

The Lay Community of Saint Benedict

14. Environmental Policy

ANNEX 2: Suggestions to Consider for Individuals

Introduction

1. **Statement of Intent and internal implementation:** A Statement of Intent in relation to Caring for Creation was approved by the Community's Council on 16 September 2023 and by its Trustees on 18 November 2023. The Statement of Intent envisages that the Community will prepare and from time to time review a separate internal implementation paper setting out how it intends to take and promote effective action on the environmental issues facing the world in the ways in which it organises itself and arranges events and activities. This is covered in Annex 1.
2. **Suggestions to consider:** The Statement of Intent also envisages that the Community will from time to time prepare, review and circulate collections of suggestions encouraging members and others to consider how, on a personal basis, they might live simply and sustainably and, through their prayers, example and encouragement, might influence others to do likewise and so to help care for our common home. This document sets out further details of how it is intended that this should be done.
3. **Nature of suggestions:** The suggestions to be made as part of this process are intended to be for members to consider and not as rules or requirements imposed by the Community. It is the personal responsibility of those to whom any such suggestions are made to decide how they should respond. It is acknowledged that individual members' circumstances may be such that it is not feasible for them to adopt particular suggestions. Similarly, some suggestions may cover a spectrum of possible actions not all of which are feasible.
4. **Campaigning and political activities:** Having regard to:
 - (a) the nature of the Community as one for those who embrace Benedictine spirituality;
 - (b) the Community's inclusive ethos and its policy on Toleration and Mutual Respect, a copy of which is available on the Community's website (see 1 above); and
 - (c) the requirements of the Community's charitable status,the Community does not engage, and does not want to be perceived as engaging, in campaigning or political activities.

The Community nevertheless recognises that the extent to which individuals can have an impact on caring for creation may be significantly enhanced if they not only live simply and sustainably but also engage in appropriate campaigning and political activities both in the UK and internationally. The Community has no wish to inhibit members and others from engaging in such activities provided that there is no suggestion that they are endorsed by or performed on behalf of the Community.

5. **Approval of suggestions:** Any suggestions to be made to members and/or others as part of this process must first be approved by two members of the Community's Caring for Creation group, and further approved by the Community Leader (who may also consult with Council, trustees or others) prior to publication.

As a charity the Community cannot suggest any illegal acts or acts of civil disobedience.

Further work is likely to be necessary to develop a framework and process for the approval and "curation" of suggestions and resources and related matters.

6. **Keeping oneself informed:** Members and others are encouraged to keep themselves informed about caring for creation issues. The Caring for Creation group intends to draw their attention (by means of all the Community's established means of communication) to documents, links, blogs and other resources that may be helpful in this regard. Leading examples include:
 - "Laudato Si'", which is available at [Laudato si' \(24 May 2015\) | Francis \(vatican.va\)](#);
 - CAFOD's materials about Laudato Si', which are available at: [Laudato Si' encyclical resources \(cafod.org.uk\)](#); and
 - Nicholas Holtam's book "Sleepers Wake – Getting Serious about Climate Change".
7. **Other resources:** The Caring for Creation group is conscious that resources containing suggestions and recommendations are made available by other organisations, such as the Ethical Consumer, whose website is available at <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>. Where appropriate, it may be better to refer members and others to this and other websites (rather than risk reinventing the wheel not terribly well) and to focus instead on how suggestions can add value from an LCSB / Benedictine / Laudato Si' perspective. If this is done, care may need to be taken to ensure that references to such resources are not taken as endorsing them without reservation in case they include material that is not consistent with the Community's ethos.
8. **Form of suggestions:** It is envisaged that suggestions will be made in a number of different forms. In view of the breadth, dynamism and pace of change of the field covered by Laudato Si', it is not currently intended to seek to prepare a single consolidated collection of suggestions. It is intended instead to issue a series of collections of suggestions, each based on a single theme. Members and others will be encouraged to respond with their own comments and suggestions with a view to each collection being improved and updated in a dynamic way.

9. **Possible themes:** The themes to be covered may include:

- (a) heating, insulation and ventilation;
- (b) travel (including commuting to work, holidays and other travel);
- (c) carbon offsetting arrangements;
- (d) water;
- (e) food and drink;
- (f) clothing and fabrics;
- (g) gardening and protecting biodiversity;
- (h) purchasing (including domestic appliances, lighting etc);
- (i) recycling and waste;
- (j) savings and investments;
- (k) charitable and other giving; and
- (l) collaborating with others (including local parishes) and joining other organisations.

13 October 2023