



Environment and Climate Justice

November 2020 Diocesan Synod Progress Report

Background

1. In November 2019 Diocesan Synod approved a new Environment and Climate Justice policy, declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon net zero by 2030.
2. This policy made seven commitments and marked the start of a journey towards the Diocese becoming carbon net zero by 2030:
 - Embedding creation care within our worship, teaching and discipleship work;
 - Becoming sustainable consumers, limiting our waste, and reducing our carbon footprint;
 - Encouraging biodiversity and using land sustainably;
 - Increasing our use of renewable energy sources and ensuring energy efficient buildings;
 - Prioritising environmental issues in our financial decision-making;
 - Working with a range of communities on environmental issues, including participating in national and global campaigns;
 - Proactively recording, celebrating and championing environmental initiatives.
3. The Church of England General Synod followed this commitment to a net zero by 2030 target, when it also declared a climate emergency at its February 2020 meeting.

Progress to date

4. There are lots of different examples of how churches have responded to the seven commitments, including: (*Click to read the story*)
 - [Celebrating and participating in the season of creation in 2020](#)
 - [St Peter's Henleaze transformed their churchyard](#)
 - [St Mary's Marshfield worked with the village to create a haven for nature](#)
 - [Revd Hazel Trapnell from St Mary's Stoke Bishop appeared on BBC Gardeners' World to speak about a community gardening project at Hazelwood Court](#)

- [St Helen's CE Primary School joined with St Helen's Alveston to campaign locally and raise awareness of climate change issues](#)
 - [Hazelnut Community Farm launched in Lockleaze creating a model of church and community engagement using urban agriculture, food production, and waste management as tools for social innovation, economic inclusion, and political and spiritual transformation.](#)
 - [Churches in North Wiltshire took on a six week eco challenge through Lent as part of the Diocesan Lent campaign](#)
5. 7 out of 10 churches reported prioritising or taking action on environmental issues in the latest 'Creating connections' survey.

6. **EcoChurch**

EcoChurch is an award scheme for churches who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth, led by A Rocha UK.

To date:

- 40% of churches (65) have registered.
- 9 have been awarded bronze level awards.
- 6 have been awarded silver level awards.

The Diocese of Bristol has been awarded a Bronze EcoDiocese award in recognition of the action taken by churches and directly by the DBF. This included a Silver level award for the Diocesan Office. Work is underway to enable the Diocese achieve EcoDiocese Silver level in 2021.

7. At last November's Synod the first three eco churches in the diocese were presented with their awards. Since then, another 13 churches have been awarded Eco Church certificates. The current list of awarded Eco Churches across the diocese are:

Bronze awarded:

Saint Andrew's, Chippenham
 Wroughton and Wichelstowe
 St Helens, Alveston
 St Mary Redcliffe
 Holy Cross, Sherston Magna
 Cotham Parish Church
 St Paul's Clifton
 St Mary the Virgin, Marshfield
 All Saints, Christian Malford

Silver awarded:

St Matthew & St Nathanael's Church
 St Andrew, Castle Combe

St Mary the Virgin, Seagry
Holy Trinity, Westbury-on-Trym
Hillside House (the Diocesan offices)

If your church has not yet engaged with the scheme. [Please find out more here.](#)

8. **Diocesan Environment Working Group initial action**

Following the November 2019 synod meeting a working group was established to drive some initial steps through 2020. During 2020 this work has:

- Provided ideas, advice and resources to support churches via the diocesan website [here](#);
- Highlighted this priority to CofE schools through the January 2020 'RE to save the planet' education conference with guest speaker Fiona Moss;
- Delivered training sessions within the LLM formation year, Diocesan Support Services and IME 2020 training programmes;
- Taken steps to ensure environmental matters are considered within ministerial learning and development programmes in the future, with some sessions already planned for 2021;
- Established an Environmental Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Environment and Climate Justice policy;
- Launched a Sustainability Award category within the DAC Awards scheme and recruited a Sustainability Adviser to the DAC to ensure environmental impact consideration is given to all applications;
- Through our existing relationship with CCLA, seen the DBF's investments move to a 100% fossil free portfolio;
- Improved recycling and environmentally minded procurement practices at the diocesan office and with regards to diocesan run events;
- Implemented a policy of carbon offsetting, through Creation Stewards, for all flights, and begun exploring opportunities for engagement around environmental issues with our partner dioceses through the Uganda Link Committee;
- Undertaken a baseline analysis and developed plans to support our carbon net zero commitment;
- Supported 16 churches to receive energy efficiency audits through a national trial operated by Parish Buying;
- Spoken through our General Synod Reps to table a motion in the environment debate at General Synod in February 2020 which led to the Church of England adopt a 2030 carbon net zero target instead of a 2045 target;
- Became a member of the National Church Energy Group; playing an active role in developing national resources, sharing learning and best practice, and informing the national Net Zero definition;

- Been invited and joined a Climate Leaders Group to share our journey to Net Zero by 2030 with other organisations in the region.

Environmental focus points through 2020

9. #LiveLent: Saying Yes to Life

Churches across the Diocese joined in with this year's environment-focused Lent campaign; 'Saying Yes to Life' using Bishop Viv's recommended book by Ruth Valerio and an associated [group course](#) written by Revd Dr Mark Siddall. The Bishop and Acting Dean hosted Greta Thunberg at Bristol Cathedral prior to the Bristol Climate Strike which coincided with the beginning of Lent.

10. Season of Creation

Churches participated in the [Season of Creation in September](#), with special service series and events. Bishop Viv joined eight other denominational leaders in endorsing this campaign, as part of an ecumenical initiative.

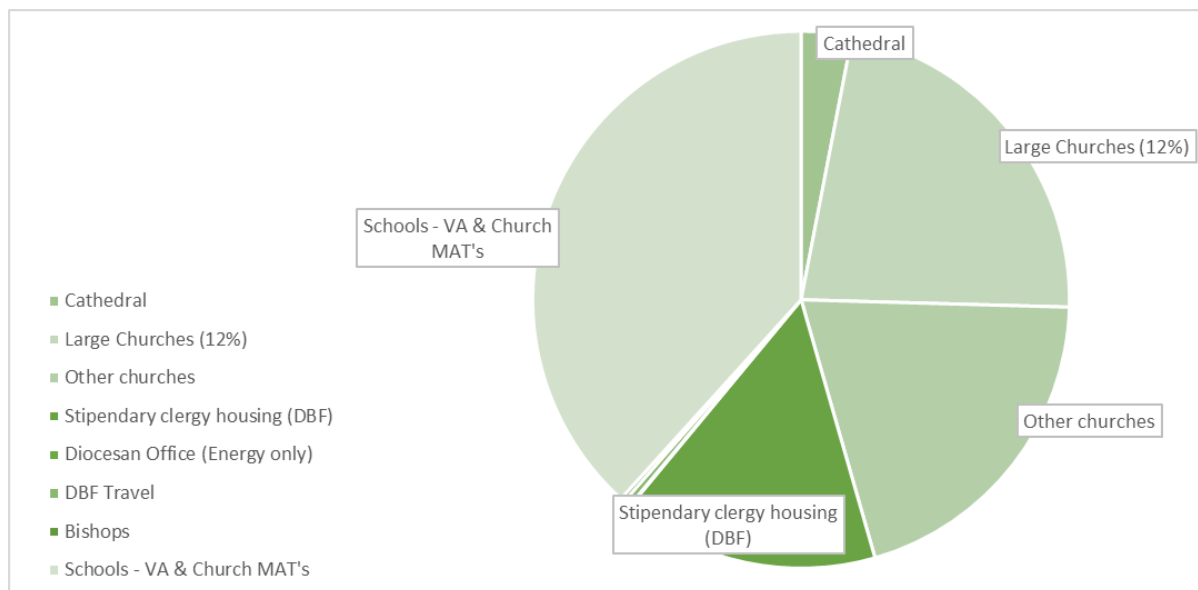
11. Church Action in a Climate Emergency Conference

Held digitally over five sessions during October 2020, over 140 people participated in this [deconstructed 'Church Action in a Climate Emergency' conference](#), postponed from March 2020. This indicates the level of concern in parishes about this topic, and the desire to take further action.

