



## *Caring for Creation*

# Towards Net Zero Carbon Programme of Activity – phase 2 (2024-2026)

Diocese in Europe May 2024

## Summary

In 2022, the Diocese in Europe's environment policy was updated as a Caring for Creation policy and a specific section on working towards net zero carbon was included. The first phase of a '*Towards Net Zero Programme of Activity*' was developed to guide the Diocese in its contribution towards the Church of England's goal of net zero carbon by 2030.

This document - phase 2 of the Programme of Activity – provides direction to the Diocese for activities in 2024-2026, with the aim of fulfilling the milestones in the national routemap towards net zero carbon, focussed largely on buildings and travel emissions.

After explanatory notes on context, scope, challenges & enablers, and oversight; the programme lays out activities which need to take place at Diocese, Chaplaincy and Archdeaconry level.

- The focus of activities for chaplaincies remains as per phase 1. Reducing energy emissions by switching to green tariffs, using energy efficiency lighting etc, is paired with measuring building and travel footprints, planning for improvements and working with the EcoChurch programme.
- Diocesan activities, now also supported by Net Zero Officer, have been expanded to increase the support available to chaplaincies and to fit with national routemap milestones
- Providing ongoing support at Archdeaconry level, through Archdeaconry Environment Officers, networking of Local Environment Officers and training opportunities remains an important feature of the Diocese approach.

We will need to continue efforts to collect and use data in order to identify priority areas for improvement and to track progress.

By the end of phase 2, we hope to have evidence of reduced emissions from energy use and work-related travel, to have a strong network of LEOs supporting climate and environment action in chaplaincies across the Diocese, to have undertaken energy audits and embarked upon relevant buildings improvements in priority cases, and to be more widely engaged in the EcoChurch programme.



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This area of work remains challenging but of great urgency and an important part of our discipleship.

## **Context**

In February 2020 the Church of England General Synod set a goal for the Church to reach net zero carbon emissions<sup>1</sup> by 2030.

The Motion stated *That this Synod, recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice,*

*. call upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, BMOs [Bishop Mission Orders], education institutions, dioceses, cathedrals, and the NCIs [National Church Institutions], to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target;*

*(b) request reports on progress from the Environment Working Group and the NCI's every three years beginning in 2022 and;*

*(c) call on each Diocesan Synod, and cathedral Chapter, to address progress toward net zero emissions every three years.*

The Diocese in Europe addressed the challenge of Caring for Creation in detail at its Synod in 2018 and chaplaincies have worked hard towards becoming Eco Churches.

At Diocesan Synod in December 2021 the work of the Net Zero Working Group was endorsed in a debate which ended with the unanimous approval for this motion: *This Synod pledges to devise and promote a programme of activity across the Diocese so that the Diocese in Europe is in line with the General Synod's pledge 'to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030'. This work to be led by the Net Carbon Neutral Working Group and reported to Diocesan Synod in June 2022.*

In June 2022 the Diocesan Synod approved an update to the Caring for Creation policy (formerly the Environment Policy), including a section on working towards Net Zero. The Net Zero Working Group presented the first phase (2022-2024) of the Towards Net Zero Programme of Activity. The group subsequently became the 'Caring for Creation' Working Group.

As per April 2024, 13 chaplaincies have achieved the bronze award from A Rocha, and 4 silver, and the Diocese has also been awarded Bronze Diocese status.

The Church of England General Synod has recently approved actions in response to the biodiversity crisis. As this strengthened commitment to biodiversity becomes integrated into policy and

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<sup>1</sup> For the Church of England, being net zero carbon means that the carbon emissions of our buildings and travel will be reduced to less than 10 per cent of our baseline levels. The remaining emissions will be offset in verified schemes that reduce carbon. That means overall, our buildings and travel will not contribute to rising carbon emissions: their contribution will be 'net zero'. Responding to the climate crisis is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation and achieve a just world.



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guidance, this will further strengthen our holistic approach to Caring for Creation, especially underpinning targets and action within this Programme of Activity towards Eco-Church awards.



