

CARBON FOOTPRINT MEASUREMENT AND OFFSET

BUILDINGS

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AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



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Carbon footprint

WHY?

Management guru Peter Drucker is often quoted as saying, 'You can't manage [or improve] what you can't measure'. Whether you are someone who likes data or not, it is true that everything we do has a carbon footprint – the buildings we heat, the food we share, the clothes we wear. Knowing the impact of what we are doing as a church can help start conversations about what is an appropriate level of resource use or what reasonable steps we might take to reduce our impact.

HOW?

Climate Stewards encourages churches to 'calculate your carbon footprint; reduce what you can and offset the rest': <https://www.climatestewards.org/>

CALCULATE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Commissioned by A Rocha UK and the Church of England, Climate Stewards has developed 360°carbon – a web-based tool which enables churches to measure their carbon footprint from different activities: energy, travel, food, waste, water and other expenditure. You will need to spend a bit of time gathering the data in each of these categories to ensure a useful result: <https://360carbon.org/>

Church of England churches are encouraged to complete an energy footprint tool (EFT) with their annual return. EFT was built in collaboration with 360°carbon so if you enter data on the CofE site, it can easily be shared to the 360°carbon tool: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool>

Climate Stewards recommend you complete the calculation each year so you can track the total and per capita changes as you make conscious decisions towards carbon reduction.



BUILDINGS

Carbon footprint

If you are new to Eco Church, we strongly encourage you to complete at least the Energy Section on the 360° carbon tool as part of your Bronze Award.

REDUCE WHAT YOU CAN

Both the Climate Stewards and the Eco Church resources are full of ideas for carbon reduction: <https://www.climatestewards.org/reduce/>

Some denominations are setting ambitious net zero targets. In 2020, the Church of England voted overwhelmingly to aim at achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for its operations by 2030. Whether your denomination has set a target or not, we all need to reduce what we can, so we suggest you consider what you can achieve year on year.

Some churches will find net zero is very difficult and expensive to achieve. Others will already be very efficient with low carbon output, so we do not want to be prescriptive about targets. The aim is that churches consider the issues, discuss their options and set carbon reduction goals suitable for their circumstances.

We often turn to heating as our first thought in reducing carbon emissions, but as you can see from the resources in this section of the questionnaire, there are lots of other areas which help and are cheaper to implement, e.g. 'Quick Wins', 'Insulation', 'Lighting' or 'Buying greener energy'.

One way to do this is the switch to electricity as a primary source of energy as it is then possible to buy 100% renewable energy from commercial suppliers.

OFFSET THE REST

Once you have calculated your footprint, and reduced what you can, you may wish to mitigate the environmental impact of the emissions that remain by investing in projects around the globe which reduce them. Climate Stewards support a range of such projects: <https://www.climatestewards.org/projects/>



BUILDINGS

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Tree planting can help offset carbon emissions, which can be done through various UK charities such as The Woodland Trust. For most churches, the carbon footprint is too high to rely solely on tree planting to offset emissions. See our 'Trees and hedges' resource for advice on planting native tree planting and those that are likely to achieve biggest carbon reductions: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/give/personal-carbon/>

LONGER READS & OTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/carbon-footprinting-guide>

The Church of England has run a number of webinars which are useful to all denominations. Here is one on 'Defining and measuring net zero carbon': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbPBmwl4gKc>

Offsetting seems like a quick win for many, but questions remain about how effective it really is. Greenpeace are not convinced: <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/the-biggest-problem-with-carbon-offsetting-is-that-it-doesnt-really-work/>

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Taking action on this topic will contribute to these UN Strategic Development Goals:

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION