Eastern Baptist Association – Sustainability Policy

For the purpose of this policy when Eastern Baptist Association (EBA) is mentioned this is referring to the organisation, regional ministers and the members of staff that serve the Association. Whilst we encourage each EBA member churches / communities to consider what sustainability and creation care looks like in their own context, the policy objectives outlined in the policy are related to the EBA organisation, regional ministers and staff.

Introduction

This policy seeks to identify principles to assist the EBA in translating into action its affirmation that mission includes 'caring for the earth' in the life of the Association at regional and local level.

Such a policy statement should relate to all relevant areas of the Association's life.
This policy endeavours to:

- Help explain why climate action by the EBA is important
- Explain a commitment by the EBA to act responsibly on matters of environmental concern
- Identify ways in which this commitment can be translated into action
- Identify ways in which progress can be measured and continually evaluated

Net Zero

An important part of this policy is via the actions outlined below, is to set a target of the EBA achieving Net Zero by 2033, as advocated by many environmental organisations, and the UN who state that achieving Net Zero is crucial for limiting global temperature rises.

Eco-Association

The Policy will also contribute to the EBA becoming an accredited Eco-Association through environmental charity A Rocha. The EBA will aim to achieve this as soon as the award scheme is launched, and to achieve the Bronze Eco Award within one year of the scheme beginning, Silver two years, and Gold four years.

Caring for the Earth

- The EBA affirms that Christian mission includes caring for God's earth and will endeavour to develop both the theology and practical implications of this on a continuing basis.
- The Biblical creation stories give human beings privilege and responsibility in relation to the earth and every living creature. We are called to be in covenant partnership with others and the with the rest of creation and co-partners with God, sharing in God's ongoing creative and renewing mission to the whole of creation. God's way, revealed in the Bible and particularly in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, is a generous sharing of the divine love to serve the needs of God's creation until it reaches its fulfilment.
- Christian mission includes sharing in putting right the relationships within God's creation that have gone wrong, and growing towards the balance and good stewardship envisaged in the Biblical vision of the world as it is meant to be.

- The EBA is challenged and encouraged to care for the earth by following sustainable practice and taking into account global and local environmental considerations for present and future generations, particularly:
    - in the conservation and use of resources in the Association and at home
    - in helping to develop more sustainable lifestyles and practices
    - in concerns for action on global environmental issues

Policy Areas

This Policy seeks to address 5 main areas that the EBA impacts through its mission and ministry. These are:

- Finance
- Home Office
- Buildings
- Transport
- Events

FINANCE

It is widely recognised that ethical use of finance is one of the most impactful things that an organisation can do to reduce their environmental impact.

The EBA therefore commits to:

- Only invest in financial institutions and use financial service providers that promote ethical standards of banking, and to annually review whether the banks and other relevant institutions are continuing to meet their aims.
- Use ethical insurance providers for all organisational insurance.
- As much as is practicable, to buy products from companies that have ethical credentials and
- Prioritise repaired or recycled items over buying new products where possible, and to ensure older products are responsibly disposed of.

As part of the EBA's ongoing mission and ministry, the EBA commit to:

- Support and promote the work of groups campaigning for environmental and economic justice, such as Operation Noah and A Rocha.
- Advocate for disinvestment from banks and pension funds which fund the climate crisis through investment in fossil fuels, animal testing, the arms trade, and human rights abuses.
- Becoming a Fairtrade Registered organisation.

In relation to the purchasing of items, the EBA will:

- Seek to purchase from
    - small, local businesses where possible
    - companies that support Fairtrade

    - Suppliers that do not use hazardous chemicals that would cause water or air pollution
- Look for suppliers who demonstrate transparent and ambitious plans to reduce their carbon emissions
- Always prefer products that can be reused, recycled and repaired
- Choose products that
    - are made from recycled materials
    - avoid excess plastic packaging

Please see Appendix 1: for an Ethical Consumer Score Table, of Ethical Banks vs Non ethical

HOME OFFICE

With all the EBA regional ministers and staff team working from home, we recognise the importance of leading by example in the way we operate, including with our working from home practices. Making this work well for our team will enable them to more confidently advocate for good environmental practice for others.

The EBA therefore commits to:

- Look for energy star rated appliances which reduce energy or turn themselves off when not in use.
- Use email instead of printed communication where possible
- Use recycled paper, double-sided printing, eco option on printers, and to consider vegetable-based inks
- Use video conferencing systems for meetings to reduce travel associated with onsite meetings, where appropriate.
- When sourcing new equipment or other items we will seek to do so from ethical and sustainable sources.
- Keep the waste hierarchy in mind when making decisions and prefer repairing existing goods or purchasing recycled products over buying new and will encourage this model as widely as possible to those in the church and the community.
- Encouraging the use of more environmentally sustainable service providers, including
    - Ecosia as a default search engine
    - Fairphone for new mobile phone contracts

Please see Appendix 2 for the Prevent-Reduce-Reuse Triangle as a pictorial form of what the EBA should be aiming for in its practices when working from home.

BUILDINGS

The EBA is responsible for a small number of buildings in terms of Manse dwellings. The EBA will be responsible for ensuring that the manse buildings they own are actively

becoming more sustainable and environmentally friendly, and for encouraging those that in live in the manses to be part of this work.

The EBA therefore commits to:

- Using a carbon footprint calculator for each property to establish where savings can be made.
- Undertaking an annual assessment of each property to ensure they are well maintained, including the checking of taps and pipes for leaks, and ensuring that any necessary works are noted and actioned accordingly.
- Paying for regular boiler maintenance to ensure boilers are well cared for and running as efficiently as possible.
- Consider second-hand or energy-efficient appliances when electrical goods need to be replaced.
- Consider environmental improvements that can be made to each property, including:
    - Solar panels
    - Improved insulation
    - Draught proofing
    - Window glazing
    - Electric car charging provision
    - Heat Pumps
    - Motion sensor lighting and taps
    - Water Butts

The EBA will encourage those living in each property to:

Energy

- Switch to a green energy provider
- Switch to LED bulbs for lighting

Water usage and capture

- Fill the dishwasher each time it is used
- Use 30c wash cycles on washing machines where possible, and to consider the use of eco-friendly washing products as an alternative to detergents
- Consider Toilet Twinning for bathrooms.

Recycling

- Use recycling facilities in accordance with local recycling schemes and recycle all possible products.
- As far as possible ensure that food waste is used for compost or disposed of via council food waste recycling schemes.

Cleaning materials

- Have consideration for cleaning materials brought and used, ensuring that cleaning materials are from eco-friendly companies that are not causing further pollution through harmful chemicals which could affect marine life, or excess plastic.
- Consider the use of refills of cleaning materials to prevent further plastic waste.

Gardens

- Understand the responsibility of looking after the land, however big or small, that comes with the property provision, seeking to do what they can to ensure their gardens are maintained with ecology and community food security in mind.
- Consider caring for gardens in a way that is hospitable to birds, wildlife, and insects, as well as the people who use the space, encouraging biodiversity where possible.
- Refrain from using any harmful chemicals such as herbicides or pesticides on the land but rather seeking ecofriendly alternatives.
- Use collected rainwater to water plants.

TRANSPORT

The carbon produced by cars used individually for travel, and plane trips, far outweigh the carbon expenditure from trains and other forms of public transport.

In working to reduce our carbon expenditure through sustainable transport usage, the EBA will:

- Ensure consideration is given to how regional ministers and staff travel to carry out their duties, including discussing travel arrangements as part of their regular line-management meetings.
- Use trains and other forms of public transport in preference to individual cars.
- Consider car-sharing alternatives where public transport is not possible due to lack of availability, time restraints, or cost.
- Encourage all regional ministers and staff to consider their CO2 emissions for journeys taken, and to consider working towards lower emission alternatives.
- Explore the possible use of offsetting initiatives.
- Consider event venues that cater for sustainable transport, e.g. have electric charging points, easily accessible by public transport, secure bike racks.

Please see Appendix 3 for a chart detailing C02 per mile for different forms of transport.

EVENTS

Events can showcase the EBA's sustainability values through decisions such as the choice of venues easily accessible by public transport, the provision of ethically sourced refreshments, and the effective processing of waste created by the event. The EBA should demonstrate best sustainability practice and use events to raise awareness and as an opportunity to highlight environmental messages wherever possible.

Where possible the EBA meets online, but we recognise the many benefits of gathering onsite together, especially for the building of relationships and support networks.

In the planning of events the EBA will:

- Prioritise venues with good sustainability principles, including Eco Church award holders, and other venues with good environmental credentials.
- Prioritise venues that are accessible by public transport.

- Encourage the use of car-sharing to and from EBA events.
- Commit to giving time to environmental issues through the teaching or workshop content planned for events.
- Ask stallholders and caterers attending the event to consider their sustainability credentials and showcase them accordingly.
- Consider the rooms used at venues, including considering how to reduce heat loss in the winter, and using cooler downstairs rooms in warmer months to reduce air conditioning usage.

Regarding the provision of refreshments, the EBA commits to:

- Using LOAF (local, organise, animal friendly, fairtrade) for any goods that need to be purchased.
- Ensure that at all mealtimes there are good vegetarian and vegan options available.
- Offer non-dairy milk options for tea and coffee breaks etc.

In working to reduce the environmental impact events, the EBA will endeavour to:

Reduce disposables

- Ensure leaflets and other publicity items are made from recycled paper, or easily compostable materials.
- Consider living plants instead of cut flowers for gifts or displays.
- Consider asking people to bring their own mugs or cups where appropriate.
- Use serviettes that are made from recycled paper, use bare tables that can be wiped with eco cleaning spray, rather than tablecloths leading to more laundry.
- Use crockery and cutlery instead of disposable alternatives, or wooden disposables if necessary.
- Use Beeswax wraps instead of cling film for covering food, and recyclable containers for storage of food.

Reduce waste materials

- Bulk-buy items that will be used regularly to reduce amount of packaging if bought individually.
- Offer any excess coffee grounds for people to take for their gardens.
- Consider offering leftover food to other groups or events that might use it or advertising it via apps such Olio.
- Ensure food waste is composted either onsite or by local council schemes
- Recycle as much as possible, having designated bins with clear instructions as to what can go in them.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Ethical Banking Table

Ethical Consumer Score Table 2024

Best buys:

- Triodos remains our current account Best Buy. Its score has dropped slightly since last time, but its transparency and positive investment strategy remain market leading. Triodos charges a £3 monthly fee for maintaining its current account.

Recommended buys:

- Nationwide and Cumberland Building Societies and the Co-operative Bank (including its Smile brand) score highly and have no monthly charges.
- Nationwide and the Co-operative Bank also offer credit cards, which will be important for some.

Companies to avoid:

- HSBC, Barclays and JPMorgan are massive financiers of fossil fuels and have been linked to multiple human rights abuses. We'd recommend avoiding their brands: Barclays, Chase, HSBC and First Direct.
- Lloyds Banking Group (Lloyds, Halifax, Bank of Scotland), NatWest Group (NatWest, RBS, Coutts, Ulster Bank) and Santander (Santander, Cater Allen) have also been criticised for multiple unethical investments.

For more information visit: https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/money-fi

