



## CHURCH OF ENGLAND

### SHRINKING THE FOOTPRINT

*The Church of England's National Environment Campaign, Shrinking the Footprint, will aim to include a number of key elements of the Sustainable Development Goals.*

The **Church of England**, along with all the **Anglican Communion**, is committed to the ending of all poverty and to ensuring that everyone can live life in all its fullness. It has supported the eight MDGs as important drivers for change and there is no doubt that they have been useful tools, with most countries having made meaningful progress towards the goals.

With the number of goals rising to seventeen there is the danger that while being impressively ambitious the SDGs fail to mobilize the constituencies necessary to achieve the transformative change. While the financing plans agreed in Addis Ababa in July are promising much still relies on the individual national sustainable development strategies and policies. The CofE's partners around the Anglican Communion repeatedly say that they hope the SDG targets will be challenging - but realistic.

As the CofE's Lambeth Declaration published this year highlighted the need - to work with our communities and partners in the UK and internationally to mitigate the effects of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable.

A message echoed our colleagues in the **Anglican Alliance**:

*We must state unequivocally that ending extreme poverty without mitigating climate change and combating inequality will be impossible. Climate change is already disproportionately hurting people living in poverty. Extreme inequality, within and between countries, contradicts our shared religious values, exacerbates social and political divisions, and will impede progress. What is needed is a new paradigm of socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth*

As the Alliance's call for action states:

*‘We believe that now is the time to end the scourge of extreme poverty—by restoring right relationships among people, affirming human dignity, and opening the door to the holistic development of all people. If we were more committed to living these common values there would be less poverty in the world.*

Our shared convictions call us to empower and uplift— not denigrate—those living in poverty, so that they can become agents of their own transformation. We must abandon a politics that too often marginalizes their voices, blames them for their condition, and exacerbates extremes of inequality. Now is the time to turn fatigue into renewed commitment, indifference into compassion, cynicism into hope, and impotence into a greater sense of agency that we can and will end extreme poverty by 2030.

We commit to working together to end the scandal of extreme poverty. We will act, advocate, educate, and collaborate, both among ourselves and with broader initiatives. And we commit to holding all levels of leadership accountable—public and private, domestic and international.’

Earlier this year 17 Bishops from around the Anglican Communion, including Bishop of Salisbury, the CoFE’s lead bishop for the environment, met under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Cape Town, chair of the **Anglican Communion’s Environment Network** to discuss and share how climate change was affecting their provinces and the need for the Church to take action. The meeting ended with a declaration which included:

*At this time of unprecedented climate crisis, we call all our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion to join us in prayer and in pastoral, priestly and prophetic action. We call with humility, but with urgent determination enlivened by our faith in God who is Creator and Redeemer and by the pain of our people’s experience in our dioceses and provinces, and their need for seeds of hope.*

*In different ways each of our own dioceses are deeply impacted by climate injustice and environmental degradation. We accept the evidence of science concerning the contribution of human activity to the climate crisis and the disproportionate role played by fossil-fuel based economies. Although climate scientists have for many years warned of the consequences of inaction there is an alarming lack of global agreement about the way forward. We believe that the problem is spiritual as well as economic, scientific and political, because the roadblock to effective action relates to basic existential issues of how human life is framed and valued: including the competing moral claims of present and future generations, human versus non-human interests, and how the lifestyle of wealthy countries is to be balanced against the basic*

*needs of the developing world. For this reason the Church must urgently find its collective moral voice.*

The bishops agreed the need to develop eco-theological material for their clergy and congregations. They also called for strategic proposals for:

- global and local action to strengthen ecumenical and interfaith partnerships;
- develop and distribute educational resources for everyone and all groups on climate change, climate justice and the ethical and practical principals of sustainable living in global and local contexts;
- programmes of theological information for ordinands and in service information for ordained clergy to include in-depth components of eco-justice and ecotheology;
- and called for Anglican educational establishments to integrate issues of environmental sustainability and ethics into their curricula and community life and by teaching a theological approach to climate justice.

The Bishops' declaration is very much aligned to The SDG 16 promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The **Church of England** takes environmental issues very seriously. Its **General Synod** in July 2015 spent a whole day in prayer, discussion and debate putting environmental concerns at the top of the Church's agenda.

The Synod gave its backing to the development of initiatives within the Church at all levels to ensure that it continues to put its own house in order and to encourage others to do likewise. It passed two motions urging governments to agree long-term pathways to a low carbon future and ending fossil-fuel subsidies, requested the development of new 'eco-theological resources' and encouraging parishes and dioceses to pray and fast for climate change on the first day of every month. The second motion urged the national investment bodies to 'engage with companies and policy-makers on the need to act to support the transition to a low-carbon economy.'

