



The Methodist Church as a whole is very committed to working towards living more sustainably. The York Circuit of churches has a 'Green Heart' and we are working hard to make our buildings more efficient and to consider the natural world in our decision making. We have a York wide Group called the Eco Task Force, which, as the name suggests, is very practical and offers help and support in encouraging our churches, congregations and our communities to live in a way that is kinder to both people and planet. As part of this we are part of the Eco church Programme. We are well on the path, with many churches attaining silver or bronze awards.

The ethos is very much 'progress, not perfection'. We can all do the best we can, in our own particular circumstances, recognising that sometimes it is difficult to do the right thing in the world we live in. Not everyone can afford solar panels, and some people have family that live abroad which means they fly often, so we all just help each other muddle along as best we can.

At Forest Church, the hope is to encourage a closer connection to nature. When we connect to something, we care about it; when we care about it, we want to protect it. Forest Church is partly a response to the realisation that the way we live is just not working; it's harmful to ourselves and the planet. It's also making us unwell, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. From the food we eat, to our phone addiction, increased inequality, a pandemic of loneliness and living in a nature depleted country. Something has to change.

At Forest church we hope that we can gather people who feel that there has to be a better, kinder, way to live. Somewhere we can figure out together this crazy old thing we call 'life'.

Our sustainability commitment can be summed up as simply 'It's just what we do'. In all of our decisions, we will have consciously or unconsciously thought about whether we can do it in such a way that is kind to people and nature. This will range from deciding what we eat, how we travel, products we use for activities and so many other small decisions. It's about an attitude of caring rather than having a huge to do list of things we will and won't do.

So, we hope to encourage things like repair cafes, book groups, nature-based crafts, practical talks on living more sustainably and maybe even trips out to 'wild' places or 'field trips' to places that might help us see how other people and organisations are finding ways to live better.

When we are 'on site' at a garden or other green space, we will tread lightly, quite literally, so we have respect for our 'non-human' community who we will be sharing the space with. It is their home, after all, so we will make sure we respect the space and treat it gently and, of course, tidy up after ourselves. In travelling to and from the garden, we will encourage people to use public transport, cycle, walk, or car share, wherever possible.

After being in the green space, we will head back to the nearest church for refreshment. We will do our very best to use produce that is 'LOAF' locally grown, organic, animal friendly and fair trade.

We'll be trying not to buy 'new stuff' for activities, but using up what we have, or asking our group to bring unused items from home. No doubt, our group will also have suggestions for how to run the group more sustainably, so this will be an evolving picture.