APPENDIX 2: Waste Hierarchy Diagram

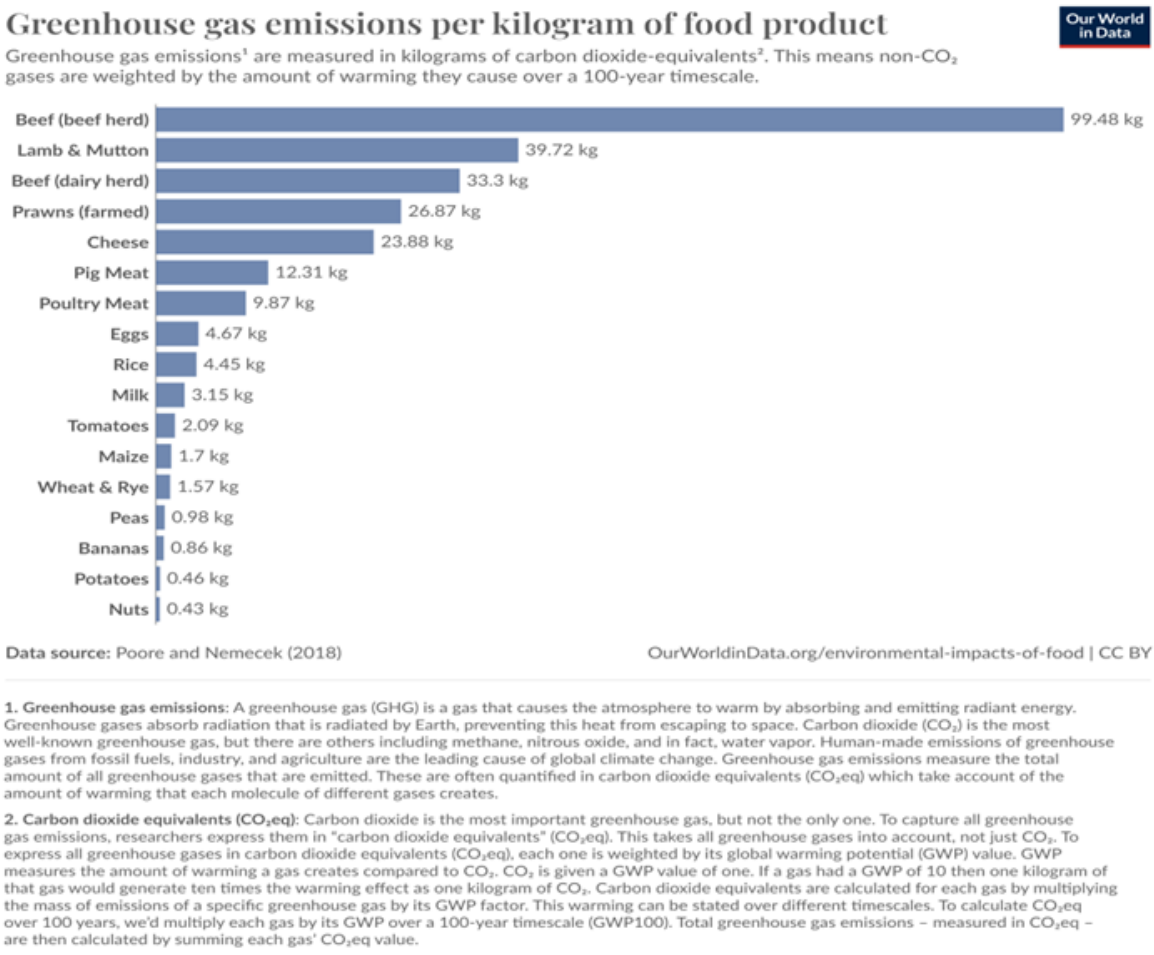
APPENDIX 3: Modes of Transport and CO2 per mile

Mode of transport and CO2e per mile	
Mode of transport	**CO2e per mile**
Full 90-seater electric bus	6 g
Half-full London Routemaster (diesel hybrid)	46 g
Rural double decker with just you and the driver	2.5 kg
Conventional bike	40 g – powered by bananas 70 g – powered by cereal with cow's milk 190 g – powered by bacon 310 g – powered by cheeseburgers (about the same emissions as driving)
Fully electric bike (with 50 g added for embodied carbon)	53 g – 12 mph no hills or stops 55 g – 12 mph with hills and stops
Underground tube train	68 g
Light rail or tram	72 g
Intercity train	80 g – second class 160 g – first class
Mid-size, 5-door electric car	180 g
Smart car doing a steady 60 mph	290 g
Average UK car doing 36 miles to the gallon	530 g
Range Rover Sport doing 90 mph	1.26 kg
Flying from London to Hong Kong return	3.5 tonnes – economy 4.5 tonnes – premium economy

	10 tonnes – business class (twice a whole year's 5-tonne personal budget) 13.9 tonnes – first class

