

## Instructions:

To apply for a **Silver Eco District Award**, you will need to:

- ☐ Have already achieved a Bronze Eco District Award
- ☐ Complete **this supporting evidence pro forma** showing how you meet the silver criteria by providing the required evidence\*
- ☐ Refer to the guidance notes provided at the end of this document to help you progress and gather evidence towards your Silver Eco District Award
- ☐ Collate your District Eco Church data to summarise all registered and awarded churches
- ☐ [Complete this Eco District Application Form](#)
- ☐ Submit all supporting documentation via email to [ecochurch@arocha.org](mailto:ecochurch@arocha.org)

## What happens next?

Once we have received your email we will review your application and supporting evidence. If there is any missing documentation, or if we have any questions or points to clarify we will get in touch via email. Sometimes we ask for further refinement of an answer to ensure it meets the guidelines for supporting evidence. Due to the nature of the evidence required we are not accepting handwritten pro formas, please do use a computer to fill it in.

Silver Eco District status will be given to your Methodist District when it has achieved and can demonstrate the required evidence to meet the [Silver Eco District criteria](#). (Processing times can take up to two months.)

*\*Please note, this pro forma is a Google document set as 'view only'.*

You will need to **save a copy to your own drive** or **download the file** as a Microsoft Word document to be able to edit it. When you download the document to Word, some of the formatting may be adjusted. If you discover any of the boxes are locked, and you cannot type text, try right-clicking and selecting 'Remove content control'.

We encourage you to embed digital photos and include weblinks as appropriate.

## Your District details

Name of Methodist District:

Methodist District website:

Eco District webpage link:

Eco District contact (your name and email):

District chair name and email:

Total number of churches in your District (including LEP's):

Date of Bronze Eco District award:

*Please list here the files you are attaching to support your Eco District Silver Award application:*

- *Silver Eco District Pro Forma (required)*
- *Eco District Application Form (required)*
- *Eco District commitment certificate (required)*
- *File name:*
- *File name:*

**Silver Eco District status will be given to your District when it has achieved and can demonstrate evidence of the following:**

*Fill in the pro forma below, showing how you meet the silver criteria by providing the required evidence. Please submit this pro forma as part of your award application.*

<b><u>Silver Criteria</u></b> <b>Please refer to the notes at the end for further guidance and support.</b>																													
<b>1. Ownership</b> a) Commissioned a working group or a committee to coordinate and progress Eco District. b) Promoted an understanding amongst all staff, officers, and volunteers of Eco District goals.																													
<p>1. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):            Add weblinks, articles, photos, and separate files as appropriate to support your application.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <p>a) Share your Terms of Reference (include details of the working group/ committee, such as date of commencement, how the membership is chosen, strategy, goals, and frequency of meetings).            Share examples of progress reports.</p> <p>b) Share how you have promoted Eco District goals with others (including Circuits).</p>																													
<b>2. Gained the appropriate levels of local church registrations and awards for Eco Church</b> For Districts of any size: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40% of all local churches in your District registered for Eco Church;</li> <li>30% of all local churches in your District awarded;</li> <li>10% of all local churches in your District awarded silver or higher.</li> </ul> <p>Contact the District Environment lead for a list of all registered and awarded Eco Churches (including Local Ecumenical Partnerships) see guidance notes for further information.</p>																													
<p>2. Summary table response:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Criteria</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Number</th> <th style="width: 20%;">%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of churches in your District</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of churches registered with Eco Church</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of churches with a bronze Eco Church award</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of churches with a silver Eco Church award</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of churches with a gold Eco Church award</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of churches with an Eco Church award</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of churches with a silver or higher Eco Church award</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of data compilation</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Criteria	Number	%	Number of churches in your District			Number of churches registered with Eco Church			Number of churches with a bronze Eco Church award			Number of churches with a silver Eco Church award			Number of churches with a gold Eco Church award			Total number of churches with an Eco Church award			Total number of churches with a silver or higher Eco Church award			Date of data compilation		
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**3. Achieved the relevant Eco Church award level in relation to its District office and demonstrated sustainability in everyday office functions and policies**

Submit evidence relevant to whether your District office is based in a church, manse, or rented office.

**Required for all District offices:**

Provide a paragraph on how the District office has embedded sustainability into everyday practice and office policies.

3. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Address of District office:

Select one of the options below:

**a) For District offices located in a church building**

Please include the date on which the church achieved its Silver Eco Church award.

