

Horsham Churches Together AGM 9.7.26

Horsham Eco Churches Annual Review - Karen Park

1. Hello

- I'm Karen Park, Eco Church Lead for Horsham Churches Together and an Authorised Lay Minister Care for Creation and Eco Church at St Mark's Church in Holbrook.

2. *A Rocha UK and Eco Church*

- A Rocha UK is a Christian charity and a member of Churches Together in England.
- Eco Church is A Rocha's free online survey and resources, supporting churches taking practical action caring for God's creation, as they progress towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold Eco Church award.
- The survey was updated in October 2024 for the most impact on climate and nature.
- Eco Church covers 5 key areas of church life
 - Worship and Teaching
 - Buildings and Energy
 - Land and Nature
 - Community and Global Engagement
 - Lifestyle

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

3. Eco Church – Resources

- Correspond to survey questions
- Quickly explore why and how to undertake recommended actions
- Also longer reads, case studies, promotional material and Welsh language resources

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources>

4. *Horsham Eco Churches*

- Horsham Churches Together Eco Churches network, created in 2019, leads the way, encouraging and inspiring others to share ideas and work together.
- Over half of the Horsham Churches Together churches, are actively engaged in Eco Church and 62.5% of those 16 churches have already achieved an award, 8 Bronze and 2 Silver Eco Church awards. Together, we are caring for God's creation and making a positive difference both locally and globally.

5. Eco Church Survey

- St Mark's most recent survey
- Reach Bronze, Silver or Gold in all 5 areas to achieve an award
- Bronze 25%, Silver 50%, Gold 75%

6. *Sussex Green Hub*

- Horsham Eco Churches work in partnership with Sussex Green Living. We have a stall at their monthly Sussex Green Hub, on the last Saturday of the month 10am to 2.30pm, in Horsham United Reformed Church.
- The Hub includes Horsham Community Fridge until 11am, Horsham Repair Café, Refill Shop, Recycling, Art and Growing Hubs
- sussexgreenliving.org.uk/sussex-green-hub

7. Horsham Eco Churches

- Represented at meetings of Fairtrade Horsham, Horsham Green Spaces, South East Climate Alliance and Sussex Resilience Forum.
- We further promoted sustainable floristry by providing an arrangement for the Entwined in Harmony, festival of flowers and music, at St Nicholas' in Worth and giving a talk for Roffey WI.

8. Westminster Mass Lobby 9.7.25

- We joined over 5,000 people gathered for meaningful conversations with our MPs on the climate and nature crisis, at a Mass Lobby in Westminster.
- Our discussions with Horsham MP, John Milne, included how unbearable it is in hot weather for many in Horsham living in flats, especially those with windows only on one side of the building and how churches are a lifeline, offering their buildings as cool and warm spaces. [Press article](#)

9. Community Engagement by Churches includes

- [Support foodbank](#)
- Community Cafés - some registered as [Chatty Cafe](#), [Warm Welcome Space](#), [social prescribing](#)
- [Horsham Community Fridge](#) - Many thanks to the six churches and all the volunteers who enabled Horsham Community Fridge to save an estimated 52 tonnes of food from being wasted in 2025, about 20% more than the two previous years, mainly caused by the huge uplift from M&S due to their computer hack. About 50 customers per session are served on Tuesdays & Thursdays at Cornerstone, London Road, plus those at the Saturday Pop-Ups in the other churches.
- Clothing or toy swaps
- [Repair Café](#) – sewing, electrical, and / or cycle repair sessions
- Community Litter Picks – loan litter pickers and hi vis from Horsham District Council and they will collect the bags of litter.

10. Global Engagement – for example Fairtrade

- Climate change hits those in low-income countries the hardest, increasingly extreme, unpredictable weather is destroying bananas, coffee, cocoa and other crops.
- Farmers and workers, already underpaid, have even less to spend on essentials such as education, medical treatment and even food.
- Around the world, the people who grow, pick, stitch and make the things we buy are facing the same challenges: unfair pay, unsafe working conditions, and a climate crisis threatening their livelihoods. Fairtrade exists to change this, and to push for the rules that make fairness the norm, not the exception.
- We can choose from almost 5,000 Fairtrade products including: bananas, biscuits, tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, wine, clothes and flowers.
- The UK government is currently reviewing its approach to responsible business. Help us demand business that's fair to people and planet, [sign petition](#) to UK Government

11. Fairtrade Place of Worship

- Currently only 3 churches listed: Trafalgar Road Baptist, St John the Evangelist and St Mark's
- Use Fairtrade products when possible
- [Fairtrade Horsham](#)

- Churches re-commit online every 2 years to being a Fairtrade Place of Worship.
<https://www.fairtrade.net/uk-en/get-involved/campaign-with-us/grassroots-groups/places-of-worship.html>

Is your church on the Fairtrade [Map](#)?