**Overview -**

The Diocese in Europe supports and contributes to the Church of England goal of net zero carbon by 2030.

The activity programme draws upon the areas of action and milestones in the [National Routemap<sup>2</sup>](#).

Phase one Programme of Activity contained key activities for the period 2022-2024.

Phase two has been updated to cover 2024-2026. Many activities either remain relevant or are not yet complete, and have therefore been extended into phase two.

Additional targets, areas of action and activities are expected to be added in future phases.

The programme of activity contributes to the realisation of the Caring for Creation Policy.

**Scope**

The Church of England national Environment Working Group have developed a definition of what is in scope for the net zero carbon 2030 target and this was updated in September 2020 after national consultation. The key activity areas to be addressed in net zero carbon 2030 scope as defined by the Church of England are energy use in buildings, and work-related travel.

The programme of activity for the Diocese in Europe follows this lead in having its main focus on these same areas. However, as more information is gathered on relative areas of activity and carbon footprint in the Diocese, it is expected this scope may be expanded in future plans.

It is noted that while lifestyle-related carbon emissions are not currently included in the nationally defined scope for the church’s net zero carbon 2030 target, (and not a primary focus of the Diocesan programme below) this is an area where it is vital to support each other on our common and faith-led journey. The Eco-Church programme is a particularly useful framework to enable congregations to engage with lifestyle issues more closely.

**Obstacles & challenges**

The following challenges were identified before programme development in 2022:

<i>Challenge identified 2022:</i>	<i>Comment in 2024 as we enter Phase 2:</i>
- <u>Awareness raising and motivation</u> to support prioritisation of lower carbon strategies	Progress has been made, but unevenly. More efforts needed to secure engagement across the Diocese

<sup>2</sup> The previous Phase one Programme of Activity referred to the draft of National Routemap as consulted early 2022; references in this Phase two version have been updated to link to the final (current) version of the National Routemap (July 2022).



<p>-<u>Resources</u> - financial resources, expertise, and human resources will be required, difficult to quantify on a Diocesan level</p>	<p>Financial support from central funds secured to support employment of Net Zero Officer and some starter funding. But further funding will be required going forward.</p>
<p>-<u>Competing agendas</u> - chaplaincies are faced with many requirements and important issues; alongside which the urgency of reducing carbon footprint needs to be addressed</p>	<p>The risk of ‘overload’ remains real – hence efforts to provide advice, tools, and to build network of engaged volunteers.</p>

The Diocese in Europe also has some specific characteristics compared to dioceses in England in working towards net-zero carbon. These include:

- Relatively low ‘ownership’ of buildings, with many chaplaincies sharing and/or renting premises (church, offices, accommodation etc) – meaning that chaplaincies may have little control over buildings-related decisions.
- Diversity of national contexts, including availability of energy alternatives, national standards etc.
- Distance - wide geographical spread with low density of churches results in high travel requirements for church representatives and congregation members.

These characteristics have been recognised by the National Church, and continue to inform the Diocese’s approach to working towards net-zero carbon as per the updated programme of activity.

**Facilitators & enablers**

The following factors were identified as supporting the Diocese in its activities towards net zero carbon milestones -

<p><i>Enabling factor identified 2022:</i></p>	<p><i>Comment in 2024 as we enter phase 2:</i></p>
<p>-Availability of good practice examples, success stories shared across the Diocese through communications channels and specific events</p>	<p>We will continue to strengthen this sharing for mutual learning and inspiration.</p>
<p>-Tools, including from expert team at National level</p>	<p>National level expertise has been usefully accessed by the C4C group, and webinars and other guidance is easily available – some adaptation needed to Europe context.</p>
<p>-Diocesan Staff member(s) with Net Zero support role (envisaged).</p>	<p>A Net Zero Officer begins work in the Diocese in Europe from April 2024</p>
<p>-Diocesan Net Zero Working Group</p>	<p>The group has grown in membership and experience and will continue to evolve. It is now called the Caring for Creation Working Group.</p>



-European Green Deal provides a supportive framework at top level Europe, (if not yet always reflected in more local policy or non-EU countries)	Political climate in 2024 is less 'green' but most citizens still in favour of climate action.
-Diocese in Europe EU Climate Pact commitment	This gives visibility to the church's commitment to climate justice and action and increases our credibility in public and political debate
-Eco-Church award engagement which is growing in awareness, action and momentum, and where significant progress has been made in the Diocese	This will continue to be of key support, and is an integral part of our Caring for Creation approach.

