



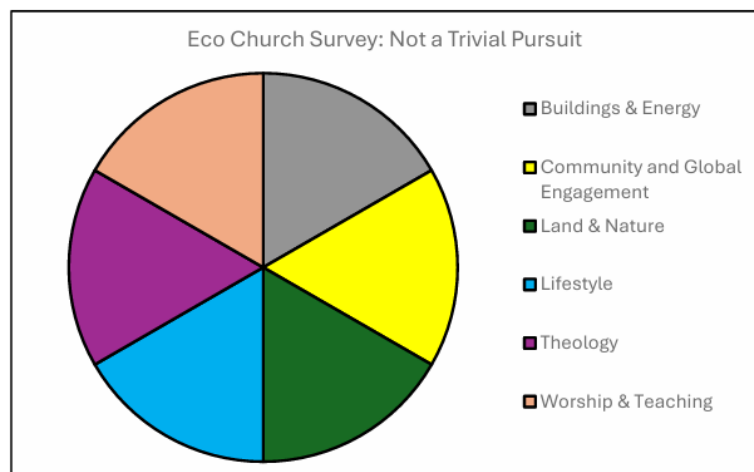
Our Eco Church Journey

The [Eco Church - An A Rocha UK Project](#) has been running for 10 years with churches up and down the country encouraged to sign up and make use of the resources available which leads to Awards. St Laurence Blackmore signed up in July 2024 and formed an Eco Church Group the following spring to work on a number of projects and to encourage participation among members of the congregation, and others in the community.

Climate Change and the depletion of the natural environment is real – and a concern for all Christians, people of faith and none.

Eco Church is a survey in five categories grounded in the theology that Christians are called to care for all creation, to speak out about injustice, and to love our neighbours. It cuts across all five Church of England 'Marks of Mission'.

The St Laurence Blackmore Eco Church Group has been working towards the Bronze Award – we are almost there.



This summer we launched a number of pages on our website to explain what we have been doing, and what our plans are: [Eco Church – Priory Church of St Laurence, Blackmore](#) . The PCC also unanimously adopted a [St-Laurence-Blackmore-Environmental-Policy.pdf](#) , a summary of which you can find on page 8.

We also held an open meeting at the church on 5 September which we called an 'Eco Church Conversation' at which our Eco Church Advocate, Andrew Smith, gave presentations and encouraged discussion on the weather and climate change; how we reduce our carbon footprint as a church and as individuals; and, how we improve the churchyard for both nature and people.

Although we have been pursuing Eco Church for some while this is our first Newsletter, so there is a lot to talk about – and act upon.

What has the BBC ever done for me? It has reported on the changing climate

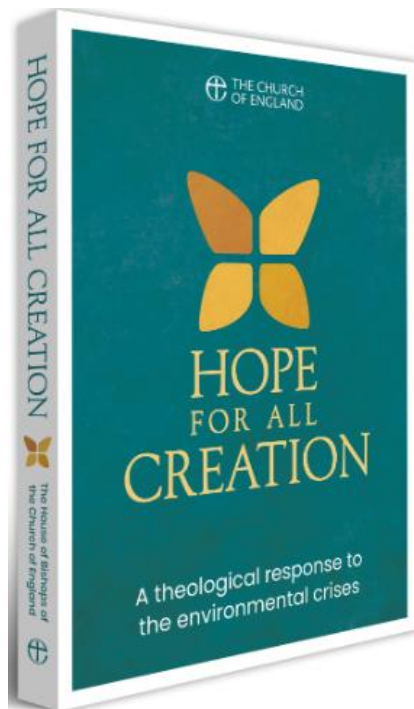
The 'Eco Church Conversation' began by discussing what the British like to talk about: the weather in summer 2026 – "our lived experience". The presentation drew on what the BBC has reported in its television news broadcasts. (The BBC prides itself that: "we pursue the truth, so disinformation has nowhere to hide ... because the fight for truth is on".)

- The Met Office say that the UK has entered a new climate era, with extreme heat and drought becoming increasingly normal rather than exceptional.
- 2026 saw repeated UK heatwaves, including record-breaking May and June temperatures, prolonged July heat, and an August peak of 38.1°C at Kew Gardens.
- The impacts include drought, wildfires, poor crop yields, pressure on water supplies, overwhelmed health services, transport disruption, and overheating homes.
- Climate scientists and the BBC repeatedly link these events to human-induced climate change, saying warmer baseline temperatures make heatwaves hotter, longer, and more likely.
- Without major cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, the UK can expect hotter, drier summers, greater health risks, food-security pressures, and infrastructure failures.
- It also highlights the need for adaptation and mitigation: retrofitting buildings, creating cool spaces, planting trees, investing in renewables, reducing fossil fuel use, and taking stronger local and national action.



Dunwich Heath on the Suffolk Coast, belonging to the National Trust, was destroyed by wildfire at the end of July with severe loss of habitat. This photograph was taken in 2019. Two of our church members Andrew & Elaine Smith visit the heather heathland almost every year when they holiday in the area.

Hope for All Creation – new document from Church of England



Hope for All Creation: A theological response to the environmental crises is a new **Church of England House of Bishops** teaching document. It sets out how Christian faith should shape the Church's response to climate change, biodiversity loss, and wider ecological crises. The document is presented as a guide for faithful living, ministry, and responsible stewardship of the planet.

At its heart, the document says that the environmental crises are not only scientific or political issues but also matters of **Christian discipleship, worship, justice, mission, and hope**. Creation is a gift from God - beautiful, abundant, and deeply interconnected - while also acknowledging that human activity is damaging the climate and ecosystems on which life depends.

The document is structured around three sections: **See, Reflect, Respond**. First, it invites Christians to **see** the reality of the environmental crises facing the world. Second, it asks them to **reflect** theologically, drawing on Scripture, Christian tradition, Anglican theology, and the hope found in Jesus Christ. Third, it calls the Church to **respond** through practical action locally, nationally, and globally.

A major theme is **Christian hope**. The document does not frame environmental action as despair-driven activism, but as a faithful response to the God who creates, sustains, reconciles, and will renew all things in Christ. It stresses that God has not abandoned creation, and that Christians are called to live now in the light of Christ's reconciliation and the promised renewal of creation.

It also places environmental care within the **mission of the Church**. The Church of England connects this with the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission, especially the call "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." The document presents care for creation as a way to worship God, work for justice, and show love for neighbours locally and globally, especially because environmental harm often affects poorer countries and poorer communities most severely.

In short, **Hope for All Creation** says that ecological care is not an optional extra for Christians. It is part of faithful discipleship: seeing the damage being done, reflecting on creation through the biblical story of creation, redemption, and renewal, and responding with worship, justice, repentance, practical action, and hope.

Improving Blackmore Churchyard for People and Nature

Churchyard Management Plan

In November 2025 the PCC approved its first [Churchyard-Management-Plan.pdf](#) . It was prepared at a time it was successfully completing an ambitious National Lottery funded Tower renovation project and actively pursuing Eco Church. It set out a blueprint for maintenance and new projects to Easter 2027 with an aim to improve the use of the churchyard for both people and nature.

The Churchyard is a special place. We have begun by mapping where the gravestones are, trees and flowers – highlighting both the things that are going well in addition to the things that need attention.

No.	Row 01	Row 02	Row 03	Row 04	Row 05	Row 06	Row 07	Row 08	Row 09	Row 10	Row 11	Row 12		Row 13	Row 14	Row 15
01	Hitching	Collin					Tree: Horse Chestnut									
02	Ottley	Piper				Sherwood	Tree: Poplar (X)	Collins			Tree: Poplar	Bland				
03		Collin		Cooper		Thorogood	Partridge	Conn	Living	Attridge	Byrne	Finch				
04				Wiltshire		Wilson		McLaren	Brazier			Temple				
05	Brick plinth	Terry					Shrub				Hunter	Whittaker				
06		Bowman		Gurr			Meadows	Livermore	Brazier			Bishop				
07								Williamson			Check	Moore				
08			Wood					Larks								
09	Hepburn							Hogg				Squibb				
10	Scudder				Dixon	Eve			Blackwell	McCullum		Kent				Casspit
11	Boyd			Hale	Knight	Brown		Polley		Blackwell		Salisbury		Pagram	Fether	
12	Hines				Hart	Wheal		Denny		Meadows		Hooks		Taylor	Curtis	
13	Thompson							Geake		Coller		Bangs		Bradley	Smith	
14	Davies				Ovel			Williamson		Blinman		Wiltshire		Shppard	Westover	
15	Ramsey				Bush			Richardson		Temple		Braybrook		Leask	Tuffey	Tridgell
16								Green		Pagram		Abbott		O'Connor	Dennis	
17	Buckingham		Hobbs					Muttick	Harvey	Moule		Shuttleworth		Hall	Bullman	Blackwell
18	Church		Stafford					Blackwell		Parris		Greenhalt		White	Pascoe	
19	Patient		Rofe					Boughtwood	Nelson			Bullman		Stringfellow	Garner	
20	Furnival		Temple					Lambert		Watson		Mills		Squibb	Snooks	
21			Clark					Stiff	Tyler	Bradford		Bowe			Lanham	
22	Blackwell		Knight					Ansell	Turner			Fletcher		Geason-Simm	Jeffreys	
23			Bentley					Ansell	Knight	Harris		Kirby		Turvey (1937)	Witherington	
24	Winger		Pightling					Barrett						Sadd	Maxwell	
25	Piddington		Moore					Chapman		Flower vase						
26	Wray							Lawrence								
27	Wray															
28	Goodhale															
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34	Hills															
35																
36	Sutton															
37																
38	Wager															
39																
40	Bacon															
41	Witney															
42	Jopson															
43																

St Laurence
Blackmore
Churchyard Map
Zone 3
Not to scale

#1322: In 1937 a wooden cross named Turvey was present.

Possible no mow May area - all untended graves - observed 30 May 2026

Graves were strimmed on 6 June 2026

Buddelia to be reshaped and maintained

Mapping helps us to locate where wildflowers appear.

The Churchyard Management Plan was completed by the Eco Church Group in consultation with others. This included the Tower Project Team (appointed by the PCC) who have involved the local school and Scouts Association on projects with focus on learning, enjoyment and biodiversity.

Our Plan confirmed that the churchyard had been reactively not proactively managed. While grass areas have been professionally maintained, the remainder has not, because of reliance on occasional working parties mainly drawn from the local church congregation.

It is evident that the time volunteered is insufficient to create a pristine churchyard, if that is what is required – Eco Church would suggest not.

We are keen to engage more with people so, during 2026 (to date) the local Beaver group has built a bug hotel, and children from the Eco Group at Blackmore Primary School came to the churchyard to plant daffodil bulbs, and sow wildflower seeds.



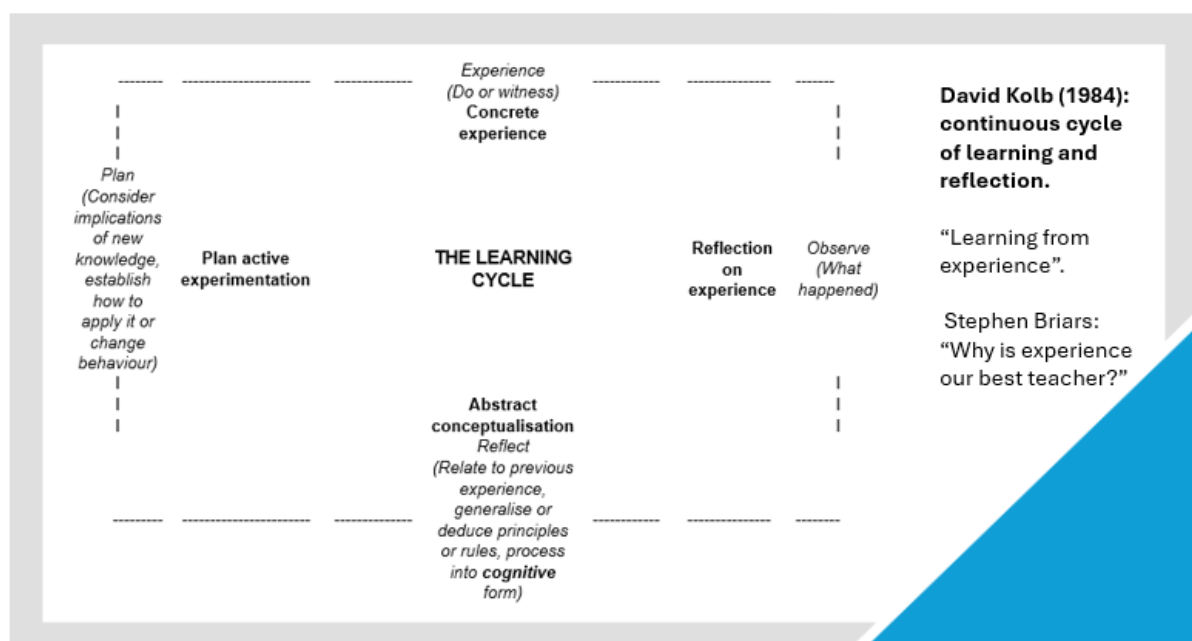
Our Easter Garden 2026

Observing the Natural World

Since March 2026, we have observed and noted the changes happening in the churchyard producing and publishing these on our website [A-Guide-to-Birds-in-Blackmore-Churchyard.pdf](#) , [A-Guide-to-Butterflies-in-Blackmore-Churchyard.pdf](#) , [A-Guide-to-Mosses-and-Lichens-in-Blackmore-Churchyard.pdf](#) , and [A-Guide-to-Wildflowers-in-Blackmore-Churchyard.pdf](#) .

