



Overview of Eco Church activities February 2020

Romsey Methodist Church (RMC) registered for Eco Church on February 17, 2016, shortly after the inception of the scheme. This was with the express agreement of the Church Council, the trustees of the church, hence the positive response to Q10 in *Worship and Teaching*. Our position in regard to the survey was greatly enhanced by the church's Renewal project. This led to the transformation of the sanctuary into a welcoming, flexible, outward-facing space. The Renewal project spanned not just the infrastructure, but also the life and spirituality of the "community for Christ". As a result we were able to make application for a Bronze award in May 2016. This was presented to the church by Ruth Valerio later in the year.

The subsequent Phase 2 of the Renewal project brought further modernisation, this time to the halls at the rear of the building. As a result, application was made for a Silver award, and this was presented by Andy Lester when he preached at RMC on November 26, 2017. Further activities and building modifications have taken place since then, and as a result we consider that we have a sound case for a Gold award. The survey on which this is based is entitled 'October 2019 post Eco Church meeting'. This document provides a synopsis of the evidence of our self-assessment.

Throughout this time, there was been a strong Eco group in the church, currently involving 10 people. Three of these are members of the Church's leadership team. We also have an allocated representative on the Church Council, recognising that this is a core feature of the work of God in our church. Our aims and activities are all carried out in liaison with the Church Council, and reports made to the Annual Church Meeting.

The following provides background and evidence relating to each of the survey themes.

Worship and Teaching (score 98/100, Gold)

In a 4-week month, our typical pattern is to have an early communion (9.15) on two Sundays and worship in the church (10.30) on three, one of which will be intergenerational throughout, rather than just at the beginning. In the fourth week, the church is given over to the children for *Funday Sunday*, and the adult congregation accommodates this by moving to the hall. There is also *Worship on Wednesday* (WOW) and three house groups meet. There is no youth work at present, as indicated in Q6.

The church largely creates its own preaching plan within the oversight of the Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey (WER) Circuit. Typically our minister, Rev. Gareth Hill, will lead two of the four 10.30 services, and the other slots mostly taken by local preachers. Gareth and two of our local preachers are members of the Eco group. Generally prayers of intercession are led by other members of the congregation.

There are approximately 20,000 visits to the church annually, with 10% of these being to special events. Some of these, such as our *Curious Café* talks, have a strong element of teaching.

Some examples of services have been converted into blogs on <https://methobytes.org.uk> and include some with an explicit theme within creation care. This blog can also be accessed via the website of the Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit (<https://www.wermethodistcircuit.org.uk>), using the Resources tab. That also includes access to publications; these include a liturgy for one of the *Green Communion*s that we have utilised.

The structure of the Worship and Teaching in our church readily allows for very regular incorporation of elements on the theme of creation care in hymns/songs (Q2), prayer (Q3), and preaching (Q4). We have held Green Communion in 2017, 2018 and 2019 (Q2). There is regular study of creation care in small groups, with *Tenants of the King* (Operation Noah) and Ruth Valerio's handbooks being well received. Churches Together in Romsey (CTiR) have adopted *Saying Yes to Life* (Ruth Valerio) for the ecumenical Lent studies in 2020 (Q8).

We have regularly hosted speakers associated with Christian environmental organisations for talks in services and at other events. These include Ruth Valerio (A Rocha UK) in 2016, Steve Hucklesby (JPIT, 2017), Andy Lester (A Rocha UK, 2017), Caroline Pomeroy (Climate Stewards, 2018) and Dave Bookless (A Rocha International, 2019)(Q5).

We do incorporate creation care in Special Sundays in different ways. For Rogation Sunday, Eco group members of our church organise the CTiR Prayer Walk around the bounds of Romsey which links up to the Rogation service at Romsey Abbey in the evening. We also emphasise this theme in Harvest and also hold a Green Communion annually (Q1).

All of our weekly notice sheets include *Eco Tips*, the topic of which are changed monthly (Q9).

Buildings (339/450, Gold) and Land (Not submitted)

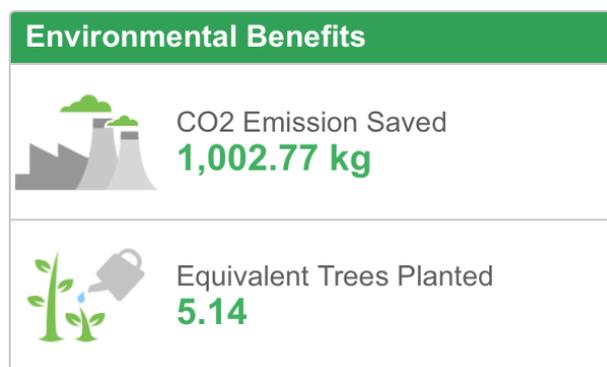
Within these themes we have only submitted surveys for our church Buildings. The site lies in the conservation area of the town, but the buildings are not listed. For this purpose our Buildings are also restricted to the church since the manse is managed by the WER Circuit; that is being assessed under *Eco Circuit*. Our land only comprises footpath access and a small space between the front wall of the church and the street. Nevertheless, enhancement works were carried out to the peripheral paving in 2019 assisted by a community grant from Test Valley Borough Council. As well as improving the appearance, this provided a small hard-surfaced area available for children's work, and three accessible bicycle stands near the footpath (Q30).

Romsey Methodist Church was built in 1881, and the bulk of the building dates back to then. For the centenary, an extension was added to the rear which now houses the main kitchen, office and a small hall. This has provided the basis upon which the Renewal project was founded. This project used the services of a specialist church architectural company, *Stone Ecclesiastical*, who follow BREEAM guidelines (Q29).

Throughout the Renewal program we have endeavoured to track our energy consumption (Q1,2) and refine plans to improve efficiency (Q2). An important feature of the change to the church space was the removal of pews with their associated large-bore electrical heaters. These have been replaced by a gas-fired water heating system linked to wall radiators. That has changed the concept of heating from an inefficient local heating (of shins) to an efficient (A-rated, Q6), lower carbon-intensity space heating (in 2015). The effect of this was an increase in energy consumption, but the change to gas reduced the carbon footprint. The increase in consumption was less than the increase in use of the building. The increase is a combination of new church activities (e. g. Friday Coffee Stop), increased attendance and increased community use (e. g. Romsey Choral Society and Achoiring Voices). The church also rescued a play group (Tiddlywinks) from closure, and the numbers attending that have doubled. Tracking continued through phase 2 of the Renewal of the building in 2016-2017, which afforded a new kitchen, and modernised the gas fired heating in the hall. The energy balance of the site in approximately its present configuration is shown in the table.

<i>Utility energy use (kWh)</i>				
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Gas</i>	<i>Electricity</i>	<i>Solar energy generation</i>
2017	69375	60578	8797	0
2018	60726	52433	8293	0
2019	61132	54112	7020	3700

The carbon footprint, based upon the current Climate Stewards calculator, was 15.5 tonnes in 2017. In 2018, we obtained an Energy Performance Certificate rating of B ([Appendix 1](#)). Since then in February 2019, we installed 14 solar panels on a south facing sloping roof and thus now generate a modest amount of energy; this system includes a diverter providing the first-option for heating the water tank (Q6). The electricity that we use now is either generated photovoltaically (Q32,33) or purchased on a 100% renewable tariff (Q4 rather than Q5). We estimate the net carbon footprint in 2019 to be 10 tonnes. This can be represented in terms of 8.4 kg per hour of use, or 200 g per person-hour; the gas supply (11 tonnes CO₂e) is offset annually with Climate Stewards (Q3). The savings in terms of CO₂e in the first 12 months of operation of the PV panels was one metric ton (Figure).



