

# Caring for the Earth

## Suggested Terms of Reference for a Task Group to develop an Environmental Strategy for the Diocese of Worcester

The purpose of a diocesan environmental strategy would be to identify appropriate and achievable steps that will reduce the Church's environmental footprint and will fit in with frameworks being developed nationally (*Shrinking the Footprint*). The visionary and prophetic role of the Church could necessitate this being a far reaching and costly strategy.

### Background

On 7 November 2006 Church Action Within Society (CAWS) recommended the commissioning of a task group to enable the diocese to develop an environmental strategy that is owned by the decision making bodies of the church and its members.

Recognition of the need to take environmental issues into account has led to a variety of responses or stratagems within the diocese. Their scope was set out briefly by officers and advisers in respect of the Old Palace, parsonage houses, church buildings and school buildings. These papers were received by CAWS together with a detailed paper setting out some suggestions about what might be included in the strategy. They will be available to the task group.

### Terms of Reference

To recommend an environmental strategy to the Diocesan Synod during 2007, after approval of the draft by Bishop's Council.

One focus in the Diocesan Priorities (Taylor Report) is *Caring for the Earth*. The strategy should set out steps for the development of awareness of the theological, ethical and practical implications of this for churches, church members and diocesan office holders and employees.

One purpose of the environmental strategy will be to enable the church to produce sustainable reductions in the Church's carbon emissions to 40% of current levels by 2050. Realising these reductions requires considerable commitment and effort over a period of many years. The strategy should give direction to that effort within the Diocese of Worcester and state the nature of the support that will be offered to church members, clergy and the councils, synods, boards and committees of the church and set intermediate targets.

The strategy should set out ways in which:

- decision making bodies and individuals can express their commitment to caring for the earth;
- environmental and energy information is to be gathered, evaluated and distributed;
- Church property can demonstrate how the built and natural environment can be appropriately conserved and enhanced;
- the impact of transport to worship and church meetings can be reduced
- people and churches can be energised for change e.g. by learning problem-solving skills or through incentives and loans
- partnership working might be achieved
- progress can be monitored and reviewed
- implementation of the strategy could be resourced (DAC and Resources Board to be consulted)

Travel to the meetings of the task group are to be carbon offset