

Carbon Reduction

In a change of wording, the annual property returns now ask, "Has your Church Council agreed a plan to reduce the church's carbon footprint, aiming for net zero by 2030?" As last year, I've extracted a few comments from 2023 property returns in our District that I'd like to challenge.

Comment in property returns	My challenge
None / nothing / nil Already done The church has a modern boiler	If there's really nothing you could do to the property, become an Eco Church - or if you are already, why not help your congregation/other churches/the community along their journey to net zero? Has anyone really already achieved net zero? Certainly, having a modern boiler isn't sufficient to do so
Continued to replace bulbs with LEDs	Can you afford to change to LEDs everywhere with high usage, even before the old ones stop working?
General maintenance Boiler serviced	Business as usual isn't sufficient to achieve net zero

Here are some comments from 2023 property returns in our District that may be helpful to others:

Topic	Comment in property returns	My comment
Education 1	Eco Church audit undertaken Exploring first steps of "Carbon Zero" plan We have formed a net zero team to investigate and recommend future improvements	These are good first steps towards identifying areas for improvement; energy audits are also recommended
Education 2	Paid carbon offset	We may all have to do this to reach net zero by 2030 ¹
Energy 1	Our electricity energy supplier provides us with green energy	Some green energy claims are more reliable than others: don't take the supplier's word for it ²
Heating 1	Use of smaller spaces to reduce heating requirements	Good idea
Heating 2	Fitted "Hive" remote control of temperatures in each room	Keep an eye on it; don't assume it will work perfectly
Insulation	Additional roof insulation installed Upgrades to doors to retain heat	Good idea
Windows	Double-glazed New seals	Both good

Responses to the following questions raise some doubts on the 2023 data:

	2023	2022	Change 2022 to 2023
Churches that have a carbon reduction plan	None (?)	41	(2023 data in doubt)
Energy costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < £1,000 • £1,000 to £4,999.99 • £5,000 to £9,999.99 • > £10,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 • 14 • 39 • 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 • 74 • 16 • 3 	Data incomplete for both years but on average those who answered this question are paying more now (as expected, given the unit price increase)
Churches that have a Green tariff	31	16	Up 93% - good but 68 churches put N/A

Thank you for everything you've done to benefit our environment.
For more inspiration, or to share your progress, join a District Eco Summit³.

Howard Warrener
District Advocate for Carbon Reduction

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References:

1. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/action/climate/action-for-hope/>
2. <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/energy/shopping-guide/energy-suppliers>
3. <https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/resources/eco-district/eco-summit.html>