



## Synagogue Environmental Policy – Example

### Introduction.

This template example is based on one that has been kindly shared by Angelina Doherty at West London Synagogue and EcoSynagogue thanks her and West London Synagogue for their generosity.

Please use this example as a starting point for your own communities. Each community is different both physically, in terms of its environmental priorities and its position on its environmental journey.

There is no right or wrong to your policy. It should reflect your current position, aims and objectives, and be a statement of commitment from all Synagogue stakeholders.

When you have completed yours, please send us your template to add to our bank of resources, as another example to help other communities.



### Policy Document for XXX Synagogue. Date: XXX

XXX Synagogue Board/Council has approved and implemented this environmental policy and a formal commitment has been made by the Rabbinic, lay and professional leadership in our community to improving the environmental credentials of our synagogue and by endorsing our obligations as an EcoSynagogue. This policy reflects existing procedures and measures within XXX Synagogue that ensure issues highlighted in the EcoSynagogue Audit are addressed and taken forward frequently and strategically. (See "The Environmental Audit – Questions" from [The EcoSynagogue website](#).)

**Signed & Dated by** .....

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## **More Detail.**

### **1. Management.**

The XXX Synagogue Board/Council has in turn approved an “Environmental Impact Team” in accordance with EcoSynagogue guidance to investigate and improve on issues highlighted in the EcoSynagogue Audit. (See “Getting Started”–Environmental Impact Team & 5 E’s” from EcoSynagogue.) The Environmental Impact Team represents different generations of our Community or/and people with different lifestyles. On the date of approval of this policy, the Environmental Impact Team is currently as follows:

Rabbinical representative: XXX

Board representative: XXX

Social Action Forum representative: XXX

Education: XXX

Operations/Maintenance/Admin: XXX

In addition, the team has a volunteer pool of members who also contribute.

### **2. Prayer.**

XXX Synagogue promotes environmental activities as an expression of our concerns for the environment with follow up actions and frequently delivers special sermons about environmental issues while highlighting our current environmental projects (such as the Environmental Impact Team and EcoSynagogue) and actively encourages the congregation to become involved through follow-up actions. The environment is a constant theme throughout the Jewish year and Rabbis include the environment as an important theme in many aspects of synagogue engagement.

### **3. Teaching.**

The environment features throughout the year as a teaching theme in our education syllabus for those under Bar and Bat Mitzvah age, in our Bar & Bat Mitzvah teaching, our youth and adult programming, in our synagogue’s shiurim and during Jewish and world environmental touch point events. Wherever possible, learning materials, texts and prayers are provided online to reduce energy consumption.

## 4. Community.

XXX Synagogue is committed to engaging with our community regarding environmental issues. EcoSynagogue events and values are actively promoted, specific environmental issues are given particular focus such as waste and the connection to the mitzvah Bal Tashchit, not to destroy or to waste, and on repairing and improving the world through the Jewish concept of Tikkun Olam. Our synagogue organises events around Jewish festivals (Sukkot, Tu B'Shevat) that bring awareness to environmental issues and invites local leaders, environmentalists, organisations, providing opportunities for members to address local and national environmental issues.

## 5. Communications.

XXX Synagogue's communications (eNews, website, Social Media and other) focus on environmental issues, provide updates on the progress of our environmental projects and encourage members to become involved. Specifically, our communications highlight environmental issues that are relevant to current parashot, Jewish holidays and environmental touch-point events within in the Jewish community, nationally and globally, and as a reflection of the connection between Judaism and the environment. These communications provide additional relevant information about solutions to environmental issues for members at home, at work, in the garden, within the Jewish community, and nationally and globally. The communications include a call to action and encourage members to become involved, to support campaigns, to become a volunteer for the Environmental Impact Team, and provides an opportunity for members to share their concerns on environmental issues, and to give feedback. Our communications offer practical lifestyle tips and advice on caring for the environment. Specific actions and awareness of certain issues are shared including encouraging members to consider alternatives highlighted in the EcoSynagogue Audit Lifestyle Section. Additionally, public transport, walking and cycling advice is included for our events at the Synagogue. At the end of the Jewish year, a digital member survey will be distributed to our members to receive feedback about changes they have made to their lifestyle. Feedback and approach to communications will be reviewed and improved upon for the following Jewish year through a digital member survey.

Rabbis embolden our communications by highlighting them during services, classes and meetings current to the date of release, sometimes with follow up actions and actively encourage members to get involved.

## 6. Buildings & Consumables.

XXX Synagogue has made several changes to our synagogue's building and consumables with consideration to the environment. Over time, our Environmental Impact Team will review ways in which to improve on this further and put forward for consideration and approval by the XXX Synagogue Board/Council. The following are current measures taken by XXX Synagogue:

- Composting facilities are available on our synagogue premises.
- A space on the roof is reserved for planting with students and members and the space can be used most times for

members to connect with nature and become involved in planting.

- In terms of energy efficiency, the boilers on our synagogue premises have a low environmental impact

(NO<sub>x</sub><40mg/kWh) for maximum BREEAM credits.

- The lighting in our synagogue building uses energy-efficient light bulbs in our main sanctuary, in some of our halls and

in some of our offices and classrooms. For each light fixture that needs replaced, an LED fixture is installed.

- The water supply to our synagogue premises is metered.

- Some of the toilet cisterns on our synagogue premises are fitted with water saving devices.

- In the event of the need to undertake a building/refurbishment project, our synagogue would insist that it be subject

to a BREEAM or similar assessment to ensure best practice in sustainable building design, construction, and operation.

- The basement serves as a bicycle storage space for members who cycle.

- Our synagogue generates some of energy we use from solar PV panels.

- Our community administration uses recycled paper.

- Paper usage is reduced through double-sided copying/printing and digital distribution.

- Disposable catering products (e.g., paper cups and plates etc.) provided by our community administration are

biodegradable and we will move to having no disposables and all cleaning products provided by our community

administration are environmentally friendly.

- Recycled toilet paper is provided by our community administration.

- Paper, glass, cans, plastics, fabrics, TerraCycle or similar are collected, sorted and recycled by XXX Council.

- Only vegetarian or vegan food is permitted within the building at all times included catered events.

- On some occasions our synagogue invests its funds ethically and rates the Environmental, Social and Governance

sustainability of its portfolio.

- Users of our premises are encouraged to minimise resource use.

- Our carbon emissions will be calculated and offset through communal tree-planting.

- We have set targets to reducing our carbon footprint

## **Policy Date.**