**b) For District offices located in a manse**

Share your EPC certificate (this should be at C or above).

**c) For District offices located in rented office space**

Please include the date on which the District office achieved its Silver Eco Church award.

**Required for all District offices:**

Provide a paragraph on how the District office has embedded sustainability into everyday practice and office policies.

**4. Environmental Policy**

Write and publish a District Environmental Policy that has been agreed at District Synod.

The Environment Policy should include points on climate and nature, travel, how your District will achieve net zero by 2030, a monitoring and action plan, timescales, a review date, follow Action for Hope principles of assets, wisdom, and lifestyle.

4. Response (to add in extra rows press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, and photos and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Share evidence that the Environmental Policy has been agreed and signed off by the District Leadership Team (Synod).
- b) Share a web link to your published District Environmental Policy.
- c) Share a short narrative on the impact.

## 5. Carbon Reduction

- a) Formulated a plan to assess and improve the energy efficiency of District-owned manses (including those rented out).
- b) Formulated a strategy to address high carbon emissions within the District according to the [Getting your Building down to Net Zero guidelines](#).

5. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, photos, and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Energy efficient action plan for District-owned manses (including those rented out).
- b) Share your Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Action Plan demonstrating how you are working with Circuits to identify and reduce emissions across the District.

## 6. Protect and Restore Nature

- a) Raised awareness within the District of local, national and global biodiversity and nature loss.
- b) Championed churches that have transformed their land to be more nature and wildlife friendly.
- c) Created Land and Nature Management Plans\*

\*As appropriate, if the District owns or manages land (not covered by manses or churches).

6. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, photos, and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Share evidence of how the District has raised awareness to protect and restore nature locally, nationally, and globally.
- b) Evidence of sharing nature-friendly church stories.
- c) Required as appropriate: share your land and nature management plans.

## 7. Schools\*

Engaged with Methodist schools around creation care.

\* As appropriate, if there are no Methodist schools in your District you can move on to the next section.

7. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Required *as appropriate*: Share a log of meetings and correspondence. E.g. xx Feb meeting to discuss x; xx March email exchange about y with the Methodist school around addressing the climate and nature crisis, or date(s) of initial conversations if this work is only just beginning.

## 8. Training and Development

Continue to embed environmental issues in ongoing training, education and support.

- a) Provided environmental training for lay and ordained leaders of worship.
- b) Provided opportunities for presbyters, deacons, local preachers, and all staff and volunteers to learn and grow in creation care awareness.

8. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, and photos and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Provide details (programme, number of participants, next steps) of two training events organised by the District, specifically related to the environment (within the last four years) along with plans for future training.
- b) Share examples of how your District has supported Circuits around environmental training and your future plans (see guidance notes below for examples).

## 9. Finance and Investment

- a) Managed District investments ethically: all District funds are invested in line with ethical principles consistent with good Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) criteria. Money invested through the Methodist Central Finance Board meets these criteria. Supporting the Green Investment Declaration (see guidance notes) is another way to do this.
- b) Have prioritised climate and nature projects and environmental initiatives when promoting and allocating grants (e.g. Action for Hope grants).

9. Response (to add in extra rows press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, and photos and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Declaration that all investments are managed by the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church (CFB), or a published investment policy following good corporate governance.
- b) Share the number and type of projects supported in the last financial year. E.g. Our grants last year supported 10 churches with energy audits, 5 churches with energy efficiency measures such as solar panels, 2 churches with community tree planting projects and 5 churches with wildlife friendly / community gardening initiatives.

## 10. Collaboration

- a) Encouraged greater environmental action locally and ecumenically. Worked with local partner church groups to raise mutual awareness about climate change and species-loss mitigation and resilience measures.
- b) Promoted Eco Church.

10. Response (to add in extra rows press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, and photos and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

- a) Share dates and details of meetings or events showing environmental engagement with other denominations and/or faith groups/ secular/non-faith groups at a District level, nationally or internationally.
- b) Share evidence of Eco Church promotion locally and ecumenically and within Circuits.

#### 11. Celebrating Creation

Demonstrated the importance of creation to the Christian faith, through regular and substantial presence of environmental issues on the District website and through wider communication channels.

11. Response (to add in extra rows, press enter):

Add weblinks, articles, photos, and separate files as appropriate to support your application.

Share evidence that environmental issues are regularly on the agenda at meetings, and practical action is taking place. For example, share links to/ screenshots of District posts, websites and publications that demonstrate the importance of creation; through Eco Church awards, environmental action, carbon-cutting achievements, and protecting and restoring nature stories.

## Guidance notes to help you progress towards your Silver Eco District award.

In addition to the notes below, there are further resources and links pertaining to the criteria on the [Eco Denominational Awards](#) web page. Districts can **only apply** for a silver award if they have already achieved a Bronze Eco District award. Fill in this pro forma to track your progress and show how you meet the silver criteria.

- 1) Ownership:** A sense of ownership by other groups (e.g. Finance) is also important for the long-term delivery of Eco District.
- a) Ideally, the committee/ working group would include a representative of the District Policy Committee. The group would also be regularly reporting Eco District progress at a District level. This shows a wider commitment and accountability towards the long-term delivery of Eco District.
  - b) Eco District is promoted/ advertised on the District website with key milestones/ progress shared. Another opportunity is for your District to engage at the Methodist Conference and Connexional levels to help implement and embed the [Methodist Church Action for Hope](#) programme.

## 2) Eco Church awards

For help gathering the statistics needed to create your summary table, District Environment leads can contact [ecochurch@arocha.org](mailto:ecochurch@arocha.org) to request access to their denominational data for up-to-date statistics of Eco Church registrations and awards. This data will include any Local Ecumenical Partnership churches. Please note, in order to comply with GDPR, access to data is limited to one Eco Lead per District. Please choose the most appropriate person to have the data access and conduct this analysis on behalf of the Eco Lead (if different from the Eco Lead).

An example of a summary table is as follows:

Criteria	Number	%
Number of churches in your District	100	
Number of churches registered with Eco Church	50	50%
Number of churches with a bronze, silver or gold Eco Church award	24 Bronze 15 Silver 1 Gold	
Number of churches with an Eco Church award	40	40%
Number of churches with a silver or higher Eco Church award	16	16%
Date of data compilation	1st Aug 2025	

- 3) Achieved the relevant Eco Church award level in relation to its District office and demonstrated sustainability into everyday office functions and policies.**

How you answer this question depends on whether your District office is based in a church, manse, or rented office space.

- a) For District offices located in **a church building**:

Please include the date on which the Church achieved its Silver Eco Church award.

- b) For District offices located in **a manse**

Share your EPC certificate (this should be at C or above).

See the [Methodist Guidelines for Manses](#) section 5 on EPC ratings. Energy Savings Trust has a [Guide to Energy Performance Certificates](#) and also offers further energy advice including how you can find your EPC rating.

c) For District offices in **rented premises** you'll need to register on the Eco Church platform, start a new Eco Church survey and answer all eight questions in the [buildings and energy category for pathway three](#), which is for churches without their own building (e.g. those that meet in rented space or outdoors) and all 14 questions in the [land and nature category for pathway two](#): for churches with very limited land OR that do not own/manage any land. You'll need to achieve the **silver** threshold for both these survey categories in order to receive your Silver Eco Church certificate. Please send an email to [ecochurch@arocha.org](mailto:ecochurch@arocha.org) to let the team know your survey is ready to be assessed in advance of submitting your award application, so that you can receive your Eco Church certificate. Please use the additional comments section to provide any extra information that supports your response.

#### **Required for all District offices:**

Provide a paragraph on how the District office has demonstrated sustainability in everyday office functions and policies.

#### **4) Environmental Policy**

Ideally, a holistic environmental policy needs to extend across the whole District and critically needs to include biodiversity as well as buildings and energy. It will communicate and demonstrate an understanding of the interconnected challenge of the biodiversity and climate crises and provide pathways for action. It will include how each District will achieve net zero by 2030 and refer to the [Action for Hope](#) recommended areas of implementation (for example travel, energy use, and investment) and Net Zero documentation. Yorkshire West has examples of an [Environment Policy](#) and a [Climate Change policy](#).

Support and advice on your environmental policy can be sought from the Action for Hope team.

