

Eco Group Report

HBC is signed up to the Eco Church Award scheme and, having achieved the bronze level award in 2022, church members have agreed that we should work towards the silver. Based on biblical principles of loving God and our neighbour, this scheme helps churches to understand how they fit into the present environmental crisis and what they can do to actively make an impact on averting the more serious consequences of climate change at both collective and individual levels. The role of the Eco Group is to facilitate this.

Following on from the village wide Eco Fest last June, in which HBC worked with a range of local community groups, in September church members produced a wide variety of home made creative items on the theme 'in praise of God the creator' for display as part of our Harvest Festival celebrations. Other new initiatives over the past year include monthly 'eco prayers' in the news sheet, having the church agree to switch to a 100% renewable electricity supplier, and leading the monthly prayer meeting in February. We are encouraged that the intercessory prayers in services have regularly included care for God's creation.

Having recently reviewed our current responses to the Eco Church survey questions we have already moved from bronze to silver level in the categories of Worship and Teaching (Chris is exploring the possibility of a sermon series later this year), Buildings, and Land. Having achieved this level there needs to be regular ongoing activity to sustain the progress we have achieved to date.

The remaining two areas are Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. Over the coming year the group will be encouraging members of the fellowship to look at the stewardship of what God has given to us, offering a range of suggestions for actions that we might take to make better use of our resources to mitigate the impact of climate change. The BMS Engage Magazine frequently has stories of how changes to the environment due to over consumption and abuse impact significantly more on poorer nations and peoples.

We would like to thank Caroline Manser, who recently stood down having led the group to achieve the bronze award. Going forward I have taken on the role of group leader and Jim Bryant will be acting as deputy. Please do come and talk to us if you have any questions or suggestions. We have a WhatsApp group for those interested in engaging more and an email address ecochurch.group@histonbaptist.org.uk to contact us.

Tony Russell