



Environment Communication Strategy v2.0

October 2024

1. Purpose

In line with the Chelmsford Diocesan Environment Policy and the Church of England's Routemap to Net Zero Carbon, this strategy aims to ensure that across the diocese, communication supports and encourages church congregations, Parochial Church Councils, clergy, teachers, pupils, diocesan staff and others to understand and address environmental issues including the current climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies.

2. Scope

The strategy covers all aspects of the environment including caring for creation, the science of climate change, climate justice, theology, biodiversity, building climate resilience, and our responsibility to speak up about these issues as necessary. It specifically incorporates requirements set out by the Church of England's Routemap to Carbon Net Zero (1), approved by General Synod in July 2022 as a plan of action to be followed by all dioceses. These requirements are to have a diocesan communication strategy:

- about the Routemap, to churches and schools, focusing on the 'why', the theology, and making it positive,
- "with Net Zero Carbon messages to be incorporated in ongoing communications by Diocesan Communications Officers, Schools communications teams and Church communications, throughout the decade, with interest groups (e.g. DEOs)."

3. Background

This strategy draws on previous experience of other dioceses, conversations with members of the Chelmsford Diocese Mustard Seed team and the Education team, the Diocesan Director of Communication and Media, the Diocesan Racial Justice Officer and other clergy, and a survey about communicating the climate emergency sent out via the Diocesan on-line weekly communication, the View.

4. Key principles

4.1. Enabling and empowering communication about the environment across the diocese:

Existing diocesan communication channels only reach certain individuals. To enable the widest possible communication to and between, for example, church congregation members, young people, those from diverse ethnic communities, all clergy, and diocesan staff we will use a variety of networks.

4.2. Engaging every deanery in communicating:

A network of Diocesan Environmental Advocates with members who can communicate with churches and networks in their deaneries to enable mutual sharing of practical advice and guidance wide dissemination of important messages and material, is key to ensuring good communication across the diocese.



- 4.3. Engaging young people:** Young people are often more knowledgeable and concerned about the climate emergency than older people. We want to involve them in all aspects of the communication strategy as far as possible. Contacts via the Mustard Seed team, the Diocesan Board of Education, and university chaplains will be key.
- 4.4. Leading in communication on climate justice:** Given the demographic profile of the diocese and the links with overseas partners, the diocese is in a strong position to be a leader in relation to climate justice and this will form a key part of the communication.
- 4.5. Engaging hearts and minds:** We recognise that communication about the environment is as much about engaging hearts and minds as giving information and calling to action.
- 4.6. Flexibility:** Elements of this strategy may be updated or added to as further milestones need to be included, and as we learn more about the effectiveness of different approaches.
- 4.7. Inclusivity:** In implementing this strategy we will be inclusive of all, including diverse ethnic communities, those with disabilities, women, and the LGBTQI+ community and others.
- 4.8. Sharing:** The wisdom and experience of those making their decarbonisation journeys will be shared as both inspiration and as a practical guide to changemaking.

In keeping with [Travelling Well Together](#), our communications seek to enable, inspire and encourage people in church communities to care for God's creation, rather than directing them to do so. This is not a top-down approach. Networking people and sharing inspirational stories and good practice from church communities who discern that caring for the environment is part of their church's mission is particularly important. The work of our Deanery Advocates is a good example of this.

5. What to communicate?

5.1. Key areas that support responses to the current environmental crisis

- Why should we care about the environment?
- Theology, worship and prayer resources
- How to reduce the carbon footprint of my church, Eco Church, funding for reducing carbon
- How to reduce my carbon footprint, usefulness of different actions, links between all aspects
- What is happening in the diocese, including case studies/stories to inspire/encourage?
- More about the science of climate change
- Climate justice, the effects of climate change across the globe
- Resilience and adaptation, support for climate grief and eco-anxiety
- How to campaign about the climate emergency
- Resources for youth, schools
- Events and talks

