

BENEFICE ENVIRONMENT GROUP

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

The Benefice Environmental Group would like to suggest to the Benefice, as well as the wider Diocese, that recommendations are put in place to discourage the use of Generative AI (examples including Large Language Models such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Grok, and Claude) in delivery of most services, particularly promotional materials, sermons and addresses, public communications, and children's materials.

We recognise that Generative AI can have many uses and that in some cases its use may be justified, but it also brings with it a host of ethical concerns, including those of data-scraping, alleged copyright infringement, bias, promotion of incorrect information or misinformation, and - perhaps most important to the work of the Church - reducing the "human touch". It also proves divisive with the public, with a recent King's College London study showing that nearly half of the public would rather avoid AI¹. However, of chief concern to the BEG are the energy and water requirements of producing Generative AI. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology estimate that in 2026, Generative AI will consume enough energy worldwide to place it fifth on the global consumption list, between Russia and Japan². It also places further demand on water supplies (used for cooling in data centres), adding more stress to an already stressed system.

Whilst the use of Generative AI by the Church will be miniscule in comparison to its use in wider society, we feel that making recommendations in the limiting of its use would set a positive example and provide challenge to the local and national institutions promoting its increased use at the expense of the climate.

Adopted by Witney PCC on 29 June 2026

Signed *Hester Jones*

Counter-signed *Kate Banks*

¹ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/one-in-five-britons-think-ai-will-create-civil-unrest-study-finds>

² <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>