### **Measurement and oversight**

Progress on the programme of activity is reported regularly to Synod and Bishop's Council and updated on an annual basis to reflect improved information, resources available and continuous improvement.

The Caring for Creation Working Group makes proposals to the Bishop's Council related to the programme of activity, and means to implement it.

The House of Laity and House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod are each represented in the Working Group.

Although data collection has been initiated, at the start of phase 2 there is still insufficient data to determine a complete range of targets for emissions reduction (and therefore to what extent offsetting may eventually be required).

Data collection is therefore an important and continued effort alongside engagement in activities which clearly contribute towards net zero carbon.

Note: due to lack of data, some reductions in emissions may be hidden (and will remain hidden) due to the absence of a baseline. For example, many chaplaincies are already engaging with efforts to reduce energy consumption. In the absence of the 'before' data showing original energy consumption, this reduction will not appear in the Diocesan reporting. We have a long way to go towards net zero carbon– but we may have already made progress that is not visible!

## Towards Net Zero Carbon Programme of Activity – 2024-2026

**1- Diocese** *This section contains activities to be carried out by Diocesan bodies in order to support the work towards net zero carbon across the Diocese. Items 1 to 5 are continued from phase one, 6 & 7 are extended and 8 to 10 are new additions to the programme.*

	<b>Activity</b>	<i>Original target date</i>	<i>Updated target date</i>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Link to CofE routemap* milestones</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Provide an annual carbon emissions report to Diocesan Synod	2023	2024	CHAPS/DO/ C4C	4.1.2	<i>Based on information from chaplaincies and others e.g. reporting on travel</i>
<b>1.2</b>	Provide a costed plan to carbon net zero to Diocesan Synod, including detail on changes required	2023	2024	C4C / DO	4.1.4	<i>First version 2024, to be developed further subsequently as information gathering continues.</i>
<b>1.3</b>	Update and implement communication strategy to churches in Diocese	2022	2024	DO / C4C	4.1.3	<i>Based on existing communication channels, and also making use of central CofE net zero carbon communication materials, the communication strategy will enable a shared understanding of information flow.</i>
<b>1.4</b>	Survey of Diocese clergy property with energy-relevant questions & property retrofitting plan.	<i>End 2023</i>	2024	CHAPS/DO	4.1.5 & 4.4.5	<i>Basic information gathered through phase 1 buildings survey, now to be developed into plan. Retrofitting plan should include a heating resilience plan. Overall housing stock improvement should be addressed in coordination with relevant chaplaincies.</i>

