

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

### DIOCESAN PRESENTATION AND DEANERY SYNOD MOTIONS

#### Foreword by Bishop Olivia

Why speak of – or declare – a ‘climate emergency’?

For people in those parts of the world already most seriously affected by climate impacts, the answer would be self-evident in the humanitarian crises that they face today – this is about their present lived experience. As we prepare for this synod debate, the opening of the deanery synod motions before us put into words the thoughts of many. Like the proposers of the motion, synod members are widely “concerned by the scientific evidence that climate change is proceeding at a rapid rate and by the impact of climate events”. And in the face of that reality, Christians around the diocese are already seeking to find an adequate response to our call, as part of our mission, “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

“Climate change grows more and more dangerous to the whole planet, a true horseman of the Apocalypse”, says the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> We see its impacts already in low-lying islands where populations are being displaced because of sea-level rise; in tropical cyclones that intensify rapidly, wreaking havoc on places like Dominica and the Philippines; in the extraordinary heat extremes like those that made last January the hottest on record. We see it here – the gravity of the situation was underlined last year by Sir James Bevan, the current Chief Executive of the UK Environment Agency. Speaking *before* the record-setting UK heatwave of last July and the catastrophic flooding this February, Sir James said, “I’ll be honest: I’ve been Chief Executive of the Environment Agency for over three and a half years now, and it’s taken me a while realise what the main thing is. And the answer, which I now say to myself every day, is this: it’s the climate emergency, stupid.”<sup>2</sup>

I am delighted that the diocese has recognised, through Common Vision, that one of the fundamental areas into which we should put our energy is climate change and to have been asked by Bishop Steven to lead a high-calibre task force overseeing our response to this critical situation. I am encouraged that in our work already on this area, and even on discussing baseline measurement, there has been a real sense of excitement at the emerging possibilities.

I welcome the debate on the motions passed by three of our deanery synods and look forward to having the opportunity to discuss them fully, following a presentation which I will make on the early work of the task force. After our discussion, we will be clearer about our position as a diocese on this crucial issue and move forward together to take the next, vital steps.

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<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/speeches/archbishop-canterburys-presidential-address-anglican-consultative>

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Speech by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency Aldersgate Group, London, 25 June 2019; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/its-the-climate-emergency-stupid>

## Societal Response

Throughout the past two years, mounting evidence of the seriousness of climate change and increased public concern have raised the climate emergency up the national and international agenda. In response, the UK Government introduced legislation calling for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs) against the 1990 benchmark – a net zero target - by 2050.<sup>3</sup> At a local level, more than half of the UK's local councils have in the past year passed resolutions declaring a climate emergency, with many setting even earlier net zero targets: in our area alone, Cherwell District, Chiltern District, Milton Keynes, Oxford City, Oxfordshire, Reading Borough, West Berkshire, West Oxfordshire, and Wokingham have set 2030 targets; Buckinghamshire and Windsor and Maidenhead have set theirs at 2050<sup>4</sup>. Businesses are already including climate change risks in their processes and are striving to make adjustments to their business models in order to meet the policies that are being made. In addition, organisations such as the National Trust have announced climate action plans.<sup>5</sup> These targets have varying degrees of planning behind them – some are more statements of intent, and some have quite specific underlying plans.<sup>6</sup> They are, however, all clearly signalling a direction of travel.

## Our calling

At the centre of our diocese's Common Vision is our goal of becoming 'a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world'. In the light of the climate and wider environmental emergencies, there is a clear call on us to shape our mission to engage adequately with the challenges these emergencies pose. *It is important to note that* this is not a distraction from the wider mission of the Church. It is a way of finding out how we can carry out our mission well in our current context. We are searching for a Christlike response to the situation of our world – one that places love of God and neighbour at the heart of all we do, and that is distinguished by qualities like those that have been identified as central to Jesus' own life and ministry: contemplation, compassion and courage. Our response will need to be undertaken collaboratively, but will be distinctively ours, shaped by our understanding of God and of our calling as disciples.

