

Archdeacons' Briefing No 8 November 2010

This briefing is based on a presentation given by the Diocesan Environment Officer, the Rev'd Rob Kelsey, to Bedlington Deanery Synod in May 2010.

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Measuring the energy use, improving the energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of our church

Questions that are frequently asked by parishes

On the basis of the responses to a questionnaire sent recently to the parishes of one of our deaneries, we have evidence that churches are concerned with the following issues:

- Heating
- Lighting
- Insulation
- Renewable energy generation
- Funding for environmental projects
- Measuring and reducing a church's carbon footprint

Our part in a bigger picture

In October 2009, the Church of England published a document entitled, *Church and Earth 2009-2016*, which is 'a statement of the Church of England's beliefs, activities and ambitions relating to climate change and environmental action over the next seven years.' The plan can be found at www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org/misc_lib/cofe_7yp_full.pdf. It includes the following challenges:

- 'Officers in all parishes should make annual reports of [energy] use and [carbon] emissions to PCCs and their dioceses.'
- 'The challenge before the Church of England is to realise the commitment to a reduction of 80% in its carbon footprint by 2050. ... The Church is ... challenged to cut its carbon footprint by at least 42% by 2020, in line with the recommendations of the UK Committee on Climate Change. This [will] involve at least 5% year-on-year cuts in carbon emissions wherever possible.'

Shrinking the Footprint, the Church of England's Environmental Campaign

The *Shrinking the Footprint* web-site at www.shrinkingthefootprint.org is well-worth a visit. It includes sections on:

- Taking action – Audits, advice and toolkits
- Best practice – FAQs and case studies
- A technical report to help with the environmental management of churches, including 'How can we reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from our church?'
- Green technologies
- Grants and funding

- The Climate Justice Fund, which enables churches to support partners overseas in their response to the challenges of climate change

The first step: measuring our energy use and carbon emissions

The first step in improving the energy efficiency of a church building is to measure the existing energy use, because 'if you can't measure it, then you can't manage it.' It's often the case that, simply by increasing the awareness of energy use, a reduction in energy use is achieved.

We recommend that Church Treasurers (or another nominated member of the PCC) should:

- **Keep a file of the church's energy bills**
- **Record their church's energy use on an annual basis, preferably using the downloadable from the form the *Shrinking the Footprint* web-site.**
- **Present a report on the church's energy use to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The report would be similar to (but simpler than) a financial report, on the basis that the church should give an account of the way it uses energy, as well as the way it uses money.**
- If you wish, you can calculate your church's carbon footprint, using one of the carbon calculators that can be found on the Energy Saving Trust web-site. (See below.)

The next step: reducing our energy use and carbon emissions

The Diocesan Environment Group seeks to encourage the church as a whole to become more environmentally-friendly, and the Diocesan Environment Officer is happy to respond to queries from parishes. Though unable to provide much in the way of technical expertise himself, he 'knows a man who can.'

Your Church Architect should be able to advise on environmental matters. He or she will charge a fee, although an initial consultation might be free.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) may be able to advise on some environmental matters. Please contact the DAC Secretary, Mr Nigel Foxon, with your queries.

The Energy Saving Trust

The Diocesan Environment Group works in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust (EST). In the past, church buildings tended to fall between the two stools of private homes and business premises, but EST now provide support for what they call community buildings. It's worth exploring their web-site at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk. Make sure you click on the 'Green communities' tab. The website includes the following sections (among many others):

- How to get funding for your community energy project
- Energy auditing for old and listed buildings
- Community carbon footprint tool
- Green communities case studies, including churches with contact details for more information

A church can become a member of the Green Communities programme. One of the benefits of membership is the opportunity for free training and the availability of up to three days of free consultancy advice. More details are on the web-site.

Your first port of call for general advice on energy matters is Colin MacDonald, at (0191) 2305492 or colin.macdonald@est-ne.org.uk. Malcolm Potter is 'the renewables chap' at EST, and is happy to field enquiries. Contact him for information and advice about renewable energy generation at (01642) 373028 or malcolm.potter@est-ne.org.uk.