5.2. Key messages about the Routemap

5.2.1. Messages about theology and why

- The world created by God is good
- Creation as gift and our responsibility to care
- Much global warming has been caused by greed/overconsumption of the rich
- It's the most vulnerable and least responsible who are suffering most
- Responsibility to act - Good Samaritan
- The church has a responsibility to speak prophetically into crises



5.2.2. Positive messages

- Lots of churches putting this at the heart of what they are doing
- We can make changes – success stories
- Can be fun
- Can bring people and communities together
- Can invigorate churches
- Opportunity for mission especially to youth
- Can be cheaper and improve resilience to the energy market
- Energy footprint tool completion up from 13% in 2021 to 55% in 2024
- Chelmsford doing better than average in Eco Church registrations
- Fast-moving technological change means many solutions available
- Networks work well

5.2.3. Messages about what to do (churches)

- Complete Energy Footprint Tool
- Change to green electricity tariff as soon as possible
- Join Eco Church
- Do energy audit
- High energy using churches to start action plan in 2024
- Change to green gas tariff if cannot move from gas heating

5.2.4. Messages about what to do (schools)

- Use energy footprint toolkits
- Install smart meters
- Change to green energy tariffs as soon as possible
- Complete Decarbonisation Plans
- Bid for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding
- Work with organisations such as Let's Go Zero to support working towards NZC
- Engage children in developing passion/knowledge/skills Work with Diocese-led projects to promote courageous advocacy
- Seek accreditation for Christian Aid Global Neighbours Awards
- Engage with Creative for Climate Justice exhibition
- With Education team, develop curriculum opportunities for courageous advocacy
- Attend Courageous Advocacy network meetings run by the Diocese Education team

6. How to communicate?

In our survey, the most popular channels suggested for communication were the View (existing Diocesan weekly newsletter), regular newsletters focused on the environment, email, and the Diocesan website. Facebook was less popular. However, almost all the respondents were over 60. In conversation with younger people and youth workers, social media was more popular, although had not always proved successful in other contexts. Ofcom research in 2023 indicated that youtube was by far the most popular means of communication by those under 18. Using social media influencers was mentioned by the Mustard Seed team. Face to face meetings were also seen as more effective. Drawing on the experience of other dioceses in communicating about the environment we will also use videos. We recognise that to adhere to the principle of inclusivity we may need to consult with various diocesan advisers as we consider the most appropriate methods of communication for different communities. In reviewing our



communication strategy in early 2024, the environment communication team was strongly in favour of using personal contact as much as possible and highlighted the usefulness of stories.

6.1. Website: We will use the website to store useful information and links (including links to Christian Environmental groups), for easy accessibility, and we will ensure that the website is kept up to date. The headings listed in section 5.1 will form the website structure.

6.2. Bespoke communication: From time-to-time communication may need to be with particular groups and individuals or about particular topics. We have already (in late 2023 and early 2024) established communication channels via email with the highest energy using churches in the Diocese, and established links with youth synods (autumn 2023).

How and when?	With who?	What?	Who?
Visits, emails, webinars, zoom conversations and individual conversations (July 2023 onwards)	High energy using churches	Options for reducing carbon emissions, engagement with Routemap targets, and support and funding available, targeted as necessary Support for a small number of Demonstrator Projects and other churches with specific funding from CofE	Net Zero Carbon Officer (NZCO) and Diocesan Environmental Officer (DEO), others as appropriate
On-line or face to face (Nov 2024 – Feb 2025)	University chaplains and students	Developing opportunities to work with universities and students	DEO, NZCO
Face to face (Dec 2024 - June 2025)	Young people from Youth synods	How to encourage what young people already want to see – a fairer and faster transition to Net Zero Carbon	DEO, Mustard Seed team
Communication via DBE or other channels as appropriate (Oct-Dec 2024)	DBE Courageous Advocate	How to engage schools with the Routemap targets, especially around energy footprint tools, smart meters and need for green tariffs, including collecting success stories How to engage with schools to support work with children around climate justice issues and courageous advocacy.	DEO, DBE, clergy and churches already engaging with schools as appropriate
Face to face (Jan – June 2025) TBC after consultation	Leaders of black-led churches, Racial Justice Officer, others concerned with climate and racial justice and inclusivity	Listening to the voices of diverse ethnic minorities and others to provide a basis for deeper inclusivity in environment work in the diocese, including collecting stories	DEO, others as appropriate
Email, social media, face to face, zoom meetings (Jan– July 2025)	All churches and schools	Switching to green tariffs	NZCO, DEO, Environmental Lead (EL)
Face to face and on-line (July -Nov 2024)	Anyone who travels on diocesan business	Developing a travel plan to reduce carbon emissions while promoting effective working	DEO, Deanery Environmental Advocates
Face to face (Jan – Sept 2025)	Churches	Review issues with developing more sustainable transport	NZCO, DEO
Email, social media, website, face to face,	Anyone who travels on	Promote travel plan	DEO, NZCO