Figures are from the Book *How Bad are Bananas?* By Mike Berners-Lee

APPENDIX 4: Our World in Data, details the amount of CO2 gases per kg of food produced



1. Greenhouse gas emissions: A greenhouse gas (GHG) is a gas that causes the atmosphere to warm by absorbing and emitting radiant energy. Greenhouse gases absorb radiation that is radiated by Earth, preventing this heat from escaping to space. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the most well-known greenhouse gas, but there are others including methane, nitrous oxide, and in fact, water vapor. Human-made emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, industry, and agriculture are the leading cause of global climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions measure the total amount of all greenhouse gases that are emitted. These are often quantified in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2eq) which take account of the amount of warming that each molecule of different gases creates.

2. Carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2eq): Carbon dioxide is the most important greenhouse gas, but not the only one. To capture all greenhouse gas emissions, researchers express them in "carbon dioxide equivalents" (CO_2eq). This takes all greenhouse gases into account, not just CO_2. To express all greenhouse gases in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2eq), each one is weighted by its global warming potential (GWP) value. GWP measures the amount of warming a gas creates compared to CO_2. CO_2 is given a GWP value of one. If a gas had a GWP of 10 then one kilogram of that gas would generate ten times the warming effect as one kilogram of CO_2. Carbon dioxide equivalents are calculated for each gas by multiplying the mass of emissions of a specific greenhouse gas by its GWP factor. This warming can be stated over different timescales. To calculate CO_2eq over 100 years, we'd multiply each gas by its GWP over a 100-year timescale (GWP100). Total greenhouse gas emissions – measured in CO_2eq – are then calculated by summing each gas' CO_2eq value.

APPENDIX 5: The Burden of Plastic Waste

Why reduce waste and disposables? The Burden of Plastic Pollution

Each day, the equivalent of 2,000 rubbish trucks of plastic are dumped into the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes, according to the UN. Plastic is in every corner of the planet, even the deepest part

of the sea.

Plastic is produced from fossil fuels, meaning it has a high carbon footprint. It doesn't disintegrate over time, instead just breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces, known as microplastics. Microplastics have entered all our ecosystems, posing a threat to the animals that live there. They release toxins and are consumed by fish and other sea creatures, which can harm their organs and ability to reproduce.

Plastic could also be affecting human health. In 2019, environmental group WWF found that the average person could be ingesting the equivalent of a credit card of plastic every week.

Plastics can contain multiple toxic chemicals, such as PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). PFAS have been linked to a plethora of health impacts from lower fertility to cancer and developmental delays in children, and are also known as 'forever chemicals' because they break down so slowly. In January 2024, a study which tested the blood of politicians across Europe found that they all contained seven PFAS, with five of the politicians carrying levels higher than the current threshold for health concerns.

Areas of life where plastic is commonly used:
* Packaging: in the UK, plastic packaging accounts for nearly 70% of our plastic waste, according to the charity Wrap. Plastic covers everything from our fruit and vegetables to our new TV. Takeaway containers for food and hot drinks like coffee cups are also usually made of plastic
* Clothing: as much as 64% of new fabrics are made of plastics. Look for plastic materials like acrylic and polyester on the label, or sometimes the word synthetic e.g. 'synthetic fur'
* Cosmetics: lots of health and beauty products contain microplastics and liquid polymers (as well as using plastic packaging). Plastic microbeads have been banned in the UK for 'rinse-off' products like shampoo and soap, but not for products which you leave on your hair or skin like make-up or moisturiser. Sun protection, nail polishes and all kinds of hair styling products use a plethora of liquid plastics. And some wet wipes may also still contain plastic.
* Technology and household appliances rely on plastic.

What We Know about Health Effects
Current peer-reviewed scientific studies have shown that exposure to certain levels of PFAS may lead to:
* Reproductive effects such as decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women.
* Developmental effects or delays in children, including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes.
* Increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers.
* Reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections, including reduced vaccine response.
* Interference with the body's natural hormones.
* Increased cholesterol levels and/or risk of obesity.

For more information see: https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/food-drink/plastics-problems-solutions and https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas