

## Overview

### Biblical references

#### Job 12:7–10 (NIV)

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.'

### Introduction

We worship a God who loves the Earth he created and calls us to care for it. While it's important to take action together as a church, we also have an individual responsibility to take action in our daily lives so that we tread lightly on the Earth, and use our voices to speak up for nature. This category is about our churches encouraging people to act as individuals and households – integrating creation care into daily lives out of integrity, as an act of worship and obedience to God and as we grow in discipleship.

Within this category, we encourage the church to play a role in educating and influencing individual church members, and wider communities, about the actions they can take and the influence they have. Andy Atkins, Chief Executive of A Rocha UK and a lifelong campaigner, challenges us to consider our understanding of the concept of lifestyle:

*It's time we revised the narrow definition of 'lifestyle'. Our purchasing habits, dress, diet and travel decisions are not the only means God gives us to act for his creation. Using our time and 'voice' to campaign is also a behaviour, a choice about the shape and content of our daily lives; and the combination of the two is much more powerful than either on their own.*

### Terminology

For consistency, the survey uses two main ways to refer to concern and care for the Earth. Reference to 'creation' and 'creation care' points to our interdependence on, and responsibility for, our God-given common home. Reference to the climate and nature crises signifies our recognition that urgent action is required. In addition, the term 'environmental issues' is used to refer to the wide spectrum of problems we face locally and globally.

## Commitment and link to Environmental Policy

At the outset of every category the Eco Church survey asks your church to demonstrate a commitment. The first question of the Lifestyle category states: *'Our church has a strategy or plan to promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households.'*

A vision or mission statement can be a great place to acknowledge our role as Christians to care for and protect the Earth. You may choose to create a statement such as this one to demonstrate your commitment and from which to make a plan.

*'We recognise that we can have an impact on the world through the choices available to us and our use of money and resources. We will strive to support our church family and wider community in bringing about positive change and care for God's Earth. We will seek to encourage our church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice.'*

This statement could be included in your Environmental Policy or on your website. An Environmental Policy is an excellent way for your church to present your recognition and outline the commitments you are making.

See **our corresponding information sheet** on Creating an Environmental Policy and Net Zero Action plan, and **editable example policies** that you can adapt for your church. You can find these documents in the [Buildings and Energy category](#).

## Themes in Lifestyle

The Lifestyle category encompasses the following themes:

### Theme 1: Influence

- Sharing of information
- Engagement in campaigning

### Theme 2: Carbon footprint

- Personal carbon footprint
- Energy use

### Theme 3: Personal choices

- Food
- Transport
- Finance
- Consumption of goods and services
- Waste

### Theme 4: Nature

- Appreciation and experience of nature
- Care and protection of nature

## Additional comments

At the end of each survey category is an opportunity for you to add additional comments. Please make use of this space to expand on any of your answers, including where you have ticked 'other', and anything else related to this survey category.

## What is a carbon footprint?

The calculation of the carbon emissions you produce, as a church or individual, is known as your carbon 'footprint'. A carbon footprint not only takes into consideration the energy used to heat and light your home, but includes travel and where we invest our money, whether we have a few pounds or many. It is helpful to understand your carbon footprint in order to make reductions in your carbon emissions. There are a number of free carbon footprint calculators available for individuals and households such as the [WWW Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) and [Climate Stewards 360° carbon tool](#). This will form an important baseline measure, the first time you complete it. By calculating your carbon footprint each year you can make comparisons and see progress on your carbon reduction.

## Resources and information

You can access all [Eco Church resources](#) via our website, as well as resources relating specifically to the [Lifestyle category](#).

### Food

[Green Christian LOAF resources](#)

### Creation care survey

The [Creation Care](#) scheme is a bit like Eco Church for households. Use the online survey to consider seven areas of your lifestyle and work toward awards. The scheme provides ideas for next steps, and recognises where progress is made.

### Ethical finance

[Just Money Movement](#)

[Green Christian's How Green is your Money resources](#)

### Appreciation, experience and protection of nature

[RHS Create a wildlife friendly garden](#)

[Wildlife Trusts How to start a wildlife garden](#)

[National Trust How to make your garden a haven for wildlife](#)

[RSPB Planning a wildlife garden design](#)

[Vegetable growing example from Wild Christian Community member](#)

[Wild About Gardens](#)

[Roots and All](#)