

Producing a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

Introduction

You may have a number of thoughts such as...

"I don't understand the whole "net zero" thing!"

"Our church has no money or time for this!"

We would however ask that you approach the action planning ...

- **With an open mind** - a "plan" is not an immediate binding commitment, and it doesn't always require expensive actions.
- **With curiosity**- We will explain as best we can some of the basics in this document but feel free to contact the diocesan team, we are happy to help you.
- **With positivity** - Dream big! Remember why we are trying to lower our emissions. Your positivity will help others in your church get on board, and having people on board is key!

How did we work out the Top 20%?

We used the 2024 Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) results from parish returns. So, it is the data that you entered into the system.

We are focussing on the Top 20% of carbon emitters as those churches produce over 50% of the carbon emitted by churches in the diocese.

Being in the top 20% is not a bad thing!

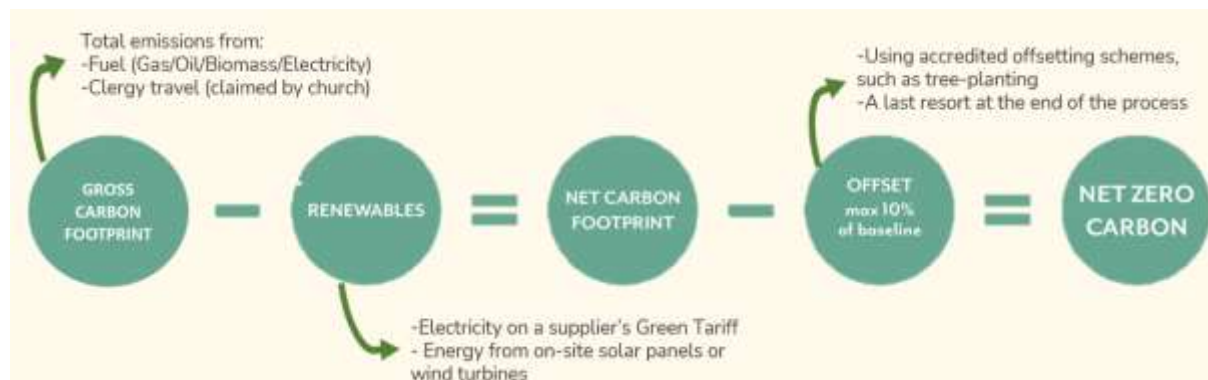
We tend to see larger, well-used, missional churches in the top 20%. Please do not stop all of the fantastic activities and support you provide for your church community.

You will receive support and help - and hopefully lower bills in the long run.

What is Net Zero Carbon?

Our day-to-day activities produce carbon emissions and these emissions exacerbate global warming. As a result, global warming (climate change) leads to droughts, floods, storms, sea-level rises and it is the developing nations who are the worst affected. However, many of us may have experienced more heavy rain and flooding that has had an impact locally in our own communities

Getting to Net Zero = reducing our emissions so that we lower our contribution to global warming.



Why should our church care?

- The Bible commands that we are to be stewards of God's creation
- The Bible commands us to love our (local and global) neighbour
- 5th Mark of mission
- Diocesan Priority - Caring for God's Creation
- General Synod Motion - July 2022

"That this Synod, having recognised that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice, and following General Synod's motion passed in February 2020 to plan to reach net zero carbon by 2030:

a) endorse the "Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030" ...

*c) request high energy users within the Church (every cathedral, TEI, school, office and **the top 20% of energy-consuming churches**) to similarly draw up a programme of action, with a clear time frame, based on the Routemap...*

Why do we need a church action plan?

- Requirement of the national Routemap to Net Zero Carbon
- Requirement of Diocesan Net Zero Action Plan
- Helps you to have a better awareness of energy usage = lower carbon footprint = better stewardship of God's creation
- Will open up funding opportunities, and actions may well save you money into the future.

Action Plan – Phase 1

Many churches will have already done the first few steps.

Step 1: PCC to nominate a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Lead on the PCC and if appropriate form a small NZC Working Group.

The Net Zero Carbon Lead does not need to be anyone with any particular experience of this. It just needs to be someone with a desire to see us take better care of the planet that God has created for us to live on. They may already be involved in any Eco Church work that you are doing or they may not. It would be good to form a small group as action plans can be difficult to write on your own, but don't try and write it with the whole PCC, probably a group of 3 or 4 would work best. It may be useful to include the treasurer if they are willing as they are probably the person who has access to the utility bills.

Add NZC to every PCC Agenda *It is important that the progress of your action plan is shared regularly with your full PCC*

Step 2: Complete Energy Footprint Tool on the Parish Returns Website and summarise the information in the table.

Step 3: Complete the Practical Path to Net Zero Checklist. This will help you identify some areas for immediate action and longer-term action

The action plan process has been split into 3 phases over an 18 month period so that you have time to understand the options and develop an action plan that is relevant and can be delivered. Even after you have a full action plan it will continue to be a live document as technologies will change, as might the usage of your buildings.

At this initial stage it is important to not let potential costs dictate your plan as you may miss an opportunity that may be viable in a year or two's time.

Step 4: Review the Church Building Council (CBC) Guidance on Net Zero Carbon

A large number of resources have been produced and it is worth looking through as much as possible.

If you have a group, you could look through a section each and then feedback to the rest of the group.

The webinars are a good starting point.



Step 5: Begin to form your action plan.

This is a document that will evolve over time, so don't think that you are committed to carrying out all of these actions by 2030. Technology is changing all of the time and there may well be different options for you to consider in a few years' time. The purpose of this document is to help you to begin the journey of reducing your carbon output.

Here is an example of what could be included but don't worry if yours ends up being very different.

Every church building is different and the usage of every building will be different, so what might be appropriate for one building won't be for another.

Quick Wins (zero or minimal cost):

	Action	Resources required	Who's responsible?
1	Clear all the gutters and drain pipes to ensure all walls are kept dry.	Get quote from usual roofing contractor for gutters. Work party to clear all gullies.	Churchwarden
2	Change times of the regular church prayer meetings to follow on from a previous activity and reduce heating times.	None	Vicar
3	Change light fittings to LED lights in the most used areas.	Quote to be obtained from electrician. Permission from Archdeacon	Churchwarden

Step 6: Identify what further support / information that you need to obtain to allow you to develop your action plan.

You will all be starting this from a different point so for some this section may be quite limited, whereas for others you will need a lot more information and support.

Further information and support required:

- Attend training session on "Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building".
- Arrange for Bethan Still to visit the church and talk through some of the different heating options that might be appropriate.
- Contact Martin Howard to discuss what permissions will be required to add zones to the heating system *e.g.* will a faculty be required.

Finally: Send your completed Phase 1 Action Plan to netzero@durham.anglican.org by 31st March. A guidance document is available to guide you through the sections.

Later in the year we will be asking you to develop your plans into a Phase 2 Action Plan but we will send you further details and provide support at that point.

If at any point you need any help or advice, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Howard on martin.howard@durham.anglican.org or 07586090996