



Bronze Eco-Diocese – What it Means and What Next?

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who has joined the Eco-Church journey over the last few years. The Diocese of St Asaph has achieved the criteria to be a bronze level Eco-Diocese and that is thanks to all those churches who have registered, attained awards as well as the adoption of the Environmental Policy at this year's Diocesan Conference. The **Chair of the Diocesan Eco-Church Group and Dean of St Asaph Cathedral, the Very Reverend Nigel Williams explains what Eco-Diocese means and considers the next steps.**

Eco-Diocese is an initiative from A Rocha UK to encourage diocesan-level engagement with Eco-Church and promote local church participation in the scheme. To achieve bronze level we needed 10% of local churches to register and 5% to be awarded bronze, silver or gold. A recent count showed we had:

- 49 registered churches (26%)
- 8 bronze churches, including St Asaph Cathedral
- 5 silver churches

In addition, the Diocesan Office in St Asaph has bronze status and that too is one of the requirements of reaching bronze Level.

Environmental Policy

The Diocesan Environmental Policy, passed by the Diocesan Conference in October 2021, sets out several objectives under the guiding principle: live simply in order that others may simply live. The objectives are:

- Reduce carbon emissions from diocesan buildings and travel to net zero by 2030.
- Encourage and support churches and Mission Areas to work towards net zero by 2030.
- To be recognized by A Rocha UK as an Eco-Diocese at bronze level by the end of 2021, and subsequently at silver and gold levels.
- To encourage all members of the *Teulu Asaph* and those with whom we work in partnership to live sustainably with creation.
- To ensure that all financial investments are divested from climate damaging activities by the end of 2022.



- To make care for creation and climate change an integral part of the work of Diocesan Steering Groups, Diocesan Boards and all training programmes.

There are further details on how these objectives will be achieved in the policy.

Next Steps

We will be looking to implement the environmental policy and actively reduce carbon emissions. Plus, we will be encouraging even more churches to join Eco-Church. To gain Silver Diocesan Status, we need 20% of local churches to be registered, which we have reached but only 6% of our churches have achieved gold, silver or bronze Eco-Church status. We still have a long way to go.

This journey is not about promoting Eco-Church, for the sake of promoting Eco-Church. It is about embedding environmentally responsible practice and behavior into everything we do. We need to ensure that caring for God's creation underpins our faith and informs our way of living.

If your church has registered but hasn't achieved an award yet, I would encourage you to complete the questionnaire. You will be amazed how much you already do to care for God's creation and how simple changes to worship, activities and life can make a big difference to you Eco-Church status. Have a look at the Eco-Church section of the website for more information and inspiration. Plus, we'll be announcing Archdeaconry Eco-Ambassadors in the new year who will support churches to complete the questionnaire and achieve an Eco-Church award.

For more information and a full version of the Diocesan Environmental Policy, visit <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/>