<i>zoom meetings (Jan - Sept 2025)</i>	<i>diocesan/parish business</i>		
<i>Email, social media, website, newsletters (Jan-July 2025)</i>	<i>Churches</i>	<i>Encourage completion of EFT</i>	<i>DEO, NZCO, Environmental Advocates</i>
<i>Face to face Eco Church conference (May 2025)</i>	<i>Anyone who wants to attend</i>	<i>To celebrate and encourage Eco Church</i>	<i>DEO, Deanery Environmental Advocates</i>
<i>Email, social media, website, face to face, zoom meetings (June 2025 – Dec 2025)</i>	<i>Churches, schools</i>	<i>Encourage exploration of community energy</i>	<i>DEO, NZCO, Environmental Advocates</i>

6.3. Regular communications: Material will be produced monthly and weekly and distributed widely through existing and new networks.

How and when?	To who?	What?	Who?
<i>The View (weekly)</i>	<i>Clergy, LLMs, diocesan staff, other readers of the View</i>	<i>Routemap messages especially on energy footprint tool completion up to July 2023, tariffs, energy audits and green tariffs, updates on new items on website, upcoming events, training including internal and external, simple actions, opportunities to engage including Season of Creation; monthly digest of newsletter (see below) with QR code which can be put in hard copy church newsletters</i>	<i>DEO</i>
<i>Facebook (weekly)</i>	<i>Those who are on facebook</i>	<i>Same content as View, appropriately tailored</i>	<i>DEO</i>
<i>Focused newsletters (monthly)</i>	<i>Anyone who signs up to the newsletter, and via wider networks</i>	<i>Each newsletter themed with following sections with relevant content: comment, news, events, resources, take action (mostly steps to net zero), digest for church newsletters as above</i>	<i>DEO, members of environment network</i>
<i>Short videos (as appropriate depending on content)</i>	<i>Anyone, but perhaps especially young people</i>	<i>To share good news stories and successful projects; to encourage particular actions eg EFT completion, energy audits, Eco Church; success stories to go on website</i>	<i>NZCO, DEO, young people, others as appropriate</i>
<i>Other social media channels (as appropriate)</i>	<i>Anyone</i>	<i>Selected items from above rows and short videos (eg on tiktok)</i>	<i>DEO, environmental communication team</i>

6.4. Meetings/events: We will organise, encourage and support, and publicise (via channels in 6.3) meetings/events online and face to face that can be more discursive and used to address questions and concerns. One specific use of these meetings will be mutual support between clergy in relation to their own communication strategies.

How and when?	To who?	What?	Who?
<i>Podcasts or quarterly zoom meetings as appropriate</i>	<i>Clergy, ordinands, LLMs, Readers</i>	<i>Supporting what attendees want to discuss including communicating about climate emergency, theology etc., may invite outside speakers</i>	<i>DEO, others as appropriate</i>
<i>Zoom meetings (monthly)</i>	<i>Anyone who wants to come</i>	<i>Covering key elements of our response to the environment, particularly focused on NZC may invite outside speakers, likely to include topics</i>	<i>NZCO, DEO, others as appropriate</i>



		<i>such as: where do I start on NZC journey, heating, solar panels, energy audits</i>	
<i>Existing meetings (as appropriate)</i>	<i>Various diocesan groups eg youth synod, existing networks</i>	<i>As appropriate</i>	<i>DEO, others as appropriate</i>

6.5. Training: We will publicise training courses (via channels in 6.3) that are relevant and where appropriate lead courses and design our own training courses. During the Season of Creation 2023 the DEO and the Diocesan Racial Justice Officer ran sessions exploring the interrelationship between climate justice and racial justice, and raising awareness of the effects of climate change across the world, disproportionately on those who have done least to contribute to emissions and have the least resources for responding. In February 2024, the DEO, and Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) Adviser organised training for 2nd year curates, and the DEO ran a carbon literacy course in June/July 2024.