## Our diocesan response so far

But what does fulfilling our calling mean in practice? Many of our churches are already working out initial responses at a parish level:

- Some parishes have put together lecture series and Lent courses – even daily reflections shared with parishioners during Lent or during the Season of Creation (1 Sep – 4 Oct);
- One church has undertaken a building programme that made it one of the first large carbon neutral churches in the country;
- Churches are using their churchyards to foster biodiversity and to offer space for people to grow vegetables for church and individual use.
- A benefice has brought together other churches and local charities in a year-long campaign on climate justice, forging a variety of partnerships to promote awareness of climate impacts and linking practical action and advocacy;

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<sup>3</sup> Commons Research Library, Legislating for Net Zero, July 2019, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8590/CBP-8590.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://theenergyst.com/national-trust-commits-to-net-zero-by-2030/>

<sup>6</sup> See for example, comments by the Carbon Trust on local authority plans: <https://www.carbontrust.com/news-and-events/news/local-authority-climate-emergency-whats-next>

- Reading Christians held a Churches Together event in November with training and resourcing sessions for the community on topics such as how to make buildings more energy efficient, start the Eco Church award, and talk about climate change.

More broadly, the diocese has sought to encourage and resource churches for prayer and action through a variety of initiatives – promoting Eco Church and running a day conference and training to introduce its principles; working alongside Parish Buying to encourage the uptake of renewable electricity tariffs; and offering a programme of subsidised energy audits and small grants to give participating churches tailor-made guidance for saving carbon and, often, money. So far:

- More than 70 of our churches have registered for the Eco Church programme, seeking to be better carers for creation in their worship and teaching, their stewardship of buildings and lands, and the way they work on environmental issues with other churches, their local community and the church worldwide. Eight have achieved bronze awards, and five silver awards.
- About 10% of our churches have had energy audits and many are making efficiency improvements as a result.
- Since Autumn 2018, the number of parishes using the renewable tariff in Parish Buying’s Green Energy Basket has more than doubled, and many churches are also using other renewable electricity tariffs.

In a national context, the diocese has taken a lead on calling for disinvestment from fossil fuels. Bishop Steven has spoken on climate issues in the House of Lords and widely in the media – and together with Bishop Olivia led a diocesan delegation to ‘The Time Is Now’ climate lobby in June of last year.

### **Our next steps**

But this is clearly not enough. We are making progress in being environmentally aware, but the critical nature of our situation demands that we respond in a way that is commensurate with the challenge. In recognition of this, an Environmental Task Group (ETG), chaired by Bishop Olivia, was formed last Autumn. It has looked at current activity and undertaken an extensive and detailed scoping exercise identifying key possible actions and their associated costs and benefits. What has emerged is that we need to build on some specific areas of activity, but also that all our activities need to build towards our ultimate goal of reaching net zero. This goal will require further action across all areas of diocesan life.

The Environmental Task Group therefore proposes as initial actions:

1. To uphold all that we do in prayer and to promote prayer throughout the diocese. This will involve sharing resources, holding events, and encouraging churches to participate in times set aside for prayer, particularly the internationally-observed Season of Creation and, in 2020, the UK-based Climate Sunday initiative
2. To establish two new initiatives that will help individuals and parishes to explore the science of climate change, theological responses, and pathways to action for individuals, parishes and communities:
  - a. a new, online EcoHub, which will gather a wide range of resources, and some individualised advice through an email ‘helpdesk’
  - b. a partnership with the ‘Spire’ group of scientists and climate communicators by which local clergy and lay people will develop a process for exploring these questions
3. To scale up the opportunities we offer for theological reflection and training for clergy and lay people, diversifying the range of topics that we cover and the contexts in which training is

delivered, holding or participating in events like a recent retreat on the Archbishop's Lent Book<sup>7</sup>, and using our new EcoHub to signpost resources. We will work in partnership with external organisations such as A Rocha and CRES, and our members will continue to work with theological colleges on ordination training programmes.

