

Thousands of churches, cathedrals, schools and clergy houses in England will benefit from the first phase of grants and projects worth £30 million, as part of the Church of England's ambitious plan to achieve net zero by 2030.

The aim is to support the Church in reducing carbon emissions from the energy used in churches, schools, cathedrals, houses and other buildings, saving money by improving the energy efficiency of buildings, and switching to cheaper, more reliable, renewable energy sources.

"The ambition to be net zero by 2030 is at the core of the Church of England's response to the climate crisis – to help safeguard God's creation and achieve a just world," said the Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, the Church of England's lead Bishop for the Environment. "Climate change is hitting the poorest people of the world hardest. We are already seeing the devastating effects of climate change and we must act now. The Church is called to be a people of hope; to repent and live in harmony with our world; to treasure God's creation and to love our global neighbours."

Dioceses, and their parishes and schools, can now take advantage of the first round of grants from the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme, made possible by funding from the Church Commissioners for England.

600 churches with the highest energy use will have access to fully funded energy audits, which come with small grants to create action plans and kickstart initial green projects. A further 1,000 churches will be able to apply for subsidised audits. The programme will also offer Quick Wins grants for small scale work in churches such as installing LED lighting or alternative heating solutions.

A Pilot and Evaluation Fund will support the trialling of new net zero carbon technologies, and there will be packages of technical and fundraising support for demonstrator churches – who can then inspire other churches by sharing their own success in reducing carbon emissions.

The programme will also fund detailed energy surveys on cathedrals and over 100 Church of England clergy houses across four dioceses, representing various housing types and uses. The surveys will help dioceses and cathedrals understand what is needed to achieve their net zero carbon ambitions.

"The announcement today represents the first major milestone of the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme, and there is much more to come," said Julian Atkins, Net Zero Carbon Programme Director with the Church Commissioners, which is providing funding in support of the programme. "There will be more details on how dioceses and parishes can apply for support in the coming weeks and months – and what we learn during this phase will inform the future phases of our work."

Notes to editors

In February 2020, [General Synod voted to adopt the ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon by 2030](#), and following a [widespread consultation with parishes, dioceses, cathedrals, and the wider Church](#), a [Routemap](#) to Net Zero Carbon by 2030 was drawn up by members of the Church of England's Environment Working Group.

The Routemap, [published in June 2022](#), encourages cathedrals, churches, schools, clergy housing and theological education institutions to make changes to their day-to-day activities to reduce carbon emissions. Included are explanations of simple changes which can be made, such as fixing basic insulation gaps or switching lightbulbs. It also includes helpful advice on developing decarbonisation plans and decarbonising heat through more complex interventions.

Case studies of churches which have achieved net zero carbon can be found [here](#).

For more details on the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon programme, click [here](#).

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