The main church has insulation to the ceiling (Q7) and full secondary glazing (Q11). The lighting in the church was installed in 2015 and is a mixture of low-energy and LED sources (Q15). Our policy with regard to exterior lighting is not to fit floodlighting and to minimise the use of security lighting. To this end, new PIR-LED lights along the path to the side entrance were fitted in 2019 (Q19).

The church hall has a cavity wall in the section built in 1981, but all ceiling spaces are now well insulated (Q8). Two of the main windows in the hall are double-glazed, as is the new (2019) accessible-entry into a lobby (Q12). It is intended to extend this double-glazing in 2020 with the replacement of a rear door into the hall. The church hall space also has low-energy light sources (Q16) (fitted in 2016/17).

The church office is in the 1981 space (Q9) and is now partially double glazed with a new (2019) entrance door (Q13). Lighting was also fitted in 2016/17 and is all low-energy in type (Q17).

The water supply to the church is metered (Q20) and we have installed a water-butt collection along the path to the side entrance. This supply is used to water the planting along that path (Q21). Toilet systems are mostly available for disabled use, for which dual flush systems are inadmissible. However all cisterns include Sothern Water volume reduction packs (Q22), but we have not fitted any composting toilets (Q23).

Recycled toilet paper is used throughout (Q24), and we utilise environmentally-friendly cleaning products (Q25). Our crockery is ceramic and cold drinks use glass containers (Q26). Almost all church 'papers' are distributed electronically, and photocopying utilises double-sided (Q27). This uses recycled paper, even though there have been difficulties in finding such that is compatible with photocopiers (Q28). Recycling streams are provided both inside and via the local authority system outside (Q31).

Community and Global Engagement (174/230, Gold)

Posters relating to our main activities in Romsey are collected in [Appendix 2](#). These were enabled by the refurbishment of the church. In 2016 and 2018 we have held Wellbeing Fairs, which include aspects of Eco Church particularly as they relate to food and gardening. Our Green Fairs have been held in 2017 and 2019 (Q8). We also participate with Transition Town Romsey in their events in the town's location, the Crosfield Hall (Q4). We provided education activities and the catering at *Drive Electric* in 2018 and plan to collaborate with them in their next Fair in May 2020. In addition we have held church- (Ruth Valerio, Dave Bookless's address at a Sunday service) and community- (Meric Srokosz's Curious Café) oriented issue-related events, which attract visitors including the Town Hall manager and some town councillors. Clearly these include awareness-raising events (Q5); we also held an open showing of *Before the Flood* (Leonardo diCaprio), which attracted viewers from across the community. Within the context of services, we have had addresses from Steve Hucklesby (JPIT) , Caroline Pomeroy (Climate Stewards), Andy Lester (A Rocha UK) and Dave Bookless (A Rocha International); in addition one of our local preachers has authored a textbook on sustainability due to be published in 2020 (Q3).



We extend invitations to the Fairs to the MP (Caroline Nokes), the mayors of Test Valley Borough Council and Romsey Town, the leader of the Romsey Extra Council, and our two County Councillors. Acceptance has been high. Visitors and stall-holders have the opportunity to discuss with the local political leaders. In addition in 2019, following the lobby of Parliament on June 26, a special discussion was organised with Mrs Nokes in Romsey. This was organised by one of our Eco group members, and two of us attended. This organisation was crucial in this meeting taking place at all (Q1, Q2).

A significant number of our church community are engaged with local conservation work (Q6) and litter picks (Q7) with the removal of Himalayan balsam from local watercourses and the *Fishlake Meadows* project key emphases.

The most regular event for walking in the local area is the Rogation Sunday prayer walk, as discussed in the Worship and Teaching section (annual). We have had other occasional events such as the *Walk for Water* in the New Forest near Nomansland (Q9).

We do inform users of our buildings about safeguarding and the need to reduce energy use and ensuring that lights are switched off after use. This is aided by having automatic switch-off at the last exit point and the pathway from it (Q11).

