

Motion on the Climate and Nature Bill

Supporting Note, November 2024

In March 2020, this Synod recognised that the interlinked climate and ecological emergencies are among the most pressing issues of our age and declared a climate emergency. We responded with a [Diocesan Environmental Policy](#), £10m for works to our clergy housing, and a range of resources for our parishes and schools to enable prayer, advocacy and action. Action on the climate and biodiversity crises is a scientific, theological and moral concern, and particularly as Christians, we must be alert to the injustice of these crises. The richest 1% of the world's population emit more carbon than the poorest 66%¹ yet impacts are felt most keenly by the poor and the vulnerable, who are the least resilient. Yet, as Hurricane Milton has demonstrated, no-one is immune from a changing climate.

In July 2022 the Church of England General Synod endorsed the [Routemap to Net Zero Carbon](#) recognising “that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation, and a fundamental injustice” and in February 2024 passed the [land and nature](#) motion, “recognising the need to respond urgently to the ecological crisis, in line with the global scientific consensus that the climate change and biodiversity loss crises are intricately linked”.

We are encouraged that our parishes and deaneries are seeking to offer a meaningful response to the crisis and to play their role in prayer, advocacy and action. The action across the diocese is hugely encouraging, with now well over 200 Eco Churches taking positive steps. As an Eco Diocese, we too must seek to play our part and speak into the public square for the betterment of God’s world.

The Climate and Nature Bill (CAN Bill) will be a legally-binding mission statement which will ensure policy and action on the climate and nature crisis is science-led and people-oriented. Consequently, this Bill aligns with our existing direction of work. It has been publicly backed by the Church of England National Environment Team, and has [cross party support](#) with many politicians, peers, scientists, faith leaders and organisations publicly supporting. In a personal capacity, the Bishop of Oxford, the former Bishop of Reading, and the Bishops of Norwich, Bristol, Guildford, Leicester, Sheffield, Selby and St Albans are among supporting signatories, alongside a number of local councils within this diocese.²

We therefore welcome this motion from the Sonning and Witney Deaneries which asks Diocesan Synod to endorse the 'Zero Hour' campaign to promote the Climate and Nature Bill, and calls on the General Synod also to do so.

The Bill had its first reading in Parliament on 15th October and will have its second reading on 24th January 2025. Supporting this motion, and asking General Synod to do the same, would add weight to the call for that support, affirm our commitment to tackling the crises locally and nationally, and support our parishes and congregations in their own advocacy efforts.

Mark Humphriss

¹ [Richest 1% account for more carbon emissions than poorest 66%, report says - Carbon Brief](#)

² [Supporters](#)

Diocesan Secretary

October 2024