How and when?	To who?	What?	Who?
<i>Face to face conversation about climate justice (Apr 2024)</i>	<i>Anyone who wants to come</i>	<i>To continue the conversation started during the Season of Creation in 2024, focusing on what a just transition means and implies about how we act</i>	<i>DEO and others as appropriate</i>
<i>On-line carbon literacy course (Nov 2024)</i>	<i>Anyone who wants to come</i>	<i>Course being rolled out across dioceses to raise awareness of carbon emissions and impacts of everyday activities, and discuss ability/motivation of individual, communities and organisations to reduce emissions (3x 2-hour sessions)</i>	<i>DEO</i>
<i>Face to face training for those in training (Feb 2024)</i>	<i>Curates and licensed lay ministers</i>	<i>To be run every other year, covering the fifth mark of mission</i>	<i>DEO, CMD adviser</i>
<i>Face to face training, possibly one Episcopal Training per year</i>	<i>Anyone who wants to come</i>	<i>Focused on the theological basis for what we are doing, likely to involve key theologians prominent in this field</i>	<i>EL, DEO, CMD adviser</i>
<i>External training – publicised via newsletters, email, website and social media</i>	<i>Anyone</i>	<i>Covering issues such as: ministry in our current context, climate anxiety, campaigning, carbon literacy</i>	<i>DEO, CMD adviser</i>

6.6. Calendar: We will take note of the Christian Calendar and other significant dates such as Environment Sunday, St Francis Day, Racial Justice Sunday, Season of Creation, COP meetings and communicate around these dates as appropriate. The Season of Creation will be a specific focus, and for the first time in 2024 we are trialling the production of and advent calendar which may also be used in 2025 if successful.

6.7. Environmental communication group: To ensure that this strategy is appropriately implemented, we have a small environment communication group with a brief to advise on and enhance the strategy, implementing strategy where necessary.



7. Key milestones – July 2024 to July 2025

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Communicate about the Season of Creation													
Talk to relevant groups about travel plan													
Targeted communication with high energy using churches eg about CofE funding streams, networking etc													
Collate information about external training and pass to CMD adviser													
Communicate about COP29													
Put together Environment Advent calendar													
Start social media													
Develop communication plan for completing Energy Footprint Tool 2025													
Further conversations about NZC/climate justice in schools													
Develop & implement communication plan about switching to green tariffs													
Start zoom meetings to support decarbonisation in churches													
Run Carbon Literacy course (standard)													
Develop communication plan about energy audits													
Contact university chaplains at UEL, Anglia Ruskin, University of Essex													
Plan Episcopal training days 2025 and 2026													
Engage with youth synods													
Conversations with leaders of black churches etc													
Promote funding opportunities for NZC work to churches including high energy using													
Arrange local climate and racial justice conversations													
Produce videos about NZC case studies eg energy audits													
Promote travel plan & discuss with churches													
Communicate about Energy Footprint Tool													
Face to face training for curates and licensed lay minsters													
Plan and hold climate justice/racial justice conversation													
Communicate about Earth Day and Environment Sunday													
Communicate about switching to green tariffs													
Plan Season of Creation Events and publicise													
Hold Eco Church celebration event													
Run Carbon Literacy Course (congregations)													
Encourage exploration of community energy													



8. Updating the strategy

The strategy will be reviewed and updated by Diocesan Environment Group and CNZ Management Board annually.

9. References

1. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/net-zero-carbon-routemap>

Sandra Eldridge (last updated 14/10/2024)

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