

Tewkesbury Abbey Ecochurch Update

Creationtide, October 2025



What is the Ecochurch programme?

- The Ecochurch programme from A Rocha is an initiative designed to help all churches in the UK tackle the climate and nature crises.
- It provides a structured framework for churches to assess their environmental impact and take practical steps to improve their sustainability.
- The programme covers five aspects of church life: worship & teaching; buildings & energy; land & nature; community & global engagement; & lifestyle.

"We recognize the goodness of creation; we acknowledge our part in the fallenness of the world in which we live and accept the urgency of the present climate and ecological crises. We are committed to becoming more sustainable and environmentally friendly as we believe this reflects God's love for God's created world, and our desire to live in a positive relationship with the world God created."

Tewkesbury Abbey PCC statement on Caring for Creation, May 2025



Worship & Teaching

We are already meeting many of the Ecochurch programme requirements which helped gain the Bronze award:

- Our worship, statements of belief, and music celebrate God's relationship with creation and God's work in creation.
- We regularly worship outside during services like Corpus Christi, Palm Sunday, and our Easter Vigil, and celebrate special festivals such as Harvest.
- We pray for local, national, and global environmental issues in our intercessory prayers.
- We recognize the environmental impact of our worship resources, such as flowers, and grow them locally.

To work towards the Silver Award, our preachers have reflected on how to more regularly incorporate environmental issues in their sermons.

We have introduced a new service with an environmental theme - **Wild Worship** - a regular outdoor service for all ages, especially aimed at families and children, to reflect on our relationship with Creation.

Buildings & Energy



We've made a start on reducing the energy use in our buildings:

- Installed LED lightbulbs throughout the main Abbey Building.
- Switched to a renewables energy tariff.

Future requirements include:

- Calculating a baseline for current carbon emissions across our estate.
- Developing a plan for year-on-year reductions to decarbonize our operations.
- Reporting on this plan to the PCC.



Land & Nature

We have long been committed to caring for the land and nature at the Abbey and this helped us earn the Bronze Eco-church award.

Some of the activities have included:

- Installing a Peregrine nest tray.
- Allowed grass to grow long in certain areas.
- Composted grass and clippings.
- Managed our trees and minimized chemical use.

To work towards our Silver award, we've introduced 'Wild about the Abbey' events, where families and individuals can support and explore the Abbey's nature and participate in citizen science activities. Most recently families helped to create a new 'Mini-beast Monastery' during 'Wild Worship.'

These events also encourage wildlife-friendly practices at home, such as making bird boxes and planting wildflower seeds. If you are interested in helping at future events, do let us know!



Community and global engagement

Community & Global Engagement

This is a core element of the Ecochurch programme. To date we have:

- Collaborated with Friends of the Earth 'SafeAvon' project through the 'Blessing of the Avon' services in 2024 and 2025, calling for urgent action on river pollution.
- Partnered with the John Moore Museum and Tewkesbury Nature Reserve for 'Wild about the Abbey' events, which were part of the Town Council's '30 Days Wild' programme.

To achieve Silver, we need to engage further with decision-makers at local and national levels and use our voices to influence them. If you have a passion for this area, please get involved.

Lifestyle

The Abbey building has a carbon footprint equivalent to around seven households per year. With thousands of visitors a year, and over 250 people on the Abbey database, there is an opportunity to influence action in many more households.



Our recent congregational survey showed that many people in our community are already making sustainable decisions, and many respondents asked for more practical tips.

To move towards our Silver Award, we plan to share regular 'eco-tips' with the congregation and those interested in Abbey life.

One activity that you can take to identify ways to make your lifestyle more sustainable is to calculate your environmental footprint. This allows you to work out activities in your life where you can make the biggest difference. You can visit <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/> for a simple calculator that then offers tips on greener living, or for a more nuanced version, try the Open University's calculator: https://students.open.ac.uk/candc/carbon_calculator/

For more information and to get involved:

Please email info@tewkesburyabbey.org.uk and ask to be put in touch with the eco-team. Current members of the group include: Steve Arbery, David Coulton, Diane Clutterbuck, Richard Clutterbuck, Paul Harris, Pat Horsley, Peter Ireland, Nancy Oakes, Liz Swift, Helen Wolfson

Thank you for reading.

