

## **Net Zero Carbon Preparation Fund**

### **Information for churches**

#### **About the project**

We are excited to announce that we have been awarded funding from the national church to kickstart action across the diocese towards decarbonisation, by funding a small cohort of churches to identify scalable solutions, and share the learning so that hundreds of our churches can benefit.

This means that ten churches will have the opportunity to receive funding (up to the value of £15,000 each) to develop their net zero project plans to the point of delivery. A further ten churches will have the opportunity to receive seed-funding (£3,000 each) to start their journey.

A further group of churches, which are interested in learning along the way, will be invited to join the learning as part of preparations for their own plans.

We appreciate that this funding is insufficient to support the many churches in need of resource, but we are hopeful that this pilot will provide us with valuable lessons to ensure the journey for other churches is simpler, effective and evidence-based.

#### **Can my church apply?**

Churches are welcome to apply if they can demonstrate one of the following criteria:

1. The church falls into the top 20% of high-emitting churches within the diocese, according to the Energy Footprint Tool (see appendix 1 of the application form)
2. The church has an oil boiler
3. The church has been advised that its boiler is likely to fail in the next two years
4. The church doesn't meet these criteria but has an innovative and viable solution that it believes would warrant piloting and could benefit other churches.

We would also expect successful churches to have the full support of their PCC, to be willing to share their learning with a partner church and a wider group of churches, the diocese and potentially the national church, and, for the directly-funded churches, to be able to top up the funding if more was needed to achieve 'project ready status'.

We would expect that some planning is already underway in terms of thinking about decarbonisation – for example the church has had an energy audit with a proposed solution, or developed some thinking about the type of heating that may be appropriate.

We would also encourage the church to reflect on its capacity to drive and deliver the project, and how it might move it forward once this phase of preparation is complete. However, it's worth noting that all of this will be done with the full support of the Environment Team.

If successful, what will my church be expected to do?

The intended outcome is that churches given the maximum funding (up to the value of £15K) will have completed the feasibility study, design work, and begun securing necessary permissions (faculty/planning etc) – by the end of 2025. In other words, we would expect churches to have reached [RIBA design stages 3-4](#). They will have worked with a seed-funded (up to £3,000) partner church to support them take their next steps, and they will have shared their learnings with a wider group.

In order to work towards this, we would support successful churches to take the following steps:

1. **Pre-work:** the successful applicants would have the opportunity for their church members (PCC, congregation members) to learn more about the proposed project, in order to ensure everyone is invested and supportive. For example, church members could attend a site visit to a church with a similar solution to that which is being considered, hear about existing case studies, or the Environment Team could come and present about the project to the PCC and/or the congregation.
2. **Introductions to partner church(es):** if there are churches already identified to be part of the learning journey, introductions will be made in-person (ideally), to support an ongoing relationship throughout the project. A framework for sharing the learning will be established e.g. set meeting times throughout the year, a mechanism for sharing resources/research/findings etc
3. **Feasibility:** the church would get underway with a feasibility study, where needed, to establish the most viable option. Or, if already complete, would use the feasibility to begin forming more detailed plans.
4. **Development of project plan:** feasibility study outcome to be followed up with a project plan, using CofE guidance and Environment Team support where needed. This might include timescales, cost estimates, risk logs and learning logs, actions and owners. It should also consider future fundraising for the proposed solution, and implementation of a fundraising strategy.
5. **Progress through project plan and ongoing sharing with partner churches:** support will remain available from the Environment Team throughout the project. The Environment Team will support the church with interacting with the Church Buildings Team and DAC.

How do we apply?

Fill in the application form by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April and return to [environment@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:environment@oxford.anglican.org). If you have questions before applying, you can contact the Environment Team at any point using the above email address, and we will be holding a webinar on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am – [sign up here](#).

We are aiming to inform churches of the outcome by the end of April 2024.

What happens if we are unsuccessful?

You will be given an option in the form to indicate whether you would like to receive £3,000 seed-funding, or to be involved in wider learning. We would of course encourage you to say 'yes' to these options, in case you are unsuccessful, as it will give you the opportunity to put your church in the best place ahead of further funding expected in 2026.

If successful, will the Diocese fund the capital works once we have completed this project?

We don't yet know what funding will be available at the end of the project, but as it stands, the Diocese cannot fund the capital works for parishes. We anticipate that national funding will be released to support these projects, but we also expect that match-funding will be required, and as such, we advise parishes that are involved to start thinking about how they would match-fund for their proposed project.

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