We have actively promoted Eco Church, with these contacts sometimes being initiated at Green Fairs (Q12). As an example we provided input to The United Church, Winchester, which have an award themselves now. We fostered Eco Circuit to Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey (15 churches), which is now close to a Bronze award. We also proposed Eco District to the Southampton District (Over 160 churches), which was adopted by their Synod in September 2019. Ecumenically we have a good liaison of mutual support with St John's in Rownhams.

We intend to start a program of focused prayer on an environmental project shortly. There is a new link between the Teso Development Trust and Climate Stewards being fostered in which Climate Stewards might provide advice and authentication to new developments in this region of Uganda, and that will be our focus (Q13).

We have as a church participated in Earth Hour (Q14). Whilst individuals have been involved with national and global environmental campaigns this has not yet occurred widely across the church (Q15,16).

We have taken up toilet twinning as our own facilities have been redeveloped and we also involved Toilet Twinning in one of our Green Fairs (Q17). There is a regular pattern of updating our congregation on the deteriorating environmental scenario through the content of services and discussions. Members of the Eco group avidly monitor and pass on assessments (Q18). The church has moved donations to A Rocha from irregular to being within the core annual donations. We also donate to Climate Stewards by carbon-offsetting (Q19). The church has been registered with the Fairtrade Foundation since 1998 (Q20), as has been verified by email. This is a base that greatly assisted progress with Eco Church. Accordingly, the church regularly uses and promotes Fairtrade goods in events; they have been ever-present at all our Fairs through the good offices of the Oasis Christian Centre in Romsey (Q21). The church strongly promotes the LOAF principals and this is include in our Eco Church

guidelines ([Appendix 3](#)). However we cannot verify that these are adopted in all situations, hence our responses to Q22, Q23, Q24, and Q25. Food options are either vegetarian or vegan (Q26) and waste is abhorred (Q27)!

Lifestyle (122/160, Gold)

As stated above, the church, at its Council in February 2016, agreed to form an Eco group to champion the environmental cause; John Evans acts as convenor and contact point (Q1).

Low-energy transport is strongly encouraged, with the provision of cycle stands symbolic of this. Advice is regularly shared about alternatives such as electrically-assisted bikes, and car-sharing is informally, but actively arranged (Q2, Q3). Ways of examining personal carbon footprints have been provided in a variety of ways, including Climate Stewards (Adrian Frost) having stands at both of our Green Fairs; this clearly includes encouragement to reduce personal energy consumption (Q4,5). We have not yet stressed personal lifestyle audits as actively (Q15). Part and parcel of this is care for the embodied energy in the materials in our goods. An example of promoting this has been the stand by Recycle Bikes at the Green Fairs (Q6). We have not organised swap events as yet (Q7).

We initiated an Eco Christmas exchange of a single symbolic gift via a church tree in 2018, and in 2019 this replaced the church's post-box scheme involving 100s of cards (Q8).

The promotion of ethically sources goods for personal use and consumption has become engrained through being a Fairtrade Church for over 20 years (Q9). The church is also involved with a plan to (re-)qualify Romsey as a Fairtrade town. This personal emphasis extends to the LOAF principals (Q10). We are not involved with a food cooperative (Q11).

Ethical savings are encouraged in a general sense, but the church understands that they are not financial advisors (Q12). The church's own investments are held in the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, and so are within the agreed ethics of the Connexion. In terms of energy companies, the ground rules are under review in time for the 2020 Conference.

Key to the encouragement for people to impact more gently on our world has been our Eco Tips (Q14). These are refreshed each week in the Church news sheet, with a monthly changes in topic. These notices are sent out electronically in the main, with some paper copies available to visitors and those who find this works better for them. These are widely appreciated and are distributed also through 24 other churches; we are to offer them as an A Rocha resource.

*John Evans
29 February 2019*

Appendix 1.

