**A Suggested Generic Policy for Flowers in and around Churches**

***“Flower arrangements in church are an act of worship and so should honour God’s creation in every way.”*** *Shane Connolly, Floral Designer*

*[Name of Church]* is committed to honouring God’s creation by being responsible stewards in relation to the use of flowers in and around the church. The church and congregation registered with the Eco Church movement and are working towards achieving *Bronze/Silver/ Gold*. This has a wide scope including sustainable resourcing as well as discipleship, life style changes and the reduction of Co2.

The areas of this policy include;

* Sourcing of Flowers for arranging.
* Arranging flowers
* Disposal of flowers
* Flowers left in the Church yard

As well as being a policy for the churches flower arrangers it is also for external florists for weddings, funerals and other events.

**Sourcing of Flowers**

Wherever possible all flowers should be seasonal and of this order of priority-

1. local, e.g. from local gardens and producers.
2. grown in the UK (but not under heated conditions) There are increasing numbers of flower producers in the UK and supermarkets usually have a choice of seasonal UK produce.
3. transported by road or rail freight from Europe, avoiding air freight. NB: Flowers grown abroad e.g. in hot countries require vast amounts of water and are sprayed with chemicals such as insecticides and preservatives which are not always licenced in the UK.

When local or UK grown are more difficult, dried or silk flowers can be considered as a good alternative, which can of course be reused again and again.

**Arranging Flowers**

All arrangements for services and events, in and outside the church, must be Floral Foam Free (commonly called ‘Oasis’). The reasons for this are environmental, along with our desire to care for creation:

* Floral foam is a by-product of the Petroleum Industry and is a plastic derivative.
* Floral foam takes up to 500 years to degrade. “Enhanced Degradable Foam” is also a plastic product and degrades (*but does not compost*) to micro plastics in under five years ONLY IF it is placed in “Ideal Landfill Conditions” (see ‘Oasis’ website). It is no better for the environment than ordinary floral foam.
* Several known ingredients of Floral Foam are Carcinogenic. It is not good for the environment or for the people working with it.
* The water in which Floral Foam is soaked contains billions of chemical-ridden micro-plastics. When it is poured down a drain it contaminates the water system and, eventually, the Marine Environment.

New varieties of Floral foam are described as ‘**biodegradeable**’. This means in this case that it breaks down quickly into miscroplastics. **It is not Compostable** and is even worse than the original. Old Oasis should be disposed by being sent to a municipal incinerator which is the *least bad* method of disposal. It should not be put to landfill as it breaks down into the water systems.

There are many traditional flower supporting techniques for all sizes of vases or pedestals.

More information can be found on sustainable church flowers websites

Flowers on the Altar should respect the significance and presence of the Cross. Candles will be placed at each side of the cross.

During Lent and Easter there are not normally flowers in the church.

**Disposal of flowers.**

Flowers and greenery should be placed on the compost heap or deposited in a green collection bin as appropriate.

**Flowers in Churchyard**

This is perhaps more difficult to manage especially with regard to the type of flowers brought to graves, but a visible notice in the churchyard may encourage people to abide by the policy.

Plastic flower wrapping should be discouraged, but the facility to collect and send to recycling should be provided in the churchyard.

**More information:**

* [www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/bishop-calls-for-sustainable-church-flowers.php](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/bishop-calls-for-sustainable-church-flowers.php)
* Find a local supplier: [www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk](http://www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk)
* Visit the Sustainable Church Flowers website: <https://suschurchflowers.com/>
* Search Sustainable Church Flowers on Youtube and Instagram