



There is a climate emergency. This has been recognised by the Church at all levels, through the Call to Action of the Environmental Working Group, through the General Synod motion of February 2020, and through a number of diocesan and deanery climate emergency motions. General Synod has called upon all parts of the Church to draw up an action plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions year-on-year, achieving net zero by 2030. This sits alongside a crisis in biodiversity; we know we need to protect the biodiversity within church grounds and church land.

The Division and its committees; the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, the Church Buildings Council, the Statutory Advisory Committee on Closed and Closing Churches, and its seven Conservation Committees, has been fully committed to action on the environment for well over a decade, since the 2005 General Synod which agreed on the need for Churchwide action on issues of climate change. This has gained additional momentum in the last two years, as the scientific consensus on the urgency of action has become clearer and clearer.

In many ways, our historic buildings are exemplars of sustainability; still fulfilling the original purpose for which they were built, centuries later. They also have a significant amount of embodied carbon; as stated in Historic England's 2019 *Heritage Counts*, "Continuing to use and re-use these assets can reduce the need for new carbon-generating construction activities, thereby reducing the need for new material extraction and reducing waste production."¹

Many churches and cathedrals are already working to answer Synod's call and play their part in responding to the climate crisis, which means the Division needs to offer useful and relevant guidance and support. We need to ensure our guidance reflects the very different needs of different churches and cathedrals, and that it avoids risks such as maladaptation. We need to ensure that, in the drive for net zero, we make the right changes, which take account of the whole carbon lifecycle of a project as well as respecting the history and intrinsic value of our buildings.

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 part of our role, and the role of all cathedral Fabric Advisory Committees, Diocesan Advisory Committees, and diocesan chancellors around the country, to ensure that our buildings support the Church of England's mission. The fifth mark of missions calls on us, "*To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*" This tells us that the way the Church heats, lights, and modifies its buildings is an integral part of the mission of the Church, a physical manifestation of that mission.

Therefore, the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division will:

I. In our guidance and decisions, encourage environmentally sustainable approaches to the conservation of the special interest of the building and the continuation and growth of its Christian mission.

- *For example, we would always encourage a church/cathedral to have done a thorough options appraisal before applying for faculty/permission to replace an oil or gas boiler with a like-for-like replacement, to see if they could instead implement a non-fossil-fuel-based system such as an air- or ground-source heat pump, radiant panel heaters, or pew heaters. We will ask searching questions to ensure applications that come to us have considered the environment in their decision-making. Environmental benefits can already be taken into account as a "public good" when making a case within the faculty process. Those buildings with historic interiors need specialist advice, which the Division and its conservation committees are well placed to give.*

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon/>

2. Create guidance notes which support good environmental practice in churches and cathedrals.

- For example, we will revise our guidance on heating and renewable energy to ensure they are up-to-date and guide churches and cathedrals towards environmentally friendly options, whilst acknowledging that they must be comfortable to be in, and that historic interiors must be conserved. There is no simple “one size fits all” solution. We will also encourage well-managed and appropriate tree planting and nature-based solutions.

3. Work with other departments to support the measurement and reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions from our cathedrals and churches.

- For example, supporting the roll-out of the Energy Footprint Tool developed by Research and Statistics, and developing guidance about how greenhouse gas emissions can be measured. We will support Parish Buying in their energy audit programme, and ensure the learnings from this are understood and widely shared. We will contribute to guidance on off-setting, including the positive contribution our churchyards can make through carbon sequestration in soils and plants.

4. Share information through the Cathedral Administrators, Fabric Advisory Committees, Diocesan Advisory Committees, Archdeacons, and Diocesan Environmental Officer network about environmental good practice, helping staff in diocese develop their skills and knowledge on topics such as heating, LED lighting, renewable energy, draught-proofing, and insulation.

- For example, the DAC conference in 2020 will combine with the DEO conference, with sessions on moving towards ‘net zero’ and practical steps churches can take.


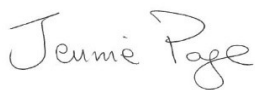

5. Work with partners such as Historic England, ICON, Caring for God’s Acre, the Bat Conservation Trust, Natural England, and A Rocha so that we can access expert advice, support, and funding opportunities which help our dioceses, cathedrals, and churches.

- For example, we are currently working with partners on the Bats in Churches project, the national Burial Grounds Survey, and the Beautiful Burial Grounds project. We support A Rocha in their nation-wide Eco Churches and Eco Diocese programme.

6. Gather information on the impact of a changing climate on our buildings and historic interiors, the damage this is causing, and the risk of future harm. We will use this information to inform our policy and guidance.

- For example, we will gather data on the impact of flooding and on practical steps that can be taken to reduce the damage caused.

We know this guidance will raise challenges for churches and cathedrals, and we are committed to helping find ways to overcome them. These solutions will be very different for different types of buildings and churches that offer differing styles and types of ministry and outreach. We know from our 2012 study that three quarters of the Church’s greenhouse gas emissions come from our schools, our busiest churches & cathedrals, and our offices: those buildings where the heating and lighting is turned on many hours per day and so the energy use is high. For these large buildings, or complex sites with multiple buildings, the solutions may include new technologies such as heat pumps and solar panels, alongside LED lighting and improvements to the fabric. Meantime, our thousands of smaller churches, used once or twice a week, need simpler and less expensive solutions such as maintaining roofs & gutters, fixing broken windows, installing pew heaters, and switching to 100% renewable electricity. We know that there are financial implications to some of these choices and will always work to arrive at a proportionate solution that balances the complex factors involved. The Division will prioritise work that guides churches and cathedrals towards the right solutions in the right places.

<p>Signed by: Becky Clark, Director, Cathedral and Church Buildings Division</p>	<p>Jennie Page, Chair, Church Buildings Council</p>	<p>Dame Fiona Reynolds, Chair of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England</p>
		
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