<b>1.5</b>	Diocesan offices measure and report on carbon emissions, develop and implement net-zero carbon plans.	2023	2024	DO	4.6.2 & 4.6.3	<i>This includes buildings and Diocese-related work travel. Net zero carbon action plan should include heating resilience.</i>
<b>1.6a</b>	Diocese expenses policy updated to encourage sustainable transport options	2023	2024	Bishop's Council/BS	5.3.4	<i>Includes expense policy guidelines for chaplaincies as well as DO policy. Travel offsetting options will be explored later (as per national plan), rationale for in-person meetings examined, and resulting guidance shared.</i>
<b>1.6b</b>	Diocesan Travel plan developed – leading to 50% reduction in travel footprint of Diocesan Synod by 2026 compared to 2023	-	2024	DO	5.3.3	<i>This is added to the plan since phase 1, corresponding to national routemap requirements.</i>
<b>1.7a</b>	Seek (financial) resourcing opportunities for supporting activities in DiE towards net zero carbon via a NZC Fundraising Strategy, including fundraising officer.	2023 and ongoing		DO / C4C	5.2.10	<i>Fundraising strategy includes liaison with National Church Institutions, other possible funding sources and support to fundraising at local level in Diocese. If possible, funds will be used to engage on officer focused on fundraising for net zero carbon projects in the Diocese.</i>
<b>1.7b</b>	Identify country-level expertise and human resources / tools available to support chaplaincies towards net zero carbon	-	2025	C4C/ DO		<i>Human resource as overall coordinator /support to chaplaincies includes Net Zero Officer (from 2024). National resources will be shared, but it is recognised that contexts vary across Europe and identification of country-specific sources of expertise, resources etc will be necessary to enable chaplaincies to take relevant action.</i>
<b>1.8</b>	Diocesan training programme to support C4C measures, including trainings relevant to DiE context	-	2026	DO/C4C		<i>National trainings, webinars and information resources need to be further promoted / made accessible within the Diocese, through Diocesan or archdeaconry-level webinars and should be complemented where necessary by additional trainings specific to the Diocesan context.</i>





<p><b>1.9</b> Diocese in Europe achieves EcoDiocese Silver award.</p> <p>Diocesan offices achieve EcoChurch Silver award.</p>	2026	C4C/DO	4.2.9 & 4.6.1	<p><i>The Diocese currently holds Bronze EcoDiocese award. For Silver 40% of local chaplaincies must be registered; 30% awarded, of which at least a third of these awards should be Silver or higher. Diocesan Offices need to register and achieve Silver EcoChurch award in line with national routemap landmarks.</i></p>
<p><b>1.10</b> Development of a Diocese-wide network of LEOs / AEOs/ C4C volunteers with active participation in CoE net zero carbon/environment network</p>	2025	C4C		<p><i>A vibrant network enabling information flow across the Diocese on C4C topics, enabling widest possible engagement in C4C/net zero carbon activities, supported by specific communications channels.</i></p>
<p><b>1.11</b> Report on progress against national routemap as required</p>	Q1 2025	DO/C4C		<p><i>All Dioceses will be requested to report progress against national routemap Q1 2025, and then again in 2028 as part of national monitoring</i></p>

**2- Chaplaincies** ... this is where the real movement towards net zero carbon happens! A Local Environment Officer (LEO) can help with information and motivation, but action will require support and engagement of clergy, chaplaincy councils and congregations.

Note -- In the table below, activities 2.2 & 2.4 from phase one have been merged into updated 2.2

<b>Activity</b>	<i>Original target date</i>	Updated target date	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Link to CofE routemap* milestones</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p><b>2.1</b> All chaplaincies / clergy which are able to choose their own provider move to 100% electricity renewable tariff if available.</p>	2023	end 2024	Chaplaincies	4.2.10	<p><i>This option is unlikely to be available in all locations. However, where possible, it can be an 'easy' win in reducing carbon.</i></p>