Carbon Net Zero by 2030

12. In 2020 our estimated carbon footprint, from in scope emissions, is calculated to be **4,142 tCO₂ pa**. Informed assumptions have been made within the calculations and measurement accuracy will improve over time. This constitutes our baseline footprint.
13. The breakdown of emissions is: large emissions churches (22%); all other churches (20%); academy and VA schools (38%); stipendiary clergy housing (DBF owned property) (15%); Bristol Cathedral, DBF travel, diocesan office and bishops (3%).
14. Half of churches completed the Energy Footprint Tool with 2019 information. This was an encouraging rate of return and information was used to build extrapolated picture. The 2020 Energy Footprint Tool will open for data submissions in January 2021.
15. 4 in 10 churches are already on renewable electricity tariffs.
16. 12% of churches (large emissions churches) generate 53% of all emissions from churches.
17. Over two thirds of stipendiary clergy housing is on renewable electricity tariffs and one third is on a 100% green gas tariff. Thank you to all those who completed the anonymous survey.

18. There is currently no recording mechanism for travel reimbursed directly by parishes, reimbursable rail travel or school coach travel, all of which are considered in scope. This lack of data means that no estimation of these emissions has been made for inclusion within the current estimated footprint.
- 19.



Reducing our carbon footprint

20. The diocesan 'Pathway to net zero' paper identifies our approach to achieving our net zero target commitment within the context of the diocesan Environment and Climate Justice Policy.
21. The paper proposes the following approach:
- The principal focus over the next ten years will be on 'in scope' activities as defined by the National Church. However, where possible, we will also go further to consider 'next phase' activities as defined by the National Church, and encourage stakeholders to do likewise.
 - This will initially primarily focus diocesan attention on working closely with Category A stakeholders, who account for three quarters of our footprint (large emissions churches, Bristol Cathedral, DBF properties and VA schools and church-led MATs), turning attention to Category B stakeholders (smaller emissions churches, DBF operations and bishops) once plans to reduce emissions in Category A are underway.
 - The vast majority of emissions relates to areas where the DBF has influence rather than control. However, relationships are strong and, therefore, we will work with these stakeholders to encourage and, where appropriate, support the development and delivery of plans for, the reduction of their carbon emissions to 'net zero'.

22. Analysis indicates that it is reasonable to suggest that carbon reductions of up to 40% could be achieved by 2025. This would remove c. 1,700 tonnes of CO₂ from our emissions footprint.
23. Plans are currently being developed and implemented for taking immediate action informed by this analysis and the Pathway to Net Zero paper. Each action is analysed as to its potential CO₂ emissions reduction impact. These initial actions will be reviewed to then inform wider deployment of resource.
24. With regards to energy use, the approach, across all constitute parts of in scope emissions is to: Understand energy use (audit) - Reduce energy use - Switch to renewables.
25. Making significant reductions in the remaining two thirds of emissions is largely dependent on decarbonisation of heating sources in churches and DBF owned properties. Given the interdependency here on national and local plans for the decarbonisation of heating and plans, this needs further development.
26. Measurement tools are being developed by the National Church and these will be deployed locally to support measurement to us.

Offsetting

27. A phased approach will be adopted to offsetting any residual emissions that cannot be removed through direct action or in-house offsetting projects. Phasing begins in 2026 and, if no action is taken to reduce emissions from our 2020 baseline, would see the Diocese contribute £48.5k to offsetting projects in 2030.

Next Steps

28. Significant steps forward have been taken during 2020 and planning has focused on achieving the Diocese's commitment to becoming carbon net zero by 2030.
29. A working group will meet again to develop defined outcomes and plans for delivery for all seven commitments made in the Environment and Climate Justice Policy. Budget has been set aside for this work in 2021 and will be spent in line with plans.
30. Governance and oversight for this work will be aligned to that of other strategic commitments and held by Bishop's Council. A further report should be made in November 2021.