

## 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.
  - This revised paper includes an updated assessment what human and financial resources would be required to enable work in part (d) of the motion.
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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 amendment to the London and Truro Diocesan Synod motion on the environment made at the July 2018 Group of Sessions called on the Archbishops' Council urgently to assess what human and financial resources would be required to enable work in part (d) of the motion and to report this back at the February 2019 Group of Sessions.
14. Staff have liaised with the movers of the motion to review the estimate of the resources that would be required to implement the work envisaged in part (d) of the London & Truro Diocesan motion. Two specific areas of opportunity for capacity building were identified as being needed to 'promote, co-ordinate and rapidly accelerate' the Environment Programme.
  - Systems work to facilitate a national carbon footprint tool
  - An Intelligent Client Service Agreement to provide expert building performance/M & E advice
15. In addition to this the level of staff resource within the Archbishops' Council working on environmental issues would need to be reviewed. It was also recognised that dioceses may wish to review the level of resource allocated to environmental issues in the light of their available resources and priorities.

16. The Archbishops' Council endorsed this analysis and tasked me with considering how the work necessary to achieve it could be resourced. In reaching this decision the Council recognised the constraints on its resources and the extent to which it can increase the diocesan apportionment meant that it would need to reduce funding for work in some other areas as a result of prioritising expenditure on environmental programmes.

#### *National Carbon Footprint tool*

17. Initial scoping has been carried out on a **National Carbon Footprint tool** to help **parishes improve efficiency, save money & measure themselves against others without adding to volunteer workload.** Work has been undertaken with the Research & Statistics team to identify and streamline existing data sources and establish a mechanism for developing a Church carbon footprint. This would involve using information from

- Finance Returns
  - Statistics for Mission
  - Parish Buying energy basket
  - Church Heritage Record
- and other sources will be combined to generate a bespoke efficiency report for parishes.

18. The report will be generated automatically and will sit alongside signposting to advice, the Eco Church survey and procurement deals on energy audits, LEDs and other implementation services. This information will also be collated nationally to provide a single Church figure against which progress can be demonstrated against targets set.

19. To achieve this there would be a need for some programming to alter existing questions and redesign an existing portal. Progressing the work in this way would mean that costs (estimated at c. £10,000) would be significantly lower than the amount needed to create a new system. Options for applying for external grant funding for these costs are being explored but if no external funding is achieved this cost would need to be funded from the Council's existing resources.

#### *An Intelligent Client Service Agreement to provide expert building performance/M & E advice*

20. Such an agreement, negotiated at national level would provide access to specialist advice from senior engineers and building performance staff which would:

- Unlock efficiency savings for parishes providing funds for mission
- Make our church buildings welcoming, innovative and fit for the future
- Improve the take up of renewable technology
- Combat the issue of poor and outdated advice on sustainable heating/lighting in dioceses

21. A service agreement would provide access to a diverse range of skills and would provide better value for money than a secondment. A bank of days would be bought and it is proposed that the available time is used for training specialist (diocesan advisors & architects) and regional groups in sustainable heating and lighting, online webinars and site visits to churches shown as most in need from the carbon footprint work (unusually high bills for building size and activity).

22. The estimated costs for an initial bank of 25 days is £10,000. Options for applying for external grant funding for these costs are being explored but if no external funding is achieved this cost would need to be funded from the Council's existing resources

*Staff resource*

23. Staff resource at national level will need to focus on the best way of delivering the following priorities:

- Wider visibility and communication of the Church's environmental work leading to greater engagement, particularly with young people
- Better support and growth of the (mainly voluntary) Diocesan Environment Officer network
- More funded partnerships with others
- Delivery of the three-year plan of the Environmental Working Group
- Ambitious environmental policy established across the Church
- Positioning the Church as a significant advocate for sustainable climate and environmental policy coming out of government, partnering with others already working in this field

24. Resourcing of this will depend on the outcome of the Synod debate/and discussions in the Council about budget priorities, and possible offsetting reductions in work elsewhere. In particular the potential for external partnerships and greater working with those who hold the Anglican Communion brief for environmental programmes will be explored.

William Nye, Secretary General

January 2019

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England  
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