



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Environment and Net Zero Carbon Update

1. Diocesan Synod has committed to priorities in this triennium around the environment and Net Zero Carbon (NZC) which forms part of the previous and refreshed Southwark Vision. On the environment, Synod members will be aware that we work with the charity A Rocha and achieved the Bronze Eco Diocese Award in 2022. Diocesan Synod agreed that we should work to achieve the Silver Award by 2027/28, and this paper updates on progress towards that goal.
2. On Net Zero Carbon, our ambition in Southwark is to achieve NZC by 2035, and we are using the National Environment Team’s Routemap to 2030 as a basis for this work. Part of this is providing an annual Carbon emissions update to Diocesan Synod which we planned for March Synods, although we are still awaiting data from the National Church. If received prior to the Synod meeting, this data will be presented to Synod members.
3. The Diocese of Southwark has already achieved the required standard on five of the ten criteria for Eco Diocese Silver standard.

Carbon reduction (achieved)	Diocesan Office award
Celebrating Creation (achieved)	Eco Church awards
Collaboration (achieved)	Finance & investments
Ownership (achieved)	Policy
Schools & education (achieved)	Training & development

4. Work on these areas has not ceased and there is an ongoing focus and energy. This reflects our long-term commitment to the 5th Mark of Mission¹ as a part of the Diocesan Vision for 2024-2035 and Synodical commitment to the Eco Diocese scheme.
5. The greatest challenge the Diocese will face in reaching the **Eco Diocese Silver Criteria** will be the number of Churches registered and awarded for the Eco Church awards. The Silver criteria are that 40% of local churches are registered; 30% of local churches awarded, of which at least a third of these awards should be Silver or higher. There is still some way to go to achieve this.

Eco Church Award	Current	Target	Difference
Registered	90	144	54
Bronze	60	72	12
Silver	19	35	16
Gold	1	1	0

¹ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

6. 2023 has seen our first Eco Church Gold award, at St John's Waterloo, one of only 39 across the country. We have also had three new Silver awards, fifteen new Bronze awards and eleven new registrations in that time.
7. The Diocese of Southwark has a long-standing Eco Diocese Working Group, which has **ownership** of overseeing the process, chaired by the Bishop of Kingston, with representatives from: the archdeacons, Board of Education, Diocesan Synod, Episcopal Area Environmental Advisors, Communications, and Property. Other members of staff are called upon as needed. This meets three times a year.
8. With the departure of key Area Environmental Advisors for Woolwich Kingston, replacements will need to be found. We are reviewing the requirements of the roles to best support churches in their Eco Church journey, and to shift the role from occasional advisor to hands-on network builder. This will be an ongoing process in the next year and suggestions or registration of interest would be greatly appreciated.
9. **The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE)** has implemented an environmental policy in line with A Rocha and National guidance. Climate Justice and Eco Schools receive support and resources from the SDBE. The SDBE is actively engaged in the Net Zero Carbon project with major works occurring across the SDBE estate.
10. The Diocese of Southwark continues its **collaboration** with its neighbouring dioceses in the area of Care for creation and Net Zero Carbon. This is mostly focused on collaborating with events and training and sharing resources in this common challenge. We also work regularly with other denominations and ecumenical groups such as Churches Together in South London, and interdenominational contacts across the Diocese. We also highlight the work occurring in our Link Dioceses, across the Anglican Communion, in our communications.
11. We continue to **celebrate Creation**, and our commitment to the 5th Mark of Mission with regular and substantial presence of environmental issues on the Diocesan website and through wider communication channels, including the Bridge, Southwark Digest, X (formally Twitter) and other social media platforms.
12. The improvement of the environmental sustainability of the **Diocesan Office** is under review, with a variety of energy and carbon saving measures being implemented under the Property Department subject to affordability. The building's operations are not far from the current Silver award standard. In line with the awards criteria we are looking at ways to promote understanding of the Eco Diocese goals and the 5th Mark of Mission amongst staff. This includes an Office Eco Group to ensure a diversity of engagement and ideas across all departments.
13. To be in line with the A Rocha criteria, our **Environment Policy** - which was approved in 2021 - will need to be updated to include land management, with an explicit reference to promoting biodiversity and managing the land for carbon reduction across the Diocese. A review of all glebe land is being conducted by the Property Department and will form part of a discussion at the Policy & Finance Committee and Diocesan Council of Trustees. This will inform an update of the Diocesan Environmental Policy in the next triennium. This criterion only applies to land under the control of the Diocesan Board of Finance and not to churchyards.
14. Environmental **training and development** is included in standard Diocesan training for both lay and ordained ministry, and there are opportunities for parish volunteers. We

aim to expand and support the network of Eco Church volunteers across the Diocese. We currently are collaborating with eager and committed environmentalist Christians in such projects as the Lenten Pilgrimages being organised by the Bishop of Kingston. We continue to offer training to Lay and Ordained members of the Diocese in Eco Church and Carbon Literacy Training.

15. All Diocesan funds are **invested** within the ethical principles consistent with good environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria and in line with guidelines from the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. Diocesan Synod has committed to divesting from fossil fuels by the end of 2024, and work continues with the Investment Committee to achieve this. A brief update will be given in the Finance item during the session. To reach Eco Diocese Silver standard we will need a written ESG Policy for our investments and to have challenged those organisations we invest and bank with to disclose and improve their own ESG policies.

Net Zero Carbon Update

16. The Diocese is committed to bringing **carbon emissions** data to the Diocesan Synod each year in accordance with the national Routemap to NZC by 2030. The annual National Report is delayed this year due to *“a lack of capacity in data services which has now been resolved”*. This information has not been received at the time of sending this paper, but will be presented at the meeting if at all possible.
17. To produce this footprint data for churches the National Church uses data collected via the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT), available on the Parish Returns website. It collects data from the calendar year previous. Thanks to targeted engagement work the Diocese has seen a steady increase in participation from Churches with this scheme. In 2021 around 18% submitted responses, in 2022 it rose to 22%, and 2023 had 46% of churches providing a complete return and nearly 60% of churches engaging with the scheme. The collection for data from the 2023 calendar year opened this month (February) and will run until July. With nearly half of our parishes submitting complete, or incomplete data, it means our Carbon Footprint Report for the calendar year 2022 will be the most accurate yet. If a church does not submit a return they will be excluded from grant schemes run by the National Church that are targeted at churches with proven high Carbon emissions rather than the estimate based on building size that is applied to those who do not submit the EFT return. The Carbon Footprint Report will draw on data from our Schools, and the Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) that our Parsonages hold. Previously this has covered 90% of our schools and 70% of our Parsonages.
18. The Diocese has received two **capacity funding grants** from the National Environment Team over the past year. An initial £15,000 was for an initial temporary role intended to oversee the development of a Diocesan Net Zero Action Plan and to write a bid for the next round of capacity funding. As we had already passed a Net Zero Action Plan the role largely focused on creating a bid for further funds and examining how Net Zero Carbon work will be structured in the Diocese, as well as the costing of the Net Zero Action Plan. As a result of this work we have successfully bid for £131,000 of capacity funding for the permanent role of NZC Programme Manager, which has recently been recruited and begun work.
19. The **Property Strategy** is being reviewed in 2024, led by Ruth Martin (Bishop’s Lead for Strategic Development including Property Strategy), together with Andrew Bennett

(Director of Property Services) and other colleagues. The updated Property Strategy will have an emphasis on our Net Zero Carbon Objectives. In the meantime, we are assessing and prioritising properties in need of improved insulation, particularly those in-vacancy. A list will be produced, in conjunction with the Archdeacons, identifying properties which may need to be replaced in the long term to avoid the particular challenges decarbonising-refurbishment would create. The Property Strategy review will be presented to the Policy & Finance Committee at its Autumn meeting, with the aim of presenting to the new Diocesan Synod in November; by which time we will have also completed our gas boiler and our eco-vicarage reviews.

20. The **SDBE** continues to support schools with resources on Eco School awards and climate justice to ensure that the journey to Net Zero Carbon is connected to our faith and present in the lives of our pupils. The SDBE continues to engage well with the energy footprint tool with most Schools having an EPC and aware of their carbon footprint.
21. The **Cathedral** has begun a programme of offering Carbon Literacy Training to all staff. It has started regular meetings of a high-level sustainability group. The Cathedral is receiving free, expert de-carbonisation support from building consultants via the Southwark Climate Collective over the next 12 months. This will monitor energy use across the site and assist in identifying where to invest in heating and cooling infrastructure with the aim to reduce carbon emissions, increase efficiency and cut costs. The Cathedral is working towards Silver Eco Church Award. The Cathedral continues to roll out an LED light replacement scheme across the site and has achieved over 50% LED bulbs in the Cathedral itself.

National Church - Funding Streams

22. Over the past year, the National Environment Team has begun to issue its first funding streams to utilise the £190m made available to them by the Church Commissioners. This will be targeted to support Cathedrals, Housing, Schools and Churches. The large bulk of funding from the National Church will be made available over the next triennium. These streams are explorations in how best to deploy the bulk of funding in the future.
23. **Cathedrals:** 2024 will see the funding stream 'Cathedrals Pathway to Net Zero' for which £600k has been allocated to carry out technical surveys and concept design reports on all cathedrals in England. Later in the year, information on the 'quick wins' and 'demonstrator projects' funding streams for cathedrals will be made available.
24. **Housing:** A 'Practical Pathway to Net Zero for Clergy Housing' was published by the National Church in the summer, alongside a 'milestones guide' that is in line with our own Diocesan Action Plan. Details on the Clergy Housing funding streams will be shared later this year. It will be decided how this funding will be used after a series of surveys of clergy housing across Birmingham, Exeter, Portsmouth and Sheffield dioceses.
25. **Churches:**
26. **Energy Auditing:** Southwark has 44 churches in the top 600 emitting churches across the Church of England, unsurprisingly the second highest after London. These 44 churches will be eligible for a free energy audit in 2024 accompanied with £3000 of match funding to implement the suggested quick wins.

27. Demonstrators project: Southwark is also able to put forward three or four churches (1 per 100) for a Demonstrators project. This will provide funding and fundraising support to facilitate the feasibility and project design stage of a significant decarbonisation project and potentially 25% of the costs of said project. This is to be a demonstrator of reliable technology and not something innovative. The DAC and Environment Officer have worked with the Archdeacons to shortlist participants which meet the criteria required with an aim of submitting applicants in March 2024.
28. Quick Wins funding: £2.4m will be divided between the 42 dioceses in the CofE to implement Quick Wins funding. The exact amount of money for Southwark is currently unknown. Grants to parishes are expected to be around £2,500 with guidance saying up to £10k max. The National Church is expected to contact Diocesan Secretaries about this in early 2024.

Jack Edwards
Diocesan Environment Officer
February 2024