

# DECLARING A CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

## Report from the Diocesan Environment Group

1. On 1 May 2019, a national climate and environmental emergency was declared in the UK Parliament, but little has visibly happened in terms of policies or actions reflecting that declaration.
2. Marking the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement in December 2020, the [UN Secretary General urged leaders of every country to declare a climate emergency](#). This followed the finding of [The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) that rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society must start immediately and be made within less than a decade to preserve a relatively safe climate. There are now growing signs that critical tipping points are being reached which risk triggering uncontrollable warming well beyond the 1.5 degree Celsius target set by the United Nations. The landmark IPCC report published on 9th August is unequivocal in its '[Code Red Warning for Humanity](#)'.
3. In February 2020, the General Synod's final motion recognised that '[the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation](#)' and set an ambitious target for the Church of England to become 'net zero' by 2030. At the last meeting of the Winchester Diocesan Synod in March 2021, an agreed approach and [Eco Plan of Action](#) aiming to achieve this target was agreed by an overwhelming majority.
4. Many dioceses have subsequently declared a climate emergency, including [Bristol](#), [Oxford](#), [Norwich](#) and [Sheffield](#). Many councils (including [Hampshire](#)), government and secular bodies have also declared a climate emergency and have plans to help to address it.<sup>1</sup> This includes 300 of 404 District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan Councils of all political persuasions as well as many other institutions from infant schools to multinational companies. Tearfund and Christian Aid, the primary Christian organisations working to alleviate poverty in the developing world, have also made it clear their support for declaring an emergency.
5. By declaring a climate and ecological emergency, Winchester Diocese would be supporting Parliament's call, the UN's call, the local community's call (Hampshire) and that of the General Synod. It would be speaking truth into the crisis in which humanity is entrenched, and fulfilling its prophetic role at this time. It would also be saying that decisions concerning the operation of the diocese will be made in the light of this emergency.
6. Declaring a climate emergency would support our commitment to work towards net zero by 2030, as well as speak out on the transformational changes that are required in our society.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>

7. The Diocesan Synod are asked to approve the following motion:

This synod, recognises that there is a climate emergency and calls upon parishes, worshipping communities and individual Christians to respond to their responsibility to care for creation.

---

**DM/RJ**  
**Sep 2021**