4. To incorporate care for creation into our existing discipleship programmes, offering, materials for families and for mentors to share with people who ask for them as part of their Personal Discipleship Plans.
5. To reinvigorate a support network of Eco Champions from across the churches to provide information and support to each other.
6. To support Church Schools in their work on climate change internally and alongside their parishes.
7. To strengthen connections with local community groups, councils and NGOs to encourage church/community action.
8. To refine and expand the current Energy Audit programme, encouraging all churches to apply for an energy audit subsidised by the diocese and, following a self-audit or full audit, to implement the main recommendations as soon as possible.
9. To expand our current work with Parish Buying, and possibly other suppliers, to promote the shift to renewable electricity tariffs and 'green gas' tariffs.
10. To work with local partners, our link dioceses, and the Anglican Communion to promote climate justice in our area, nationally and globally.

### **Our net zero target**

For several months the ETG has been working on how a net zero target can be achieved in a way which is realistic, measurable, costed and takes into account the rapidly changing technological picture.

The motion carried by General Synod in February 2020 "call[s] upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, BMOs [Bishop's Mission Orders], education institutions, dioceses, cathedrals, and the NCIs [National Church Institutions], to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target."<sup>8</sup>

We welcome the sense of urgency behind this motion, and its recognition of our missional imperative to action. We will, given this call, examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030, within the parameters of the initial scoping exercise that we have already conducted.

We have, however, already embarked upon a detailed review of the reality of taking particular actions and have been in consultation with heating and lighting specialists, energy auditors, property managers, clergy and laity, academics and practitioners. It is our present sense that the constraints and characteristics of our diocese will make it very unlikely that we will achieve net zero emissions by 2030. The primary constraints on our pace of change include:

- Our broad geographic spread, which means we are working with numerous local authorities, which currently have different targets
- Some uniquely challenging buildings with which to work
- People's willingness to change the way they think about energy use, and to factor energy savings into their evaluation of activities
- Uncertainty about government policy and the pace of technical and infrastructural change

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<sup>7</sup> Ruth Valerio 'Saying Yes to Life' (SPCK, 2020)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/general-synod-sets-2030-net-zero-carbon-target>

- The financial resources available to us

We are also guided by some key principles:

- That we have an obligation, laid on us by love of God and neighbour, to set targets in accordance with what is scientifically necessary to keep within the bounds of a 1.5 degree target;
- That we seek to time our work in a way which makes the best use of resources in every sense – initially working on managing extant systems better to achieve the most reductions we can, then investing in technology where management alone will not suffice, and always ensuring that we choose the timing and nature of our technology changes well, so that we take advantage of technological advances and do not create unnecessary emissions even as we seek to reduce them, and
- That we will work insofar as possible in partnership with others, seeking to be a catalyst for wider work in our communities and in the church, and to make use of economies of scale,

The proposals from our deaneries (which predate the GS motion) call for us to reach net zero emissions by “2035 or as soon thereafter as is possible”. Our work suggests that this is still an ambitious target, but one that is potentially achievable. We have concluded, moreover, that because of the benefits capital improvements make on long-term running costs, and because of the additional incentives and opportunities for partnership provided to early adopters, it makes sense to set this target.

More broadly we will work through our Environmental Task Group’s advocacy element, Bishop Steven’s role in the House of Lords, and the encouragement of local advocacy by individuals, parishes and schools, to push for policies and solutions that will enable the most rapid transition possible. And we will continue to pray, actively and earnestly, that the constraints which currently limit action are altered so that more rapid action is possible.

