The Energy Footprint Tool allows all churches around the country to enter their utility bills and find out their ‘carbon footprint’.

The easy-to-use Energy Footprint Tool will tell your church what your ‘carbon footprint’ is annually, based on the energy you use to heat and light your buildings.

You can find the Energy Footprint Tool on the Online Parish Returns System.

The system uses the information we already hold about your church to populate your answers.

This means churches will only be asked for a small amount of additional information. You will need your 2022 electricity and gas/oil bills to hand.

The system is open now for you to put in the details of your 2022 bills, and closes for the year on 31st August 2023.

Overall it helps build a national picture of our baseline and progress towards becoming net zero carbon by 2030. It also allows you locally to know where you are starting from and how much progress you are making.

General Synod voted in February 2020 for the whole of the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The vote recognised that responding to the climate crisis is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God’s creation and achieve a just world.

On the Church of England's Routemap to Net Zero Carbon by 2030, the first milestone for churches in 2023 is to start use the Energy Footprint Tool if you haven’t already.
Why did we develop the EFT?

As a Church, we have a target to meet net carbon zero by 2030. We are therefore developing a number of tools to monitor how we are progressing towards this target.

In 2020, we introduced the first of these tools – the Energy Footprint Tool, which measures the energy carbon use of churches. Since then, other tools have been created for schools, housing, cathedrals, offices, TEIs, and transport.

What is the EFT for, and where do I find it?

The easy-to-use Energy Footprint Tool will tell your church what your "carbon footprint" is, based on the energy you use to heat and light your buildings.

You can find it on the Online Parish Returns System.

Nationally, it helps us know our carbon baseline - where we are starting from - and how much progress we are making.

What have we learnt from the EFT so far?

The EFT helps us know our carbon baseline - where we are starting from - and how much progress we are making. Nearly 5,000 churches entered their information in 2022 allowing us to estimate that for 2021 the carbon footprint for the Church of England's church buildings was around 110,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases (tCO2e).

Full findings from the EFT are published within the annual Energy Toolkit Report. The most recent publication relates to the year 2021.

For earlier iterations of the Energy Toolkit and Energy Footprint Tool reports, please see our Resources, publications, and data webpage.

Opening and closing dates

The EFT is open for all churches for 2023 from 1st January 2023, when you will be able to enter your 2022 utility bills. It will remain open until the 31st July 2023.

The EFT is available to all Church of England churches using the Online Parish Returns System. (St Albans churches can use an equivalent system that connects, contact your DAC.)
How does the EFT work?

To find out how it works, read the instructions sheet here, and watch this demo (14mins), which is an excerpt from our longer webinar all about calculating your carbon footprint.

The system uses the information we already hold about your church to populate your answers.

This means churches will only be asked for a small amount of additional information. You will need to have the whole of last year's electricity and gas/oil bills.

The Energy Footprint Tool will tell your church the amount of carbon produced annually by heating and lighting your church buildings. There are two useful graphs that show you your efficiency scores: one for energy efficiency based on building size and one for attendance. It can take account of separate buildings such as church halls, as long as you have the utility bills for them.
What information do you need to hand?

You will need your utility bills for the year before; electricity, gas, oil, or whichever other fuel you use. For example, if you are completing it in 2023, you need your 2022 bills. If you have solar panels, information on their generation over the preceding year.

If you want to include a separate church hall or other building, then you need the bills for this too. If you want to exclude an area which is permanently rented out to tenants and sub-metered, you will want this information to hand.

You can find a paper copy of the questions here.

For most churches, we already know the floor area. If we don’t already hold this information, you will need a sensible estimate of the m2 floor area of the church, and any other associated buildings you are inputting, such as the church hall.

You will also need a sensible estimate of the number of person-hours that the church is used throughout the year. Please remember when entering this data that a good estimate is fine – these numbers do not need to be 100% accurate, and long as they are in a relevant ball park.

To help you calculate the size and usage of the church, you might find this template helpful.

Which green energy providers 'count' for EFT purposes?
The Energy Footprint Tool calculates the carbon footprint of your energy use (oil, gas, electricity). It shows both the ‘gross’ and ‘net’ carbon footprint. The gross figure represents all the energy your church has used, whilst the net figure deducts any electricity or gas which is either generated on-site or purchased from a 100% renewable tariff meeting certain criteria.

The list of companies meeting these criteria is reviewed each year.

You can find here the list of providers who meet the criteria in 2023.

This list is backward looking, applying to 2022 utility data entered into the EFT in 2023. Looking forward, the intention is to restrict Opus to its ‘Advance Plus’ tariff only and to review Octopus, in light of its recent acquisitions, including Bulb.

**Why complete the EFT, when COVID reduced our activities?**

For parts of 2021, our activities were reduced and disrupted, so energy use was not entirely normal. We can assure you that entering your energy usage will be useful for you and for the national church.

Inside the tool we have built a special adjustment for the time spent in lockdown, which will mean firstly, a sensible comparison for the efficiency of your church’s energy consumption compared with your data from before lockdown, and also gives us a way to make sensible comparisons in future years.

**Once we know our carbon footprint, what next?**

The tool also offers some helpful tips to reduce your carbon emissions. Using the tool each year will help you to track the impact of the different steps you are taking to reduce your carbon footprint.

You can use the [Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon](#) to plan your action, and our [Net Zero Carbon church webpage](#) to get informed. Refer to our [net-zero carbon webinar programme](#) and see how [Parish Buying](#) can support you.

**Who created the EFT?**

The Energy Footprint Tool was created by the [Church of England Data Team](#) in response to the call from General Synod in Feb 2019 to be able to measure the carbon footprint of the Church. It is a key step towards meeting our goal to cut our emissions and play our role in responding to the climate crisis.
Reducing your carbon footprint

The path to net zero

Eco Church

Learn how your church can become an Eco Church.