



help churches meet carbon reduction targets.

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On Wednesday, changes to the faculty jurisdiction rules - the Church's equivalent of planning law - were voted through.

Most of the changes will make it easier for churches to make adaptations such as insulating pipes, draft-proofing doors and windows, fitting new non fossil fuel boilers, electric pew heaters, electric car charging points and soft furnishings to help worshippers feel warm and comfortable.

Meanwhile the installation of like-for-like fossil fuel boilers and new oil tanks will now be subject to a full faculty application.

The rules come as part of a wide-ranging approach to meet the 2030 net-zero carbon target set by General Synod in February 2020. In July 2022 Synod will discuss a full proposed routemap to net zero which is currently out for consultation.

Introducing the legislation, the Dean of Arches, Morag Ellis QC said that the changes represented a "positive and proportionate" part of the Church's response to the Climate Emergency. The proposals do not require or compel parishes to make changes, but help to foster an informed approach to decisions when they are made.

Amendments brought by The Revd Marcus Walker (London) and The Ven Luke Irvine-Capel (Chichester) were not carried, before an amendment brought by The Ven Fiona Gibson (Hereford) was carried. The latter makes it easier for churches to install wireless internet and broadband equipment. Introducing her amendment, Revd Gibson said it was about improving connectivity options for rural churches who may not have access to cable networks, helping to bridge the "digital divide". These will now be subject to 'list B' (Archdeacons) approval.

"Time to put worthy words into action"

Speaking in the debate, the Church of England's lead Bishop for Environmental Affairs, Graham Usher, who is Bishop of Norwich, said that the General Synod's 2020 commitment had been "noticed and praised" at the COP26 summit in Glasgow last year.

"Now it is time for us to put those worthy words into action," he said.

"For me, the life of the local parish church is the hope for the world. Each is a crucial place for where the living out of our faith happens.

"Our parish churches can be exemplars, leading the way in communities, for sustainable living. Yes, it is going to be a challenge, but so is any aspect of living the Gospel. It's a challenge we must step up to.

"The new rules offer encouragement to parishes to rise to this challenge by de-regulating a range of actions, some small, some bigger, all of which can help us move in the right direction.

"And they help give a nudge about fossil fuel boilers by seeking to spark research, discussion, reflection.

“These changes are not about ‘telling’, they are about ‘living’ – making it easier for PCCs to choose to live in a low carbon future for the health of our planet.”

The rules, duly amended, were approved with an overwhelming majority. They will be laid before Parliament and come into effect on 1 July 2022.

More information

- [Churches’ practical pathway to net zero](#) (resources)
- Read the [full legislation](#) and [explanatory notes](#)



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