### **The scope: what do we count?**

For these purposes we are currently defining ‘the diocese’ as comprising:

- individuals, whose activities are only counted if reimbursed as part of diocesan business;
- ‘the diocese’ as governed by Synod, with ODBF as the legal entity;
- institutional entities such as churches and the cathedral, which are governed by canon law and control their own operations but are recognised as part of the diocese, and
- those educational institutions (Voluntary Aided schools and diocesan MATs) over which we exercise a measure of management control<sup>9</sup>

Operationally, we will need to report on the Scope 1 (heating and combustion) and Scope 2 (purchased electricity-related) emissions for all the buildings and vehicles owned within our organisational

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<sup>9</sup> Clearly the situation is complex: churches, for example, are not under diocesan financial or management control, and the diocese cannot, therefore, be responsible for their meeting or not meeting the targets. But more narrow scoping arrangements that cover only what ODBF directly controls run the risk of seeming to separate out ‘the diocese’ from the churches that form it – something which would not promote our own sense of cohesion and which would undermine our credibility with those for whom the diocese is embodied in their local church and school.

scope.<sup>10</sup> Organisations are also asked voluntarily to report on what are called ‘Scope 3’ emissions. The GHG Protocol standard defines these as “a consequence of the activities of the company [or organisation], but occur[ing] from sources not owned or controlled by [it].”<sup>11</sup>

Organisations have wide discretion to decide which Scope 3 emissions they will include in their footprint. The Church of England is currently considering what would be an appropriate standard – based on what is material (in the sense of accounting for a significant proportion of our emissions), and what is feasibly measurable. Our aim is to provide sufficiently accurate and complete assessment of our emissions to help us plan to become genuinely zero carbon, and to maintain our credibility in pressing for others to do the same. In starting the process, we have been guided by representations from people in the diocese with expertise to offer – including members of synod – by clergy and lay people who have brought up particular areas that they feel are worthy of focus, and by staff in the relevant diocesan departments. At present, we are looking, subject to revision, at:

- a detailed assessment of the footprint of CHO itself, including not only energy use, but also emissions associated with waste disposal, water, and procurement
- reimbursed diocesan travel, as well as reimbursed parish travel, with the possibility of including individuals’ reimbursed travel on school business, if this turns out to be material
- procurement, where it likely to be material, for diocesan business and for VA/ODBST/ODST schools including paper, printed materials, conference goods, catering, and hired transport. Whether parishes’ procurement is also considered is a topic for discussion.

We are also looking at how we might include ‘in scope’ the emissions associated with our land holdings, diocesan investments, and major energy efficiency and building projects – the last of these with the aim of ensuring that we are recognising the true emissions costs of our construction and renovation works.

One of the most complex areas involved is clergy housing. The diocese is legally responsible for maintaining the buildings involved, so is responsible for the ‘hardware’ that sets the parameters within which they can be efficiently managed. But the management of them (and at times the ownership of them) is the province of clergy, and the emissions are therefore partially also the result of personal choices and form part of personal data. We are, therefore, looking at different ways of reporting. One would be to ask clergy to fill in a carbon footprinting tool like the existing tool for churches. Another would be to accept the diocese’s responsibility for making the clergy houses as energy efficient as possible – and using energy surveys of the houses, conducted with an appropriate methodology, to determine a ‘reasonable rate’ of energy usage that would stand as a proxy for actual use. We will consult widely to determine which way of proceeding is most appropriate.

## **Proposed actions for 2020-24**

### Measurement

We will need to begin by measuring our baseline: the appendix sets out how we intend to do this.

### Church House Oxford

We have already begun energy efficiency work at Church House Oxford – and it is notable that, following implementation of the energy audit’s recommendations, CHO’s energy usage in Q4 of 2019

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<sup>10</sup> We are using the definitions and standards established by The GHG Protocol, one of the most widely accepted global standards for footprinting and emissions reporting. The corporate standard and further documents can be found at <https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard#supporting-documents>.

<sup>11</sup> ‘The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard,’ rev ed. p.25

was 27% lower than that of 2018<sup>12</sup>. We are also now on a renewable energy tariff, meaning that our emissions from the building's energy use are already at net zero. We have increased our recycling through greater use of the council's facilities, contracting to recycle food waste, and a voluntary staff initiative, started by the Church House Green Group, to collect and recycle items not covered by the council facilities. This has already reduced the number of waste skips we need to have collected. We will continue to work in these areas, and also encourage people to reduce emissions through the way they use the facilities. We will also look seriously at our procurement, use of water, and remaining amounts of waste.

