



October 2022

Energy crisis toolkit

Diocesan Support for Worshipping Communities during the Energy Crisis



Transformed Lives | Growing Church | Building Community
THE KINGDOM OF GOD - GOOD NEWS FOR ALL

Introduction from the Bishop

At the heart of the outworking of our diocesan vision are the five marks of mission. All five marks of mission - reiterating the calling of the church to tell the good news of Christ, to teach disciples, to tend to human need by loving service, to transform unjust structures of society, and to treasure creation – are vital in our response to the current energy and cost of living crisis. We have opportunity, in our words and actions, to proclaim the hopeful message of Jesus Christ to those overcome by feelings of anxiety and despair.



This deep desire to reach and serve the communities we live and work and worship among is rooted in the very practical challenges we face ourselves, not least to keep our own homes and buildings warm. This is a tough time. Thank you for your commitment and ingenuity as you seek to continue to offer mission and ministry in these winter months.

Bishop Malcolm and I commend this helpful correspondence from our archdeacons as a useful 'first word' on this subject. If nothing else, please hear in it a recognition of the challenges you face and an acknowledgment of the stress that it brings. There are some practical ideas, some promise of support and my almighty 'YES' to using this time to think creatively in new missional ways (with my commitment to be as permissive and flexible as possible as you adapt).

Be assured of continuing and grateful prayers,

+ Libby Derby



Words of support from the Archdeacons

This is the first in a series of diocesan communications intended to support local parishes respond well to the energy crisis. Further information will be released as additional sources of support are made available. The Archdeacon's Office will be coordinating these communications and will be the main point of contact for questions.

The diocese will be offering practical assistance, advice, and signposting to external support during this energy crisis. Please get in touch with your archdeacon for a conversation.

We invite you to consider the information that follows at an imminent PCC meeting. If you don't have a PCC meeting scheduled imminently, please consider convening an extraordinary PCC meeting to consider your parish's response to the energy crisis.

The energy crisis is, of course, undesired, it is harming life and accentuating human suffering and deprivation. The Church of England with the whole Church of God has an explicit concern for human suffering and need. Therefore, do hold before you the opportunities to minister during this crisis and consider how the physical location of our worship and other activities can be missionally located. Further advice on some questions you might explore is included below.

Carol, Karen & Matthew



Missional Guidance

In the last two years, we have seen a significant shift in the way that we do church out of necessity. We have had to adapt to changing circumstances, and as traditional meeting spaces were suddenly closed to us through lockdown, the Church showed remarkable adaptability and innovation in opening new missional spaces through online church. This meant those who previously found it difficult to access church now had new ways to be present. Out of the tragedy of COVID, we have seen the Holy Spirit working through His church to reach out to new people with the love of God.

The energy and cost of living crises present an equal challenge to think more simply, more boldly and humbly as we seek opportunities to be similarly creative in the way that we minister. We welcome Bishop Libby and Bishop Malcolm's encouragement to worshipping communities to be creative in how and where they meet as they seek to be Good News to All; to try new things and to stretch into new spaces and communities. We can think about meeting in different buildings, in different locations and new communities, where local people can more easily access worship and events and where creating warm spaces is easier and more cost effective. We may find that, in doing so, we are "expanding God's tent" and sharing the Good News of Jesus in ways that we hadn't previously considered.

You may wish to consider the following points:

- Blending the use of your buildings to ensure inherited spaces can be open (warm) and available at key moments of mission (Remembrance, Christmas, etc) whilst at other times using smaller venues.
- Giving strong consideration to using this opportunity to build ever deeper relationships with Church schools and other community partners. Places that others may actually feel familiar with and more comfortable accessing. By using other community spaces and halls that can be hired more cheaply than the traditional meeting spaces may be heated, the church reduced its costs and carbon footprint whilst forging new partnerships!
- Using different parts of your building, meeting in core spaces that are easier to heat (side chapels etc)
- Having the humility to recognise that rather than being a 'provider' of warm space that actually the need is to be a 'recipient' of the hospitality of others. This may include, sharing spaces with other churches and denominations across parish and community boundaries, using halls and centres that are more modern with more efficient heating systems.

