



...t needed for the green revolution - just as they were when they were built â

Simon Bray

Addressing the National Cathedrals Conference in Newcastle, Graham Usher, who is Bishop of Norwich, said that cathedrals can show the way in making changes for achieving Net Zero carbon across the whole Church by 2030, with a route map due for a vote at General Synod in July.

Cathedrals have an impressive track record within the heritage sector, with Gloucester Cathedral becoming the first Grade 1 listed building to install photovoltaic panels in 2016.

Many others have followed suit with green adaptations including solar panels, replaced light fittings, draft exclusion and in some places re-designed precincts to give greater access to green space and a chance for biodiversity to thrive.

The host venue, Newcastle Cathedral, was praised for the installation of an air source heat pump as part of a major recent renovation.

However, with cathedrals currently responsible for around 2 per cent of the total Church of England carbon emissions, delegates from cathedrals across England were encouraged to identify more opportunities to meet the ambitious [target](#) set by General Synod in 2020.

“You have a crucial part to play in caring for the web of creation and seeking justice for the world’s economically poorest people already adversely impacted by climate change,” he said.

“Every time we turn on our boiler or install a new kitchen, we are using the Earth’s resources, and we are called on to manage our buildings in ways that ensure we are not wasting these precious resources.

“In the main, churches and cathedrals are currently heated by burning oil and gas, the very fossil fuels which are contributing to climate change.”

“It is the role of all cathedral Fabric Advisory Committees, Diocesan Advisory Committees, and diocesan chancellors around the country, to look to how to change this as we strive to reach net zero.

“Installing a new gas boiler today means that you are committing to continuing to pump carbon into the atmosphere for the next 25 or so years.

“To reach net zero is going to be challenging and costly. The [announcement](#) this week of £190M of Church Commissioners’ funding over the next 9 years to support the 2030 target is an enormous encouragement. It now needs to be spent wisely so as to gain the greatest impact and the best sharing of good practice.”

Over two thirds of cathedrals are already part of the A Rocha ‘Eco Church’ programme with Salisbury Cathedral [first to win](#) the ‘Gold’ award status. Bishop Graham said that he hoped the remaining cathedrals would sign up to the scheme.

The Church of England’s Route Map to Net Zero Carbon will be discussed at General Synod in July 2022 following a [consultation](#) which included all dioceses and cathedrals.

Read more:

- [Church of England's CFCE and CBC statement of commitment to environmental sustainability](#)
 - [A Rocha's Eco Church scheme](#)
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