### Clergy Housing

For clergy housing, we envisage over the next five years:

- Encouraging individuals to switch to renewable tariffs
- Renovating our 67 "off-grid" clergy houses (i.e. not connected to mains gas) to move to appropriate technology, doing related additional work to improve performance and heat retention, and considering the possibility of solar PV to cover some of the costs of increased electricity consumption, if it is significant. This would also involve a change to our boiler replacement policy, planning replacement as boilers approach the end of their useful reliable life rather than at point of failure, so as to minimise inconvenience to the clergy and their families.
- Evaluating our housing stock overall and making decisions on what we do with our most difficult buildings (perhaps deciding to offset those that have irreplaceable historic value and considering selling others).
- Beginning to do strategic capital investment in 'no regret' renovations that improve efficiency (eg increasing insulation and placing or replacing, as needed, double glazing) in anticipation of the transfer to whatever new heating technologies are ultimately adopted.

### Schools

For our schools, we will also focus initially on use of renewable tariffs and changing oil-fired buildings. Our ODST and ODBST schools already use renewable electricity, and we will work with local authorities to ensure that our VA schools do, as well, and to move all schools to 'green gas' tariffs. We will seek to work with the local authorities, local energy groups, and other partners in exploring the possibility for low-carbon heating solutions to replace oil. We will make use of free or low-cost energy audit opportunities for schools and actively pursue government loan funds and grant funding where appropriate.

### Churches

We will ask all churches to apply for an audit and help them determine whether a self audit or a full audit is more appropriate. All of the full audits will follow our new template, providing not only advice on efficiency but an individualised pathway to net zero. We will particularly encourage churches with 'off grid' heating that is not electric to have an energy audit, so that they can determine what replacement technologies will be most suitable. We will also work with congregations whose gas heaters are currently nearing or at the end of their usable life, helping them, in accordance with the

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<sup>12</sup> Figure not weather adjusted

forthcoming national Church of England heating policy, to explore options for the immediate and long-term future.

We will aim to share best practice from current solutions found in other churches, and to assist churches in navigating the necessary permissions, finding access to information about reliable providers, and finding out about possibilities for grant funding. We will also explore other methods of financing parish works, working in conjunction with external partners, other dioceses and the national church.

### Travel

We will start by working to get consensus about patterns of activity and scheduling. We will, for example, endeavour to group visits by diocesan staff to schools, churches, and clergy houses in order to minimise mileage. We will also encourage lift sharing to diocesan meetings, make more meetings accessible by public transport, and, indeed, use technology to conduct meetings that don't absolutely require people to be present face-to-face.

We will also be looking at helping diocesan staff and clergy transition to electric (or hydrogen) vehicles, through such mechanisms as:

- Seeing whether we can enter into an agreement to get discounts on electric vehicles from particular providers, as was done by Exeter Diocese
- Increasing the availability of charging points at CHO (we already have two points)
- Signposting ways for clergy to access grants to install charging points at home

Our air transport is currently primarily associated with our diocesan links. The Council for Partners in World Mission (PWM) evaluates all travel carefully and does not support any travel unless there is a clearly defined purpose that cannot be accomplished in any other way. There are times where travel is clearly necessary. PWM has already decided as a policy that it will:

- Recommend that where land or sea travel can replace air travel it does – this applies primarily to our link with Växjö, but also to internal travel within South Africa and India.
- Offset air travel for which the diocese is paying.

### Diocesan-owned land

While we are uncertain still whether or how emissions from our land will be included 'in scope' conversations have begun with our property managers on how to evaluate the emissions associated with our portfolio. We are also exploring the possibility of carbon removal using some of our land to participate in schemes that promote biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

### **Estimating costs**

It is difficult to estimate the costs of reaching net zero. Decisions by the Government and local authorities on infrastructure policy as well as potential advances in technology will have a profound impact on the gross cost of changes necessary. Moreover, there are uncertainties around the scale of government subsidies and private funding for change. We are also aware that net costs will be reduced over time in many instances by savings from efficiency measures. Given those caveats, the following are suggested as provisional best-estimate costs in the present context: they will be supplemented by a more detailed paper.