For those anxious about the legality of this permissive thinking, guidance on Canon B40 is attached in Appendix 3

Financial Support

We recognise that rising energy prices have been a concern for everyone. Many individuals are struggling to meet the increased cost of living, care for their families and keep fed and warm. Churches are also faced with higher costs, the complexity of finding new energy contracts for some, and the need to support our congregations through incredibly difficult times.

The Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners have considered what additional support can be made available to help support parish ministry in the light of the very significant increase in energy costs. In the face of this challenge, the national Church has agreed to make £15m available to dioceses as a contribution towards this challenge. The allocation for Diocese the Diocese of Derby is £343,000. We recognise that this won't be enough as parish energy bills were in excess of £600,000 last year, before the price rises. Each diocese is free to choose how it allocates the funds, with decisions on allocation to be managed through our governance processes. Best endeavours will be made to distribute the grants before the end of 2022, however this may not be possible, so we aim to distribute grants no later than the end of March 2023 in line with Archbishops' Council deadlines.

Additionally, the government package of support to help with rising energy bills this winter includes churches. According to the latest guidance, under the Energy Bill Relief Scheme wholesale prices are expected to be fixed for all non-domestic energy customers, including churches. It is understood the scheme will be reviewed after three months with an option to extend support for "vulnerable businesses" beyond March 2023 - but it is not known what organisations will be included as part of this extended support. Churches do not need to contact their suppliers or apply to the government scheme; the support will automatically be applied to bills. Savings will be seen from October bills, which are typically received in November. The scheme will apply to fixed contracts agreed on or after 1 April 2022 as well as variable and flexible tariffs and contracts. The diocese is in contact with the Church Buildings Council regarding advocating for churches when the government reviews grant support after the initial six-month price cap.



Energy Use Guidance

National church has identified a number of resources/guides for parishes to help reduce energy use and carbon emissions, which can be found at Appendix 1.

Whilst each church building is different, there may be a number of short- to medium-term actions PCCs can take that will temper the impact of the high fuel bills you are facing. Attached at Appendix 2 is a list of practical actions which as a PCC you could go through together, identifying the things that will help in your particular context.

Closing words

Finally, we recognise that many of our parishes will have already taken steps to mitigate the impact of the energy crisis. If your parish has a particular story of innovation or creativity in responding to either the energy or cost of living crises, please contact your archdeacon, who can share good practice. Good ideas from across the diocese will bring encouragement and wisdom.

National Church Resources to help reduce energy use and carbon emissions

This note sets out resources, guidance and other practical help with reducing energy costs and working towards the aspiration of reaching Net Zero Carbon Emissions (NCZ) by 2030.

Parish Buying

Products offered by Parish Buying are listed here [Parish Buying - Net Zero 2030](#). This includes solar panels, pew heaters, heat pumps and LED light bulbs. Guidance sheets are also provided to cover the questions parishes need answered before they approach a supplier. The team is investigating the feasibility of including an offer for heated seat cushions which are a cost-effective way of keeping people warm, without running the space heating.

Parish Buying members can have a subsidised Energy Audit [Parish Buying - Energy Audit](#) which gives them £100 off the cost of an audit and typically offers around 25% reduction in energy costs.

There was a webinar earlier this month which outlined the specific reasons why churches should use the Parish Buying service in their route to Net Zero. This is now available as a recording. [\(3\) How Parish Buying and 2Buy2 can support parishes with Net Zero Carbon - YouTube](#)

The Energy Basket offers 100% green electricity [Parish Buying - Energy Basket](#)

Energy Footprint Tool

[The Energy Footprint Tool](#) - allows all churches around the country to enter information from their utility bills and find out their carbon footprint. The link says it's closed for this year but it's still open to Parish Buying members.

Environment

[The Environment programme](#) offers a wide range of tools, case studies, webinars and videos to help churches reduce their carbon footprint. Many of these measures will also reduce their energy bills.

Church Care / Church Buildings Team

[The Church Care website](#) includes information for churches on how to be more energy efficient.

The Church Buildings Team has created a note for dioceses to share with parishes on energy saving tips. It went out to Diocesan Advisory Committee secretaries in late September, for dioceses to tailor and circulate as they think best. This is included in appendix 2.

The team is working on an additional piece of guidance, which will also cover what to consider if a PCC is considering closing a church building during the winter months. This will be circulated imminently.

Church of England Pensions Board

The Pensions Board has prepared some information focussed on individuals - with pensioners particularly in mind - but some aspects may help with clergy and lay workers. [Help with increases in everyday bills.](#)

Practical suggestions to help parishes save energy and money

<p>Is there anything you can do about our Electricity and Gas bills?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on a winter energy bill that you are not paying more than 5% VAT. Most churches should be paying just 5%, and NO Climate Change Levy (CCL). The exceptions will be churches who hire their premises out commercially. • Check any Feed in Tariff (FiT) charge on your bills is correct • A dual-rate electricity tariff can be an advantage for churches, but check your meter shows correct time and date • If your circumstances are about to change, speak to Parish Buying, to see if the Green Energy Basket can offer you a better deal.
<p>Do you know what you use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly check your readings, and look for patterns; is something being left on which shouldn't be on overnight, or when the church is empty? • Smart meters can provide detailed use information to analyse. If you don't have one, speak to your energy company • Completing the CofE Energy Footprint Tool helps give an idea of where your church footprint falls against other similar churches Energy Footprint Tool The Church of England
<p>Are there some maintenance issues that could be attended to?</p> <p><i>Note if you're not sure whether any changes you choose to make require 'permission' please check with the Secretary for the Diocesan Advisory Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently dust/vacuum fan convector heater fins and grills on backs of fridges to increase efficiency • Ensure your radiators can function efficiently; bleed radiators if cold at the top, have sludge flushed-out if cold at the bottom • Get the boiler serviced (annual gas / oil boiler inspections are strongly encouraged, and may be required by your insurance provider) • Fix leaking taps • Keep radiators clear of furniture or other obstructions • Tackle drafts: fix broken windows (even small breakages), consider fridge magnets over large keyholes, consider curtains across doors. But don't block air bricks or other intentional ventilation, remembering that some windows may need to be open during a service to let condensation out. • Mend leaks to prevent damp problems (damp = cold!) • Insulate heating pipes and water tanks • Keeping the building wind and watertight will reduce the energy needed to warm the buildings, and consequently reduce bills • Clear gutters to prevent damp problems (remember damp = cold!)

<p>Are you making best use of your building's heating controls?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your thermostat settings suit your needs; try turning them down a degree or two and see the response. • If there are different heating circuits for different parts of the building, make sure they are not heating empty rooms, otherwise consider thermostatic valves on radiators. • Check that the heating timings suit your current service times. Amend them when the clocks change. Many churches find they can turn the heating off 30-45 minutes before the service ends and still maintain comfort, because of the residual heat in the radiators. • Check the frost setting on your boiler or thermostat, if you have one, and set it correctly. Read the guidance here Managing your frost protection v5 (churchofengland.org) • If you have a dual burner, the high-flame setting should be set lower than the low-flame setting (see webinar above, 16 minutes in) • Add timers to heaters so they can't be left on by mistake • If you have Drugasar, Temcana or similar heaters, check whether they have pilot lights. If they do, then turn them off at the end of the heating season and on before the start of the next. The turn on should be carried out by a competent person, such as a Gas Safe Engineer to ensure the correct components are operating, including internal controls and external controls where applicable. This can save a lot. • If radiators are next to walls, then consider putting insulating foil between the radiators and the walls • If you are providing background heating when the church is empty, and unless the fabric, fixtures and/or fittings require it, turn it down or off. Monitor for ill effects such as mould. • If needed, and in smaller spaces such as meeting rooms or offices, try a dehumidifier to control damp rather than heating.
<p>What alternative heating can you use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how to make people warm without heating the whole building. • You may wish to purchase a set of heated cushions, heated blankets, and/or heated floor mats, to enable you to reduce the hours you run the main space heating for. (See case study: Marown Church tries a new approach: heated cushions) Or use a few portable electric heaters, preferably of the infra-red variety that warm people quickly.

<p>Comfort:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add cushions to seats. This can be done without faculty under certain conditions (see the new List A): • Add breathable carpet matting on the floor. This can also be done without faculty under certain conditions (see the new List A): • Encourage people to sit away from walls, doors, and other draughts • Encourage people to sit closer together, so that their natural warmth is shared. • Can the welcome team keep the door closed more of the time? (This often works if the welcome team stand OUTSIDE the door and then open and close it for people. Offer them a hot water bottle or heated cushion.) • Consider using a portable screen to reduce drafts from the door
<p>Think about who uses the church building and when</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check how light the building is before turning lights on. • If you are regularly open for visitors, consider motion-operated lights if not already in use. • Turn off lights, computers/ monitors, printers, copiers etc when not in use • Put signs next to lights, asking people to switch them off when leaving • Create clear instructions for groups hiring the church • If possible, plan your scheduling so that activities are back-to-back on fewer days, so that heating up from scratch happens less often • Can service times be adjusted in winter, happening later in the morning or early afternoon, when the solar gain through the windows has had effect? • Ensure thermostats are tamper proof or located where the general public cannot access • Close doors when rooms not in use, and turn off radiators when rooms are vacant longer term (note - see previous comments on damp) • Don't overfill urns and kettles • Appoint volunteer champions to remind people (gently) to save energy

<p>Lighting matters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all parts of the church need to be lit, for the current number of hours? • Consider reducing the hours/days your floodlighting runs for. Consult your community, who may be happy when they understand the need. Some churches turn floodlights off entirely except for special events / holidays. • Use dimmers if you have them. If lighting is LED, ensure that the correct type of dimmer is being used. • Switch bulbs to LED alternatives where possible, using a reputable brand (LEDs use up to 90% less energy). Start with simple bulb to LED lamp switches. More complicated lighting may require outside help. • See the CofE webinar here: Effective management of lighting towards net zero, from the CofE Environment Programme - You-Tube
<p>How can we get smart with appliances?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many dishwashers have an 'eco' setting, using less electricity and water • Make a plan to budget for energy efficient appliances when your current appliances fail • Energy labels have changed on most items; look for a rating of C or higher • Energy labels for ovens, tumble dryers, air conditioners, space and water heaters have not yet been updated so you're still looking for A+ and above • Check that fridges and freezers do not need defrosting and turn them off if there is nothing in them.
<p>Have you checked the water temperature?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, check water temperatures are not higher than they need to be. turn down the water temperature somewhat.
<p>Have you considered alternative venues?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may want to consider moving worship, meetings, and/or other activities into a smaller part of the church which is easier to heat, and where local heating is more effective, such as the chancel or the lady chapel. Some activities, such as PCC meetings and toddler groups, might be able to move to an alternative venue such as a school hall. • Live-streaming services held in the church may be a way to allow more vulnerable people to participate throughout the winter.
<p>National guidance note:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more information on energy efficiency, read the CofE energy efficiency guidance: ENERGY.

Sunday Services in Non-Consecrated Buildings

Canon B40 states:

No minister shall celebrate the Holy Communion elsewhere than in a consecrated building within his cure or other building licensed for the purpose, except he have permission so to do from the bishop of the diocese: Provided that at all times he may celebrate the Holy Communion as provided by Canon B 37 in any private house wherein there is any person sick, or dying, or so impotent that he cannot go to church.

This means that if a service of Holy Communion were to be held in a parish hall, permission must first be obtained from the bishop. Some churches have asked the bishop for such permission, and it is likely that others may follow suit. Given the likely cost of heating and the demography of many of our congregations, it would be difficult to refuse a request. Guidance is being sought from the National Church Institutions, but meanwhile the following criteria are proposed:

- No diocese-wide permission will be issued.
- Unless the consecrated building is in a dangerous condition, occasional offices should be held in the consecrated building which should be heated.
- Requests should be supported by a resolution from the PCC/DCC following local consultation and discussion.
- Consideration should be given to the effect of turning off heating on the fabric of the building – guidance may be sought from the DAC.
- Permission would be time limited: Ash Wednesday falls on 2 March 2023, so seems a suitable date liturgically and meteorologically.
- Permission is permission, not obligation. If the winter is mild and the consecrated building can be kept reasonably warm, it would be preferred to a non-consecrated option.
- The alternative venue should be suitable for worship, with consideration given to accessibility, furniture, lighting, acoustics and aesthetics. A risk assessment should be agreed. Where possible, live-streaming should continue.
- Attention should be given to insurance, both of the buildings and of accoutrements being carried from the church building to the alternative venue. If the policy document is not clear, the insurer should be consulted.
- Any item on the church inventory should not be removed from the church or church complex without temporary permission granted by the Archdeacon.
- Care should be taken over communicating with the local community, in order to pre-empt any objections, to reassure people that this is a temporary measure and not an attempt to abandon a consecrated building and also to inform those who might stay away from a cold church that worship is continuing.