12. **Climate Resilience**

We need to become Climate Resilient so we can respond to the more extreme, changing weather with increasing [extreme heat](#), drought, wildfire risk, storms, torrential rain, flash floods, rising sea level and in future extreme cold weather.

Met Office "hotter-than-usual weather is more likely in the UK this summer."
<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

UK Health Security Agency "This increased likelihood of heat fits with the long-term warming trend in the UK linked to climate change ... heatwaves in England are expected to become more intense, last longer, and happen more often. This makes it increasingly important to understand how heat affects people's health and to take steps to reduce those risks."

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2026/06/23/how-to-keep-cool-and-stay-well-during-hot-weather>

[Beat the Heat](#) – Public Health England / NHS advice

Flood Risk GOV.UK long term flood risk data, identifies risk as well as potential management strategies that you could use for your church and community:
<https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>

The Eco Church Survey now includes:

Buildings and Energy Q14

"Our church has a climate resilience action plan"

Buildings and Energy Q28

"Our church plans for future climate resilience and has a 'safe spaces' policy"

Land and Nature Survey Q16:

"Our church is planning and acting for land based climate resilience."

13. **Climate Resilient Church**

This interactive picture explores the main risks and potential mitigating actions for churches.

Five key steps every church should take to ensure your church building is climate resilient:

1. Good maintenance – damp, gutters and drains, roof and windows
2. Identify and discuss potential risks
3. Plan ahead create a Future Climate Action Plan
4. Communicate with those who maintain or manage church buildings and the wider community
5. Review annually, or as often as reasonably possible and check for updated guidance.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/climate-resilient-church>

14. Climate Resilient Community

Consider how your buildings could become a community hub in an emergency and er how you could help your community to be more climate resilient.

- A refuge in emergencies and from extreme weather events.
- An emergency response centre eg: distribute water, food, clothes.
- A sanctuary from overheating – cool space with seating, cold drinks and maybe Wi-Fi, open to community as a meeting, co-working and spiritual space, encourage use of shady areas church land
- Sussex Resilience Forum [Preparing for an emergency](#) download, printed copies from Karen
- Worked Future Climate Action Plan
- A key missional point for the church now and in the future.
- Horsham Eco Churches News [Subscribe](#) follow us on [Facebook](#) for latest news

15. People's Emergency Briefing

- Together with Transition Horsham and others we helped to organise Horsham Green Film Festival, with 4 films shown at Trafalgar Road Baptist Church.
- This collaboration continues as we support those hosting screenings of the People's Emergency Briefing.
- Could your church host a free screening? We can help you with posters and publicity, [email](#) Horsham Eco Churches.

16. Community Climate Fund Grants – Horsham District Council

- Rare Sussex apple trees and water butts, Psalm 23 nature trail
<https://stmarksholbrook.org.uk/EcoChurch>
- St Mark's - £1,000 Holbrook Community Orchard rare Sussex apple trees and water butts
- St Mary's £1,095 - intelligent thermostats
- Other churches - bicycle rack, ceiling insulation, LED lighting, solar panels, recycling hub, green roof
- <https://tinyurl.com/ccwhp6p8>

17. Together We Can

Climate change can seem overwhelming but together we can do simple things to help our planet & reduce our bills.

The good news is that we have a multitude of solutions that can and should be implemented at every level, from individual to global. On their own, none are sufficient; but together, they offer more than enough potential to meet global targets.

18. Keep up to date

- See our webpage: <https://horshamct.org.uk/eco-churches>
- [Subscribe](#) for Horsham Eco Churches monthly News and follow us on Facebook, to keep in touch with our news, activities and events.
- Please email Karen Park if you have any questions or would like more information.
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