£60-100k for baseline surveys for clergy housing – we are able to start this in 2020

£170k to subsidise energy audits for churches – this is already provided for within current funding

£2-3 million for converting oil-heated (the highest priority) dwellings to appropriate alternatives, including the associated costs of updating properties [we would hope up to a third of this cost could be covered by a Government scheme], with the conversion of other properties managed by the Buildings department resulting in a total cost in excess of £20 million

£30 million for church schools [some could be funded by government schemes including revolving loan funds and some might be covered by partnerships to install renewable energy]

Indicative estimates for churches will follow. In essence, for some that are electrically-heated the cost will be very low; for those used very regularly and heated by oil or LPG the costs could be considerably greater. Audits will show what solutions are best in each case.

There will be some additional staffing costs to the diocese of enabling and supporting this transitional activity, including within the Buildings department (which includes the DAC team).

It is important to note, however, that there will also be significant savings, including where it is possible to reduce mileage significantly through the rationalisation of journeys.

## Appendix

### How we will measure our baseline and our progress

Doing the scoping exercise has revealed the complexity of the picture – and also the gaps in our current knowledge. Put simply, with a few exceptions – the CHO figures are readily available – we don't actually know what our carbon footprint is, and we lack, in many areas, systems to measure it. This gap is not unique to us. A recent survey points out that despite local authorities' announcement of their intentions to set rapid decarbonisation targets, some 43% of councils "do not measure the energy they use in council-owned buildings or know how much carbon they produce."<sup>13</sup>

Measuring the year-on-year cuts that the recent General Synod motion and our deanery motions request will not be possible unless we are able to measure our current baseline. Nor is it likely that we can get to net zero without the clarifications such measurement will provide; we need to grasp our current carbon emissions more fully in order to target resources wisely towards reducing them. With that in mind, our first two-year action plan, in addition to providing resourcing for action as noted above, involves a rigorous measurement of where we are. This will involve:

- continuing to monitor energy usage, waste management and water usage at CHO and establishing a protocol for measuring procurement-related emissions
- asking all churches, in line with the national church's initiative, to use the nationally provided Energy Footprint tool to measure building usage emissions for their churches, church halls and other ancillary buildings for which they are responsible
- encouraging churches to have energy audits as appropriate, as these, in addition to giving a basic figure for energy use also show how the energy is being used, where reductions may be possible, and what technologies may be suitable to make those reductions. We are also joining in funding a national study of extant audits to help determine what the most common recommendations are, and how diocesan and national resources can be best deployed.
- encouraging churches to engage with the new '360 carbon calculator', a joint project of A Rocha, Climate Stewards and the Church of England, which will enable them to get a clear picture of the emissions associated not only with their buildings, but also with their activities.
- using Display Energy Certificates (DECs) – which are already publicly accessible - to measure the energy use by VA, ODBST and ODST schools, and encouraging schools to have audits to give a more detailed breakdown as for churches.
- conducting a survey of our properties, to a level that will both enable us to have EPC certificates for each property (at present, we have them for about 20%) and to do more detailed assessments of where improvements can be made
- establishing a 2019 baseline for mileage and public transport usage based on DBF expense claim forms, and establishing a new system that will give the information we need more accurately to assess the emissions associated with mileage
- working with our property managers – which has already begun – to establish a methodology for assessing emissions associated with use of diocesan-owned properties
- working within guidelines determined by the Church Commissioners to determine a sensible way of assessing and reporting emissions associated with our investments

The results of these measurements should give us a clear sense of our starting point – and help guide us in determining sensible and positive action plans at parish, school and diocesan level.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jan/27/english-councils-set-to-miss-carbon-emission-targets>