#### **Here are some suggested areas:**

- i. Spell out a commitment to act responsibly on matters of environmental concern (climate and nature)
- ii. Identify ways in which this commitment can be translated into action
- iii. Identify how progress can be measured.
- iv. Include a timescale for 2030 Net Zero targets and an associated monitoring and action plan
- v. Follow Action for Hope principles of assets, wisdom, and lifestyle
- vi. Include a timeline for reviewing their policy
- vii. Date of policy publication
- Viii. Date signed off at Synod

#### **5) Carbon Reduction**

The Methodist Conference has set a target of becoming a [net zero emissions church by 2030](#). The Eco District Silver criteria aligns with this target and uses the Methodist Conference Net Zero resources.

- a) Provide a plan detailing the approach to assessing and improving the energy efficiency of District-owned manses (including those rented out). You may like to use these pointers to formulate your plan:
  - i) All manses owned by the District need to be EPC C-rated and above (to include owned by the District and rented out properties). There are EPC Ratings in the [Guidelines for Manses](#) (updated Jan 2024). So for example, if your District has a single manse we would anticipate an EPC rating of C or above for that single manse. You can [find an Energy Certificate here](#).
  - ii) As a District you can compare the energy use of each manse as part of their Net Zero Carbon Action Plan. A useful tool to support you with calculating your carbon footprint for your manse is through [footprintr.me](#) which is the carbon emissions calculator from Climate Stewards for individuals and households. You can select the categories that best fit your situation e.g. energy only. Compiling a



[Footprintr.me](#) report can be used to help identify which manse have the highest carbon footprint.

- b) A District's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan will demonstrate how your District is working towards the Methodist Net Zero target. The action plan will show how your District is working together with Circuits and churches, to identify churches with high carbon emissions and formulate a strategy to address this and reduce carbon emissions. The Methodist Action for Hope programme encourages the faith-consistent use of assets - including energy, travel, food, waste, water and other expenditure. For further resources to help formulate an action plan refer to the [Action for Hope webpage](#). One way you can work with Circuits to identify churches with high carbon emissions is to refer to the [Get Your Building Down to Net Zero guidelines](#). Guidance is also available for energy audits and carbon footprint toolkits (360 Carbon) in the [Assess your Building & Energy Usage guidelines](#).

## 6. Protect and Restore Nature

- a) A Silver Eco District will have raised awareness within the District of local, national and global biodiversity and nature loss. Some examples of biodiversity campaigns Districts can support locally include tree and hedge planting projects, supporting local nature reserves. Nationally there is the [Nature 2030 campaign](#), A Rocha UK's [Target 25 initiative](#), [Net Zero in my Neighbourhood](#), the Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill which commits to reversing the destruction of nature by 2030 and promoting national wildlife surveys like RSPB Big Garden Watch or other nature surveys throughout the year. For other ideas of ways to protect and restore nature refer to the [Eco Church land and nature resources](#).
- b) A Silver Eco District will be championing and sharing about churches that have transformed their land to be more nature and wildlife friendly. Ideally, these nature-friendly churches represent a broad cross-section of churches within the District, for example: Eco Church award levels, urban or rural settings, small or large green spaces, and tarmacked areas. Working with circuits to identify these churches will help share the message about tackling both the climate and nature crises. Settle Methodist Church is a great example of a Gold Eco Church that [transformed a paved space into a haven for wildlife](#). Further examples are listed on the [Methodist Net-Zero-Outdoors webpage](#).
- c) If the District owns or manages land (not covered by manse or churches) then we recommend that you create land and nature management plans. Please see our [Guidance on how to create a land management plan](#).

## 7. Schools

Although Methodist schools are not in the direct control of the District, it might be possible for the Districts to engage with Methodist schools to promote care for creation, for example by encouraging: net zero awareness /sustainable buildings, the use of their land in a nature-friendly way, and promoting environmental awareness in the classroom. There are various projects for schools which you might like to explore and encourage your schools to engage with, such as [Christian Aid's Global Neighbours](#), [Eco Schools](#) and [Let's Go Zero](#). [Creative for Climate Justice](#) from the Climate Coalition and [Spirited Arts](#) from NATRE are opportunities for schools to engage in climate and nature through art.

In addition, A Rocha UK has a series of [Education Plans for primary and secondary schools](#) to promote exploring nature and caring for our planet through both indoor and outdoor activities.

## 8. Training and development

Training and development will look very different in each District. Evidence needs to be provided to show the breadth of training offered to ministers, staff and volunteers rather than a few 'experts'. Training and development will cover practical technical aspects of carbon reduction, protecting and restoring nature, as well as Christianity, faith and

creation theology. Training may be delivered in-house, or via external courses. This does not need to be a formal education opportunity but can include webinars etc.