The CofE's *Shrinking the Footprint* campaign is a national programme designed to enable the whole Church to address – in faith, practice and mission – the issue of climate change and the developmental, ecological, social and cultural issues that climate change threatens. It involves initiatives and partnerships developing at a national level and working locally and regionally to support individuals, parishes and dioceses. The

campaign will continue to encourage all dioceses and parishes to reduce their energy consumption by a measurable amount.

*Shrinking the Footprint* is committed to its stated aims to reduce the CofE's energy use throughout its churches, church buildings, offices, clergy homes and schools. It will also encourage the use of energy produced from renewable sources with a target in line with that of the UK Government to reduce its carbon footprint by 80% by 2050. Thus fulfilling the requirements of SDG 13. It has already been a leader in establishing a national Community Energy Coalition with a number of leading UK institutions and will continue to promote the concept and encourage the development of initiatives. The CofE will also seek to make its building stock sustainable through good management and the promotion of best practice.

The Church's 10,000 churchyards contain a wealth of biodiversity of national importance for which the Church recognises its responsibility for sustainable management. Further partnerships will be developed to monitor and record this biodiversity and extend the use of its own - and partners - land for mental and physical recreational treatment activities and community use.

It will seek to increase its educational responsibilities at all levels – by extending the scope of its clergy training both for new clergy and those in service involving environmental ethics and eco-theology. Funding will be sought to better engage 5200 schools and to encourage further Eco-School accreditation and extend environmental awareness and understanding throughout congregations, Sunday schools and youth groups.

Alongside mitigation work the *Shrinking the Footprint* campaign also addresses adaptation to a changing world climate through its numerous associations with partners involving environmental, heritage, interfaith and political interests.

All dioceses will be encouraged to undertake Environmental Engagement Programmes aimed at encouraging parish action involving biodiversity, food, green purchasing, energy, transport, mission and liturgy.

Further development of websites and publications will encourage greater awareness of local, national and international issues.

*Shrinking the Footprint* will work with **Mission** colleagues in developing twinning of parishes and dioceses to encourage increased awareness and sharing knowledge and understanding of SDG issues.

Much of the programme outlined above will rely on **additional funding** being raised by the *Shrinking the Footprint* team working for an already fully committed Church providing a presence in every community with considerable and often growing demands. In particular funding will need to be raised for a variety of educational initiatives – including those called for by the Bishops of the AC’s Bishops Environmental Network - for clergy and schools and for essential training for StF’s local representatives - the **Diocesan Environmental Officers** – to ensure that there is a professionally trained environmental expert able to cope with the many environmental issues in every CofE diocese

**CofE Bishops** have a unique role with their membership of the House of Lords actively involved within the UK Parliamentary system in committees and debates influencing Governmental policy and legislation. The growth in membership of the Bishops Environment Group will be maintained with information and support.

Three Bishops are members of the newly formed national **Environmental Working Group** chaired by the lead Bishop on the environment who has embraced his role as an advocate and figurehead for action.

The CofE’s **Church Commissioners** have made a major commitment to monitor and review its investments in line with its recently revised and widely welcomed climate change policy. Changes have already been made to its portfolios whilst it also maintains an active engagement strategy using stakeholder resolutions to hold companies to account and improve transparency. Together with like minded investors the Commissioners can influence the way fossil fuel companies conduct themselves. Furthermore they can supply equity capital to companies specialising in the transition to a low carbon economy.

The need to co-operate with others has a special relevance to the Commissioners as their size and reserves allow them opportunities for partnerships that may not be available to others.

This year the Commissioners have adopted an updated policy on climate change drawn up by the **Ethical Investment Advisory Group**. As a result they have a divestment policy targeted on specific segments of the fossil fuel industry and companies that derive more than 10% of their revenues from the extraction of oil sands or thermal coal resulting in the sale of shares in 13 oil and mining companies. The Commissioners are engaging with the companies, making contact with senior management and ask questions at Annual General Meetings This step by step by step action will be increased.

The Commissioners have made significant low carbon investments including a large forestry portfolio, green office buildings and environmental investment funds which combined significantly exceed the value of investments in fossil fuel extraction. It has also, with others, made a major investment to buy and revive a national bank to be run on ethical format. In addition its multi-asset strategies and private credit portfolio invests with managers operating all over the world who supply finance to companies in situations that are too complex to be of interests to the banks.

Amongst possible future investments would be a commitment to funding and nurturing a wide range of companies specialising in the developing of clean energy in line with the proposals of the Apollo Programme.

This fulfils many of the issues in Goal 9 – regarding resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

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