



Thames North Synod Green Apostle for Thames North

**Paper F
20 March
2021**

Proposal

As part of its strategy to implement the 2016 URC Environmental Policy and to respond to the growing climate and ecological crisis, Thames North Synod meeting on 20 March 2021, agrees to create a Synod Appointee position, namely a Thames North Synod Green Apostle.

Background

Members of Thames North Synod have had a longstanding concern for the environment and a desire to better care for God's creation. In recent years there have been regular reports of churches becoming Eco Churches and a Synod decision to disinvest from fossil fuels was successfully implemented in 2019. As part of the 2016 URC Environmental Policy, members of Synod have been attending the URC Green Apostles meeting on an informal basis since 2017. The Synod Executive supports the above proposal to formalise this arrangement, by creating the post of Thames North Synod Green Apostle, to help and encourage the Synod in the further steps necessary to implement the URC Environmental Policy and to respond to the growing climate crisis.

A Green Apostle for Thames North

A Green Apostle is an individual appointed by the Synod to help the Church work towards climate justice. The Green Apostles have responded to the environmental crisis that has economic, social and political implications and feel called to raise awareness about climate disruption within their Church settings, at a local and regional level.

Green Apostles share a vision of a world in which:

- There is a passionate love for God's creation.
- Christians are especially positive advocates for climate justice.
- Care for God's creation is embedded within the discipleship and mission of the Church and is an integral part of the individual spiritual journey.
- Climate disruption has been challenged and where possible, reversed.

The Green Apostle's Role is:

- a) to help monitor progress on carbon reduction in the synod (and to report regularly to the Discipleship Steering Group and to Synod meeting as appropriate).
- b) to be a member of the URC Green Apostles' Group (which meets twice a year to share news and information).
- c) to promote the URC Environmental Policy within the Synod and encourage implementation by local churches, Synod committees and Synod itself.
- d) to promote the Eco Church programme among local churches and help the Synod move to Eco Synod status <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/eco-synod/>.
- e) to encourage the Synod to celebrate success and progress in this area, especially with regards to churches who have won Eco Church Awards.
- f) to gather those with expertise and interest in this field from time to time to share ideas and good practice, in liaison with the Church and Society Network.

The role is a voluntary unpaid one and if undertaken by a minister will not affect their scoping. Necessary expenses will be paid (travel and resources), but these will be kept to a minimum (it is not envisaged that the role will involve major travelling, especially as one of the main purposes is to help reduce the Synod's carbon footprint).

NOTE If the Synod so desired and there was a suitable candidate, a second Green Apostle could be appointed to share in this work.

Proposer: Terry Hinks, supported by the Executive Committee.