### **Opportunities for all**

Environmental training and creation care theology should not be an optional extra in a package of training, nor left to church leaders alone. Encourage your District Property Secretary and District Grants Secretaries (as appropriate) to engage with environmental issues such as net zero and biodiversity and consider these areas in their work, inviting local experts, or a gold-awarded church to share their Eco Church journey or participate in environmental webinars.

Districts also have a role to support circuits in their continuing development of ministers and lay preachers around net zero and biodiversity. You can do this by communicating to circuits and signposting training opportunities facilitated by the Connexional Team or another external organisation. You could also arrange a conversation with someone from the Learning Network.

A helpful resource to support your training and development is the recently formed [Methodist Eco Community](#) which offers regular online forums.

### **Eco Champions**

To build and maintain momentum in this area, the District has a role in equipping and empowering advocates. A network of committed promoters and activists should be equipped to help support and enable uptake, for example amongst less well-resourced churches. To this end, development and learning opportunities should be offered to staff and volunteers within the District to act as eco champions. For more resources to support Eco Champions visit our [Promoting Eco Church page](#), which includes a resource on '[Ideas for stalls and talks](#)'.

## **9. Finance and Investments**

In 2021 the [Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church](#) (CFB) fully divested from fossil fuel companies. Therefore, any District funds invested with the CFB are divested and are considered to be funded ethically. For any District funds not invested in CFB, there needs to be due consideration of the environmental implications/opportunities of such investments, taking into account the climate change investment policy of the DFB. (All District funds are invested in line with ethical principles consistent with good environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria).

The [Green Investment Declaration](#) is a toolkit to enable church institutions, such as circuits and Districts, not only to have an impact through their investments but also speak publicly about it. Becoming a signatory to this declaration is a clear way to demonstrate your fulfilment of this section of the Eco District award criteria.

Helpful ethical investment guidelines can be found in: the climate change investment policy of the [Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church](#) and the [Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment \(JACEI\)](#). Other helpful resources and support are available via the [Just Money Movement](#). Efforts to consider cash investments in high street banks are also encouraged. Where banks are used, we encourage them to be challenged to share their environmental and social policies, see [The Greener, Fairer Banking Guide](#) for more information.

Grant funding is available from [Action for Hope](#) - contact Hamish Leese ([LeeseH@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:LeeseH@methodistchurch.org.uk)) for more information. If applicable, use of District Advance Fund (DAF) Grants and [Benefact Trust's Methodist Grants](#) can also be explored.

## **10. Collaboration**

Collaboration is about joining forces with others for a greater positive impact on the environment. Partner with groups such as secular environmental organisations, other faith groups, Christian organisations and churches at a local, national or international level to raise awareness of climate change and species loss and respond with action. Share how you are actively collaborating.

Circuits are an important network within the District - working with your Circuits to [promote Eco Church](#) will be another important collaboration opportunity.

Nationally, the [Joint Public Issues Team \(JPIT\)](#) and [Net Zero in my Neighbourhood](#), can offer helpful resources and campaigns for your District to support, as well as other external environmental-focused organisations.

Globally, the [Methodist Global Relations Team](#) highlights partnerships with churches across the world and those impacted by climate change, for example mission partners who are currently overseas/ visiting the UK/ returned can be approached to give updates.

## **11. Celebrating Creation**

Demonstrate that environmental issues are regularly on the agenda at meetings and practical action is taking place. Share information visually on social media, news and stories on the District website and via other communication channels such as newsletters and press releases. Celebrations can reflect the facets of care for creation e.g. projects demonstrably cutting carbon, restoring nature, celebration of Eco Church awards, and District steps to facilitate networking of local Eco Church groups.

Share the progress of your Eco District with regular updates of the number of Eco Church registrations and Eco Church awards across your District. You may also like to find ways to weave this into existing publications e.g. add an eco focus to your District newsletter. Share social media posts celebrating your eco awards, and don't forget to tag A Rocha UK's social media accounts (use the hashtag #EcoChurch). This could be a collaborative effort e.g. by encouraging people to send in good news stories.

Celebrations of Eco Church achievements can be a source of encouragement and learning for churches. These may take the form of special services, events or artistic projects. You might consider planning events around national events such as the [Season of Creation](#) and [Great Big Green Week](#).