Energy Performance Certificate

Non-Domestic Building

Romsey Methodist Church
The Hundred
ROMSEY
SO51 8BZ

Certificate Reference Number:
9220-8985-0328-8030-9080

This certificate shows the energy rating of this building. It indicates the energy efficiency of the building fabric and the heating, ventilation, cooling and lighting systems. The rating is compared to two benchmarks for this type of building: one appropriate for new buildings and one appropriate for existing buildings. There is more advice on how to interpret this information in the guidance document *Energy Performance Certificates for the construction, sale and let of non-dwellings* available on the Government's website at www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-performance-certificates.

Energy Performance Asset Rating

More energy efficient

A+

Net zero CO₂ emissions

A 0-25

B 26-50

◀ 48 This is how energy efficient the building is.

C 51-75

D 76-100

E 101-125

F 126-150

G Over 150

Less energy efficient

Technical Information

Main heating fuel:	Natural Gas
Building environment:	Heating and Natural Ventilation
Total useful floor area (m ²):	388
Assessment Level:	3
Building emission rate (kgCO ₂ /m ² per year):	54.45
Primary energy use (kWh/m ² per year):	314.81

Benchmarks

Buildings similar to this one could have ratings as follows:

23 If newly built

69 If typical of the existing stock

Appendix 2:

Eco Church activities

curious Cafe

RomseyMethodistChurch
building a community for Christ

do we care about our OCEANS?

A talk by Professor Meric Srokosz

What impact are we having on the oceans? Does it matter? What difference can we make? Meric Srokosz, professor of physical oceanography at the National Oceanography Centre and author of *Blue Planet*, *Blue God*, will help us to think about these questions.

Saturday 19th October
7.15pm, doors open 6.45pm
Romsey Methodist Church
Free Entry, Coffee/Tea & Cake

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey
Methodist Circuit

RomseyMethodistChurch
building a community for Christ

Green Fair

Saturday 9th March
10.30am - 2.30pm
Romsey Methodist Church
The Hundred, Romsey, SO51 8BZ

Activities and presentations from local environmental organisations, sharing practical ways that we can care for our world.

Refreshments available throughout
Light lunches from 11:45am

Plus, children from local schools present a vision for the world they'll inherit:

"What we want for our future"

ROMSEY FESTIVAL 2020

Thinking Globally and Biblically, Acting Locally and Practically

An informal service focusing on the biblical case for caring for the planet.

With Revd Dave Bookless
Director of Theology at A Rocha and author of *Planet Wise*

Sunday 3rd March, 5pm
Followed by refreshments
Romsey Methodist Church

RomseyMethodistChurch
building a community for Christ

Drive Electric

Friday 29th June
4pm to 8pm
at Crosfield Hall

Thinking about buying an electric car and want to know more?
Fed up with poor air quality?
Or just curious about how this technology works?
Come along to Drive Electric to find out more
Come and talk to people who actually own and drive one
Presentations and a discussion with people who own and drive an electric car

- FREE ENTRY -

www.transitiontownromsey.weebly.com

Refreshments will be provided
Contact: tromsey@yahoo.com

TRANSITION TOWN Romsey
Building a low carbon community...



Our Eco Church practices

Food

When we can, we use the LOAF principles:

Locally grown, **O**rganic, **A**nimal-friendly, **F**airtrade.

We provide vegetarian or vegan options

Energy

Outdoor lighting:

We will avoid introduction of floodlights. Ensure outdoor lighting is minimised but effective

Indoor lighting:

All users should ensure that lighting is off when they leave

Carbon footprint:

We seek to reduce our carbon footprint per hourly use

We aim to reduce our own personal carbon footprint

Water

Rainwater: We collect for re-use

Indoors: We will reduce the water consumption of toilet cisterns

Materials

Paper:

We are reducing use of office paper and use recycled paper

We will use recycled paper for toilets

Cleaning materials :

We use only environmentally-friendly cleaning agents

Disposable items: we avoid the use of single-use cups, plates and cutlery

Waste

We use the bins provided to separate recyclable materials and coffee grounds



John Evans, November 2017