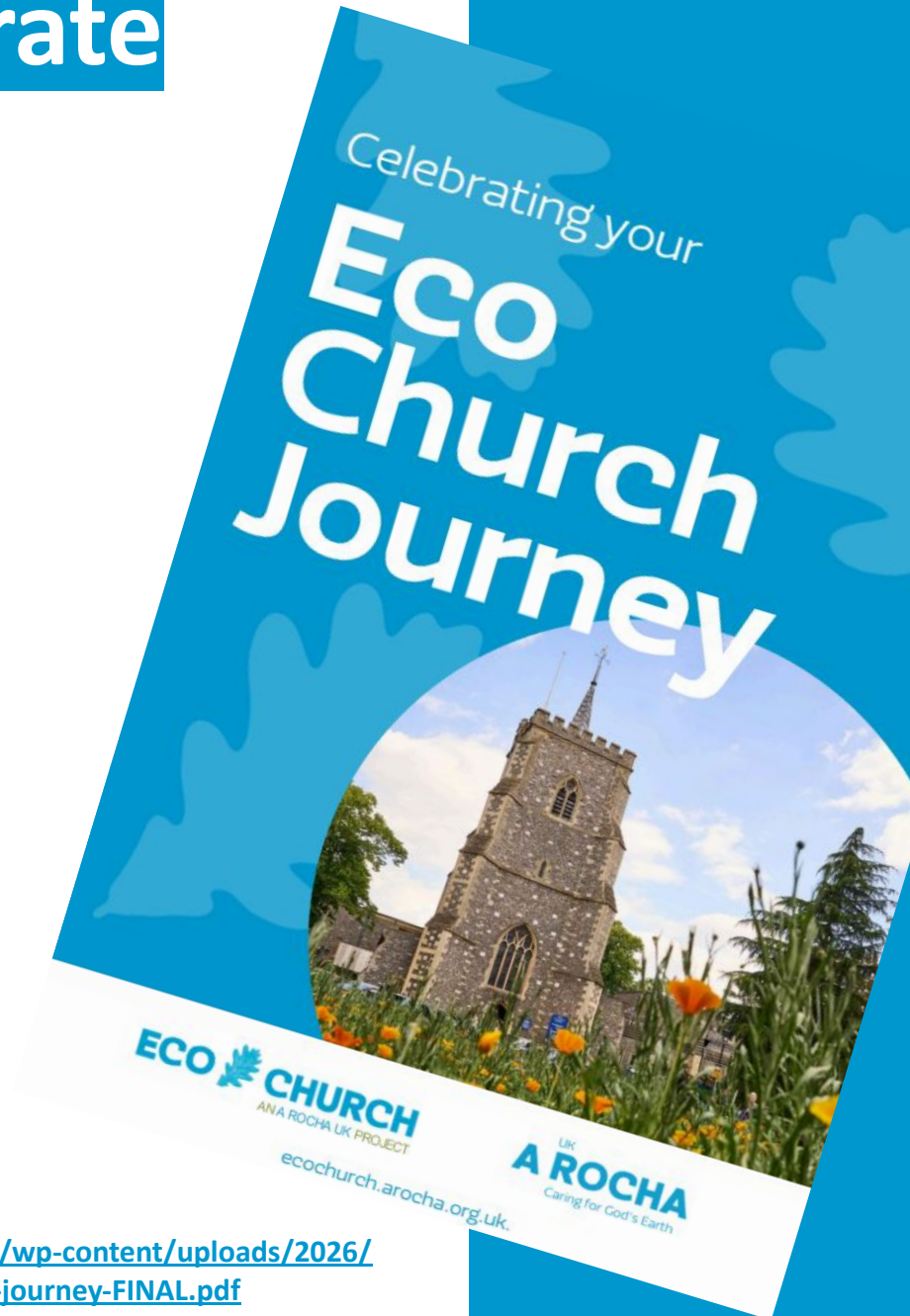
Net Zero Carbon 2030

Celebrate



Eco Church Award celebration at St Mary's
East Grinstead

Celebrate



<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Celebrating-your-Eco-Church-journey-FINAL.pdf>

Summary

1. Create spaces to grow
2. Gather a team
3. Take ownership
4. Make a commitment
5. Have a go
6. Prompts for action
7. Make connections
8. Collaborate
9. Make use of other resources and tools
10. Celebrate

<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Getting-started-with-Eco-Church.pdf>



Photo credit: Glossop Parish Church