



**St John the Baptist Church, Grove
OX12 7LQ**

Environment Group Report 2026

In our Grove Parish Church Vision Prayer, we ask God to help us share His hope for our hurting world and His love for all creation.

The Environment Group met together in October 2025 to discuss how to prioritise and bring together all the environment related initiatives in our church. We previously had long discussions about how our environmental mission fits in with our overall church mission, especially after considering the financial costs that will be incurred to reach Net Zero (to alleviate Climate Change). Although we had wanted to replace our existing gas boiler with more energy efficient alternative technologies, as reported last year, the costs required to upgrade the electricity supply infrastructure has resulted in us now having a more efficient gas boiler for the church. We are still hopeful of using different technology to replace the St Johns Rooms gas boiler.

Our discussions highlighted a relatively new initiative by A Rocha UK; the Eco Church framework and survey is celebrating its 10th anniversary. A Rocha UK's Eco Church programme (<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>) equips churches in England and Wales to care for creation. Eco Church is a learning community of churches of all shapes and sizes open to all denominations. It provides a framework to support churches and church leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth, through the Eco Church survey.

The survey covers five key areas of church life:

- Worship and teaching
- Buildings and energy
- Land and nature
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle



The survey guides churches through an assessment process that progresses towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold Eco Church award.

Our church already undertakes many of the requirements for a Bronze award. But to progress we will all, as individuals, need to commit to taking the environment seriously if we sign up to the initiative. As a church, we have already started to explore our Christian role in looking after the environment through a Lent course this year and in the new newsletter, *The Messenger*. As Martin Hodson explained in the April 2026 issue: *Psalm 24 begins: "The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it." All life on this Earth belongs to God – he has created it and loves everything that he has made. This means as Christians that we should care for God's creation as part of our Christian faith. It is not an extra, that we might do if we have time, but something at the heart of what it means to be a Christian.*

Chris Franklin - Environment Group