

GENERAL SYNOD

**London and Truro Diocesan Synod Motion on the Environment
A Background Paper from the Secretary General****Summary**

- Significant progress has been achieved in environmental action, and visibility in public debate, through the Church of England Environment Campaign.
 - A variety of successful energy measurement and monitoring schemes are active in dioceses and two approaches have been trialled in auditing at national level.
 - To create an energy measurement mechanism suitable for all dioceses is challenging, and allocating resources to do so would require reducing national activity in other areas.
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1. Shrinking the Footprint was established in 2006 and guided by a small steering group. Following a July 2014 General Synod motion from Southwark Diocese the national Environmental Working Group was created and is accountable to the Archbishops' Council. Chaired by the Bishop of Salisbury, as the lead bishop for the environment, the EWG has members with specialist knowledge on buildings, liturgy, advocacy and policy. The group works to a three year planning framework which has objectives on engaging with parishes, supporting clergy, renewing environmental liturgy, communication, interfaith links and education. The environment programme is supported by two staff (equal to 1 fte) based in the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, and in Mission and Public Affairs.
2. In 2017 Shrinking the Footprint became the Church of England Environment Programme reflecting the broader remit of work and the Church's wide-ranging environmental responsibilities.
3. Recent achievements include:
 - "Big Church Switch" Campaign resulted in more than 2000 churches transferring to green energy
 - Green Church Award saw 112 entries with outstanding winners highlighting a diversity of projects
 - "Plastic-less Lent" campaign received widespread parish support and global media coverage including pick-up by the New York Times, BBC and Canadian Global Network.
 - Support of the Eco-Church award scheme has seen growth to over 880 churches with 13 eco-dioceses.
 - Diocesan Environment Officer network coverage increased to 35 dioceses. Bishops Environment group (formed from those attending the environmental event every year at the College of Bishops) growth from 5 to 71 members in 5 years. Policy responses, briefings, ministerial meetings and letters engaging

Government on issues of climate change and environment including support for parish engagement with MPs.

- Support and resources provided for parishes and dioceses ranging from advice on solar panels to swift boxes and tree care.
- The Programme is represented and the profile of Church engagement on the environment raised through events and contacts with representatives of other faith groups and organisations, environmental NGOs, government departments, the Anglican Communion Environment Network, All Party groups etc.

Energy measurement

4. In 2007 the Church of England's first estimate of energy use and carbon emissions was undertaken as a study by Faber Maunsell (now AECOM) and paid for by the Carbon Trust and with some contributions from dioceses. It undertook energy surveys at 24 churches and 6 cathedrals in the dioceses of Durham, Exeter, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Southwark and then extrapolated from those measurements to estimate the overall carbon footprint of the Church.
5. Five years on, in 2012 the follow up programme sought to develop a light-touch and voluntary tool that could be used by a larger number of churches to help them understand energy use and manage it better. Although aware that the results would not be directly comparable with the 2007 benchmark, advances since that date meant that a more widely available tool could be created which allowed users to see their energy use visually, adjust it to weather data and understand their building performance. In contrast to 2007, available funding in 2012 was extremely limited. A Government LEAF grant enabled the *Smeasure programme* to be proceed. The *Smeasure* tool was developed by the University of Oxford's Environmental Change Unit and adapted for church use.
6. The programme was offered with online support and communicated through presentations at diocesan events and a network of champions. Initially it was piloted in two dioceses and then expanded to 6 areas. Take-up was good but the system relied on the continuing enthusiasm of volunteers inputting data regularly and it became clear that this placed an undue burden on parishes. From a large amount of data, a smaller sub set of churches who had provided data over a full year on a fortnightly basis allowed the production of a more statistically accurate carbon footprint, albeit still with a large margin for error.
7. Over the lifetime of Shrinking the Footprint there have been numerous efforts to establish a system which would work across our diverse dioceses. Individual dioceses have set up successful systems, most notably London. But also more recently data on energy use has been collected in Leeds diocese and Chichester, amongst others.
8. Other mechanisms for recording energy use have been explored which include archdeacons' visitations, the online Church Faculty system and the use of energy data from churches in the Parish Buying energy basket (around 1,880). These sources could potentially give a good indication of current carbon footprint if the resources existed to analysis and clean the data. However, the Environmental Working Group is clear that collecting energy data should not be done in isolation from the parishes,

since without a feedback loop action cannot be taken to increase efficiency as a result of the findings.

9. In addition, through experience of the 2012 audit and from other national projects, it is clear that every diocese has a different approach. While the London scheme has worked well in the particular context of that diocese, it is questionable whether this would be successful in more dispersed rural dioceses where building energy use is minimal and where the capacity of parishes is often already overstretched.
10. Whilst the 80% reduction commitment – set in line with Government targets and approved by Synod – was put in place with the best intentions at the time, it was instigated without a full understanding of the resource implications and diffuse nature of the Church of England as an institution.
11. The Environmental Working Group has concluded that the limited resources available to the environmental programme are best used in promoting a diverse range of actions so that every church has an opportunity to engage – from churchyard biodiversity and community food-growing projects to renewable energy and political climate campaigning.
12. This is not to say that energy use and carbon emissions are neglected. Recent work to encourage energy switching has resulted in around 2000 churches using green energy - a significant move in terms of carbon footprint reduction and one that puts the action in the hands of parishes. The encouragement of Eco Church has also been rooted in this support for parish-led progress, and work is ongoing to link tools for energy management into the award scheme to help congregations increase building efficiency. Similarly, while energy use data will still be collected from the national energy basket, aiding understanding of the overall picture, EWG are also working with Parish Buying to offer energy audits and implementation services for churches. By focusing communication with parishes nationally on our mission as Christians to care for God's creation, and offering a range of tools for reducing carbon footprint and increasing energy efficiency, the aim is to move the entire Church forward in environmental action with the resources available.

Costs of annual measurement

13. The London/Truro paper puts forward a cost of £25,000, a figure produced by the London Diocese for the Environmental Working Group when investigating the feasibility of establishing a national system. This covers the cost of a basic online framework. The £25,000 figure does not include the staff time which would involve not only careful set-up, data evaluation and support for parishes but also communication and engagement across the country. In addition, based on experience with previous measurements, reaching a 10% take up would require commitment from dioceses in promotion. This would be a very substantial task if it were to embrace all the dioceses of the Church of England and it would be reasonable to assume that it would require the full-time work of one highly knowledgeable staff member for at least the first three years. This would multiply the projected costs by several times depending upon the final definition of the job and the appropriate salary band.
14. Finally, it is worth noting that the Archbishops' Council has already agreed its budget for 2019 and that Synod will be asked to approve this at the July Group of Sessions. The final clause of the motion, calling upon the Archbishops' Council to make available

financial and human resources to meet the provisions of the rest of the motion, could only be realized by taking those resources away from another area of work that has already been agreed as part of the Council's forthcoming work programmes. The scale of the Council's overall commitment to its existing environmental programme, in relation to other priorities, would inevitably have to be considered if Synod wish to see a full, national, programme of annual energy measurement become a priority.

William Nye, Secretary General

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