We have also participated in the ‘Count on Nature’ survey during ‘Love Your Burial Ground Week’ and the ‘Big Butterfly Count’ with the ambition to involve more people next year.

Observing things helps us learn too and work out what to include in the next Plan for 2027.



Of Interest to Family Historians

To improve the churchyard for people we have started to record and publish [Monumental-Inscriptions.pdf](#) both outside and inside the church. This was last done by the Essex Society for Family History back in 1997. It is a monumental task!

Genealogists will be aware that our old Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers have been deposited at the Essex Record Office. However, for the first time we are making available online a copy of the [Blackmore-Burial-Register-1893-to-1992-with-Index.pdf](#) which is kept in our church safe and referred to from time to time by the churchwardens.

Consultation

In order to complete our Nature Trail, at the 'Eco Church Conversation' and throughout September we consulted on the siting of a new butterfly garden, whether to grow an herb garden around the old Garden of Remembrance, and to leave an area where there are untended graves unmown until the beginning of June so that wildflowers can grow and insects can feed on pollen between the daffodil season and summer flowering.

Partial Solar Eclipse

With a clear westward view to the evening sun the churchyard was an ideal place to get together to simply enjoy God's creation doing its thing: a partial solar eclipse on 12 August when just over 90% of the sun was covered by Earth's setting moon. Many enjoyed using pinhole cameras, colanders, while others brought special spectacles to view the event.



Thirty Actions for Nature Recovery by 2030

Download this leaflet to see how you can help reverse biodiversity depletion [30-for-30-Leaflet.pdf](#) or pick up a paper copy from church.



Our personal carbon footprint

change our lifestyle, think...

home, garden, travel, food,

possessions, community & global

engagement

To find 7 ideas for change go to

www.bbc.co.uk/future/article/20241231-seven-proven-ways-to-help-the-planet

including ***CUT DOWN ON FLYING**

(flying is one of the most damaging things we can do),

***JUST BUY LESS STUFF.**

***EAT MORE VEGGIES**

love meat too much?

ok, then ***AVOID BEEF AND LAMB**

plus we could

***OFFSET OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT**

BY DONATING TO GREEN PROJECTS

at home www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or around the world <https://climatestewards.org/our-projects/>

more information in leaflet "[L4-Auditing-your-lifestyle.pdf](#)"

Ten Ways to Reduce Energy Consumption and Improve Energy Efficiency

Reducing energy use is not only good for the environment; it can also lower household bills and make your home more comfortable. The following actions focus on everyday behaviour, heating efficiency, appliances, and longer-term improvements.

1. **Lower your thermostat slightly.** Reducing the room temperature by even one degree can cut heating demand while still keeping the home comfortable.
2. **Use heating controls effectively.** Set timers, thermostatic radiator valves, and room thermostats so that heating is only used where and when it is needed.
3. **Improve insulation.** Loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, and insulated floors help keep heat inside the home, reducing the amount of energy needed for heating.
4. **Draught-proof doors and windows.** Sealing gaps around frames, letterboxes, pipework, and floorboards prevents warm air escaping and cold air entering.
5. **Switch off appliances at the plug.** Many devices continue to use energy in standby mode, so turning them off fully can reduce unnecessary electricity use.
6. **Use energy-efficient lighting.** Replace older bulbs with LED bulbs, which use much less electricity and last longer.
7. **Wash clothes at lower temperatures.** Washing at 30°C and using full loads reduces electricity and water heating demand.
8. **Avoid overfilling the kettle.** Boil only the amount of water needed, as kettles are high-power appliances and can waste energy quickly.
9. **Reduce hot water use.** Shorter showers, efficient shower heads, and fixing dripping taps can reduce the energy used to heat water.
10. **Choose efficient appliances.** When replacing appliances, select models with strong energy ratings and use eco settings where available.

St Laurence Blackmore Environmental Policy

Our church recognises:

- and teaches that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crisis are integral to Christian faith, life and worship
- the impact of the climate and nature crisis and has a plan to take action
- and has a plan to promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption patterns by individuals and households
- the fundamental injustice caused by the climate and nature crisis. We have committed to reduce our carbon footprint year-on-year
- and has written a Churchyard Management Plan to manage our land for nature in an impactful way.