



Diocese of Blackburn

Net Carbon Zero Action Plan Update 2024

V1.0

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Executive Summary

This Net Carbon Zero action plan sets out the Diocese of Blackburn's response to the climate emergency and the Church of England's aspiration to be net carbon zero by 2030.

The document articulates the plans to address net carbon zero for each of the key diocesan sectors (churches and cathedral, church schools, clergy and DBF housing, glebe land and diocesan offices) that overall contributed to the total assumed diocesan net carbon emissions total of c. 11,813 tonnes/CO₂ in 2023.

The national Church of England is fully supportive of each diocese creating their own road map of planned actions between 2022 and 2030 and, thanks to a commitment from the Church Commissioners, have set aside over £180m in funding that will be released to dioceses to reduce carbon emissions in all of the sectors over time.

The main actions completed from the plan agreed by Diocesan Synod in October 2023 are:

- Eco-diocese bronze status was achieved in spring 2024
- National church funding secured for:
 - A part-time Senior Project Manager to work across both Blackburn and Carlisle dioceses in delivering actions in the plan until end 2025
 - Energy audits and a £3k grant towards carbon reduction actions at sixteen churches that were in the top 600 carbon emitting churches in 2022
 - Energy decarbonisation plans for 35 of the highest emitting churches, the cathedral, Whalley Abbey and Clayton House to be completed by mid-2025
 - £58k of quick-wins grants to be distributed to parishes by end 2025
 - Two church buildings as carbon reduction demonstrator projects by end 2025
 - Retrofit actions on two clergy houses selected for carbon reduction demonstrator projects by end 2025
- A 69% return rate for actual 2023 energy footprint data from churches/halls
- Clayton House and Whalley Abbey switched to green energy tariffs
- Lighting at Clayton House changed to fully-LED with motion-detectors

In addition;

- Good progress is being made towards the achievement of silver eco-diocese by the end of 2025 including:
 - 68 churches have registered for Ecochurch with 17 achieving bronze and 7 silver awards
 - Nine participants completed the Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) Creation Care elective module
 - DBF and DBE staff based at Clayton House have attended a carbon literacy workshop
 - Whalley Abbey has hosted a number of creation-care themed retreats
 - Draft glebe land management plan in development

Whilst the focus of the DBF action plan is on interventions that can be taken to reduce emissions from church-linked assets, the far greater impact on global carbon emissions is for each member of worshipping and school communities to make carbon-conscious choices about how they heat their homes and the frequency, distance and modes of travel they use.

The World Wildlife Fund have an easy to answer questionnaire (<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/questionnaire>) that enables individuals to see their personal carbon emissions from four categories: home, travel, food, and 'stuff' and synod members are encouraged to use the tool to calculate their personal carbon footprint.

Introduction from + Joe

Caring for the beautiful world which God has made is a key part of the mission of the Church. So it is hugely encouraging to see the work being done across the Diocese to look after creation. I want today to draw particular attention to the work of so many people to reduce the carbon being emitted as a result of our activities across the Diocese. Our recent bronze Eco Diocese award is one marker of this work – though, of course, it does not capture it all.

As we look to the future, I am committed to encouraging the churches, schools, and individual people who together make up the Diocese to engage ambitiously with the Church of England's target of reaching carbon net zero by the year 2030.

This document provides an update to our plan (supported by national Church funding) for the next few years as we work towards the goal of attaining net carbon zero. I commend it to you warmly.

+Joe

Bishop of Burnley

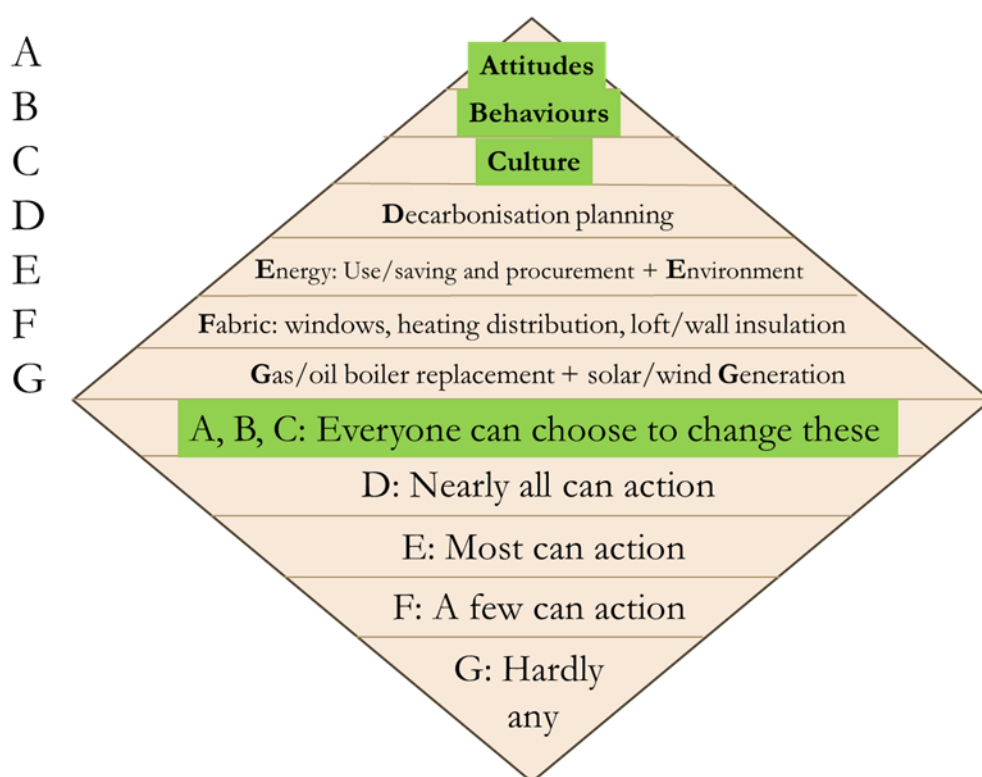
1 Introduction

General Synod voted in February 2020 for the whole of the Church of England to **aim to achieve** net zero carbon by 2030, fifteen years earlier than originally planned. The vote recognised that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation and a fundamental injustice.

The Church of England defines net zero carbon as the reduction as far as possible of all in-scope carbon emissions (from the oil, gas and electricity used in church-linked buildings and petrol and diesel in transport) and the removal of an equivalent amount of carbon from the atmosphere for the remaining in-scope emissions by use of accredited offsetting schemes.

The Church Commissioners have backed the net zero strategy by committing £190m of financial support over nine years (£30m 2022-2025, £90m 2026-2028 and £60m 2028-2030).

The diagram below outlines the key actions that can be taken towards achieving the net zero target.



All individuals can make different choices on their personal **attitudes** and **behaviours** towards climate change/carbon-saving activities and hence influence the **culture** in their households, churches and schools etc – bearing in mind that, in most cases, any energy saved has both a direct financial as well as carbon-emissions benefit.

Nearly all of those who are custodians of church property (eg parochial church councils/ school governing bodies) can engage in **data** recording/sharing and **decarbonisation** planning and most can use the recommendations from the plans to reduce **energy** use/switch to different tariffs and/or engage in wider **environmental** activities as recommended by Ecochurch.

A smaller number of property custodians can undertake appropriate and cost/beneficial **fabric** changes to insulation, glazing and heat distribution systems with only a few looking to replace **gas/oil** heat sources and/or install cost effective solar/wind **generation**.

2. Diocese of Blackburn response to the net zero carbon challenge

Blackburn Diocesan Synod followed General Synod's lead and passed a motion at its meeting in October 2022 that included the following commitment that ***all church buildings and Diocesan property in Blackburn Diocese have a clear roadmap in place to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030.***

A Net Zero Carbon Steering Group was established in early 2023 to oversee the development of the diocesan plan that was endorsed by a significant majority of Blackburn Diocesan Synod at its October meeting in 2023.

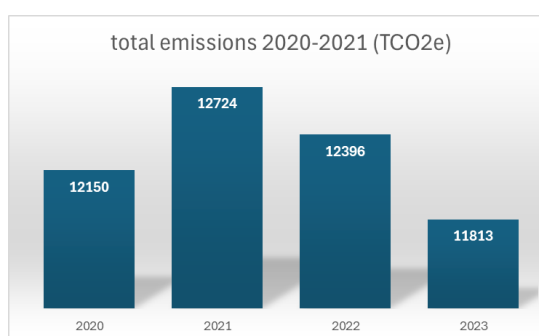
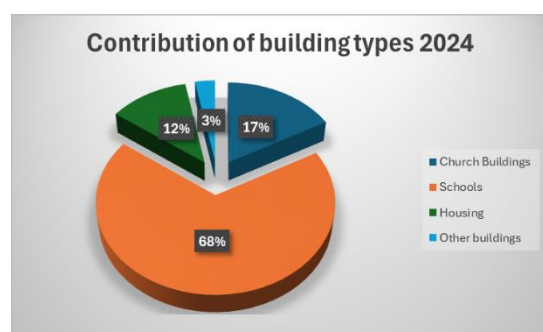
This document reports on progress in delivering the actions in the 2023 plan.

3. The main sources of carbon emissions in the Diocese of Blackburn

Based on data obtained from the national church's Energy Footprint Tool, the assumed net carbon emissions from each property type/activity are as follows:

	Number of buildings in-scope in 2023 (response rate %)	Carbon emissions 2023 (tCO ₂ e) (% contribution to total diocesan emissions)	Carbon emissions 2022 (tCO ₂ e) (% contribution to total diocesan emissions)	Carbon emissions 2021 (tCO ₂ e) (% contribution to total diocesan emissions)	Carbon emissions 2020 (tCO ₂ e) (% contribution to total diocesan emissions)
Church Buildings *	266 (69%)	1,950 (17%)	2,511 (20%)	2,994 (24%)	2,800 (23%)
Schools *	176 (0%)	8,009 (68%)	8,009 (65%)	8,009 (63%)	7,746 (64%)
Housing *	223 (100%)	1,417 (12%)	1,441 (12%)	1,437 (11%)	1,359 (11%)
Other buildings (cathedral + offices, Clayton House, Whalley Abbey, St Philips, Nelson)	4 (100%)	389 (3%)	387 (3%)	236 (2%)	150 (1%)
Work related travel		48 (0%)	48 (0%)	48 (0%)	95 (1%)
TOTAL		11,813 (100%)	12,396 (100%)	12,724 (100%)	12,150 (100%)

* Assumed emissions data has been provided by the national church (based on building size bands/other assumptions) where no actual energy use data has been provided.



Some observations on the **2023** data:

- Just over two-thirds (69%) of churches have provided actual data for their church buildings which is 17% higher than in 2022 (52% return rate) and gives more confidence in the church buildings data.
- The assumed 2023 emissions are 5% lower than the assumed 2022 emissions. However it should be noted that, as schools emissions have been estimated for a third year and they account for over two-thirds of diocesan emissions, the actual reduction may be higher or lower than shown.
- Twenty percent (53) church buildings account for 47% of church carbon emissions in the diocese.
- The 11,813 tCO₂e carbon emitted by DBF/DBE activities is the equivalent of 10,000 small cars travelling 4,130 miles each (41.3m miles equivalent of traveling to the moon and back nearly 86 times).

4. Key achievements during the past 12 months

The following are the key achievements since the action plan was agreed in October 2023:

- Eco-diocese bronze status was achieved in spring 2024
- National church funding secured for:
 - A part-time Senior Project Manager to work across both Blackburn and Carlisle dioceses in delivering actions in the plan until end 2025
 - Energy audits and a £3k grant towards carbon reduction actions at sixteen churches that were in the top 600 carbon emitting churches in 2022
 - Energy decarbonisation plans for 35 of the highest emitting churches, the cathedral, Whalley Abbey and Clayton House to be completed by mid-2025
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- Lighting at Clayton House changed to fully-LED with motion-detectors

In addition;

- Good progress is being made towards the achievement of silver eco-diocese by the end of 2025 including:
 - 68 churches have registered for Ecochurch with 17 achieving bronze and 7 silver awards
 - Nine participants completed the Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) Creation Care elective module
 - DBF and DBE staff based at Clayton House have attended a carbon literacy workshop
 - Five deanery chapters or synods have, or are diarised to, engage with a presentation on Creation Care/Net Carbon Zero
 - Whalley Abbey has hosted a number of creation-care themed retreats
 - Draft glebe land management plan is being developed
 - A draft DBE Environment Policy has been developed

5. Key actions during 2024-2025

The key areas of focus for the Net Carbon Zero Steering Group over the next twelve months are:

A. Church-focussed

- Continuing to increase PCC and congregational awareness of the quantum and sources of carbon emissions from church buildings across the diocese through supporting effective and timely data collection via EFT and reporting eg in APCM reports.
- Supporting parish representatives with arrangements for both site visits and report sharing for the nationally funded energy audits/energy decarbonisation assessments focussed on the highest emitting buildings first.
- Analysing the costed actions from the reports, identifying the 'quick wins' and sharing with the national church the opportunities and challenges of working towards net carbon zero.
- Supporting PCCs with identifying sources of funding for net zero actions.
- Encouraging PCCs to engage with, and work towards, Ecochurch awards
- Continuing with 'green special' Parish Updates with encouraging stories

B. DBF

- Undertaking actions towards achievement of silver eco-diocese status including:
 - Completing a glebe land management strategy
 - Running a second cohort for the Creation Care Authorised Lay Minister elective
 - Presenting carbon literacy/eco-awareness sessions at deanery chapters/synods
 - Hosting a quiet day and a retreat at Whalley Abbey with creation care themes
 - Supporting the cathedral and Bishop's House on their journey towards Eco-Church silver status
- Installing six electric vehicle (EV) charging points at Clayton House
- Offering an EV salary-sacrifice scheme for DBF/DBE employees
- Continuing with fabric eco-improvements and/or replacing diocesan properties to improve the overall energy performance of the housing stock
- Analysing the costed actions from the energy decarbonisation report for Whalley Abbey
- Continuing to proactively engage with the national church on net carbon zero matters including identifying opportunities to secure additional national church funding for actions in Blackburn Diocese in this triennium and beyond
- Continuing to proactively engage with regional ecumenical, community and statutory partners on climate change/creation care matters and with local, regional and national non-church grant funders to secure additional sources of funding for church net zero activities/capital investment.

Appendix- Highest 20% emitting churches/halls based upon 2023 EFT (net/CO2)

Building code	Building name	Building type	Gross co2	Net co2	basis (if not actual dat)
603279	Preston: St John	Church	57.5	57.5	
603242	Lancaster: St Mary (The Priory)	Church	55.3	55.3	
603193	Heyhouses-on-Sea: St Anne	Church	42.3	42.3	
603079	Chorley: St Laurence	Church	38.5	38.5	
603183	Blackpool: Holy Trinity, South Shore			37.1	2022 data
603204	Thornton-le-Fylde: Christ Church	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	40.7	34.6	
603056	Burnley: St Peter	Church	32.7	32.7	
603187	Ansdeil and Fairhaven: St Paul	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	29.7	29.7	
603180	Cleleys: St Andrew	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	27.4	27.4	
603233	Cockerham: St Michael	Church	25.3	25.3	
603042	Blackburn: St Silas	Church	24.0	24.0	
603171	Blackpool: St John	Church	23.8	23.8	
603129	Penwortham: St Mary	Church	23.3	23.3	
603065	Padiham: St Leonard	Church	22.8	22.8	
603273	Preston: All Saints	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	22.1	22.1	
603092	Standish: St Wilfrid	Church	21.6	21.6	
603052	Burnley: St Catherine			21.1	NZC estimate
603203	St Annes-on-Sea: St Thomas			21.1	NZC estimate
603225	Preesall: St Oswald			21.1	NZC estimate
603259	Winmarleigh: St Luke	Church	20.9	20.9	
603264	Broughton: St John the Baptist	Church	20.9	20.9	
603151	Clitheroe: St James	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	20.6	20.6	
603069	Worsthorne: St John the Evangelist	Church	20.6	20.6	
603272	Longridge: St Paul	Church	20.4	20.4	
603275	Preston: St Cuthbert	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	20.0	20.0	
603163	Whalley: St Mary & All Saints			19.9	2022 data
603124	Leyland: St James	Church	19.8	19.8	
603078	Chorley: St James	Church	19.4	19.4	
603057	Burnley: St Stephen	Church	19.2	19.2	
603073	Brindle: St James	Church	18.7	18.7	
603196	Lytham: St Cuthbert	Church	18.4	18.4	
603092	Standish: St Wilfrid	Church Hall	18.0	18.0	
603240	Lancaster: Christ Church	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	18.0	18.0	
603177	Blackpool: St Stephen-on-the-Cliffs	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	17.4	17.4	
603053	Burnley: St Cuthbert	Church Hall	19.1	17.2	
603023	Oswaldtwistle: Immanuel	Church	17.0	17.0	
603070	Adlington: St Paul	Church	16.9	16.9	
603196	Lytham: St Cuthbert	Church Hall	16.6	16.6	
603268	Fulwood: Christ Church	Church Hall	16.5	16.5	
603007	Accrington: St John	Church	16.5	16.5	
603244	Lancaster: St Thomas	Church	15.8	15.8	
603102	Darwen: St Peter			15.7	2022 data
603197	Lytham: St John the Divine	Church	15.6	15.6	
603161	Read-in-Whalley: St John the Evangelist	Church	16.1	15.6	
603244	Lancaster: St Thomas	Church Hall	18.2	15.2	
603229	Whitechapel: St James	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	15.2	15.2	
603083	Croston: St Michael & All Angels	Church	14.8	14.8	
603195	Lund: St John the Evangelist	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	14.6	14.6	
603246	Morecambe: St Barnabas	Church	15.2	14.5	
603312	Tunstall: St John the Baptist	Church	14.4	14.4	
603245	Poulton-le-Sands: Holy Trinity	Church	14.4	14.4	
603126	Lostock Hall: St James			14.3	2022 data
603053	Burnley: St Cuthbert	Church	15.2	14.2	
603080	Chorley: St Peter	Church	14.1	14.1	
603239	Heysham: St James	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	13.9	13.9	
603170	Blackpool: Holy Cross			13.8	2022 data
603137	Colne: St Bartholomew	Church	13.8	13.8	
603308	Silverdale: St John	Church and Church Hall combined (shared meter)	13.7	13.7	
603267	Chipping: St Bartholomew	Church	13.3	13.3	
603012	Baxenden: St John	Church	13.2	13.2	

*NZC estimate = estimated emissions data provided by national church based on floorspace of building as no actual data provided in 2022 or 2023