<b>2.2</b>	Chaplaincies measure and report annual energy consumption and carbon emissions (premises, accommodation, offices & travel) supported by webinars and advice. (Target : by 2026 reporting shows year on year decrease in travel & energy emissions in every archdeaconry)	2023	2024	Chaplaincies / C4C	(4.2.14)	<i>Collection of basic data on energy consumption is important even in contexts where the building is not church-owned. 360carbon<sup>3</sup> is the tool adopted for use in the Diocese in Europe. recommended for chaplaincies. This provides chaplaincies with important data for further planning and action. Diocese is liaising with 360Carbon to make the tool more Europe-friendly.</i>
<b>2.3</b>	All chaplaincies with competence over their buildings review lighting systems and install energy efficient lighting (including e.g. LEDs, motion sensors)	2024	2024	Chaplaincies	4.2.13	<i>This measure is also considered to be an ‘early win’ on the carbon reduction journey.</i>
<b>2.4</b>	Chaplaincies make net-zero carbon plans, supported by webinars and advice. (Target 50% chaplaincies have a plan by 2026, 30 energy audits by 2025, with 10 key projects costed, 5 renovation projects completed by 2026)	2023	2026	Chaplaincies / C4C	4.2.14	<i>Support will be prioritised towards enabling the chaplaincies with the highest emissions as per 2.2 to develop and implement net zero carbon plans. No new oil boilers after 2025. For chaplaincies with housing - retrofitting plans and long-term housing improvement plans as per national routemap 4.1.5 and 4.4.4</i>
<b>2.5</b>	Chaplaincies engage with EcoChurch award programme; register, review requirements, make and implement action plan for relevant target level, supported by advice and webinars. (Target 100% registered by 2025, 40% bronze and 15% silver by 2026)	2023	2024	Chaplaincies / C4C	4.2.9	<i>The EcoChurch programme encompasses Worship and teaching, Stewardship of Buildings and Land, Lifestyle and Global and community outreach. It is a useful starting point for engaging congregations on personal aspects of carbon emissions reduction.</i>

<sup>3</sup> 360carbon.org this tool is developed by Climate Stewards and recommended by EcoChurch.



**Diocese in Europe**



<b>2.6</b>	All chaplaincies appoint an LEO and inform AEO/ Diocesan Net Zero Officer to link to Diocesan network	2022	2024	Chaplaincies
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*Having an LEO is an important first step towards action and to enable networking & reporting. A role description is available and can be adapted. LEOs will be supported by AEOs.*

**3- Archdeaconries** – *this level of activity does not correspond directly to targets /actions on the National Routemap, but was developed specifically to deal with the unique situation in the Diocese in Europe. Networking, discussion, guidance and exchange at archdeaconry (and in some cases deanery)-level is an essential means of support for chaplaincies working towards net zero carbon, given the size of the Diocese and the varying geographical/national contexts.*

<b>Activity</b>	<i>Original target date</i>	<i>Updated target date</i>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Link to CofE routemap* milestones</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>3.1</b> Establish network of chaplaincy climate/env contacts in each archdeaconry, including mentoring e.g. with EcoChurch award holders supporting other chaplaincies.	2023	2024	AD / C4C/DO		<i>Climate / environment contacts (including LEOs) do not need to be experts or have all the answers, but help to channel information and champion change at local level, and feedback to DO/C4C on support/resources needed.</i>
<b>3.2</b> Annual induction/training day for chaplaincy climate/env contacts	2024	2024 and ongoing	AD / C4C/DO		<i>Based on a common framework, but most relevant at Archdeaconry (not Diocese) level</i>
<b>3.3</b> Care for Creation session on each Synod agenda to enable discussion of progress and mutual support	2023	2024 and ongoing	AD		
<b>3.4</b> Each Archdeaconry appoints and supports an Archdeaconry Environment Officer	2022	2024	AD		<i>A suggested role description is available, and support will be provided through C4C WG and Net Zero Officer. This role is key support to chaplaincy networking and engagement. Some archdeacons prefer to have deanery-level positions.</i>
<b>3.5</b> Continued support and follow-up of chaplaincies for actions towards carbon reduction	2023	2024 and ongoing	AD/C4C/DO		<i>Archdeacons will be essential in facilitating information flow and support to chaplaincies, and liaison with C4C Working Group</i>



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**3.6** Functioning system of reporting from archdeaonries to C4C WG / Net Zero Officer

2024

AD



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## **4-Governance and support for net zero programme of activities**

The Net Zero Working Group (NZWG) is now the Caring for Creation Working Group (C4C WG). The group meets regularly to support implementation and review of the programme of activity, including through development and sharing of relevant tools and resources.

The C4C WG includes Diocesan Synod representatives (clergy and lay), and reports to Bishop's Council on a regular basis. Bishop's Council and Synod will consider reports on progress in implementing this programme of activities and will adopt recommendations as necessary to facilitate achievement of the targets.

Archdeaconry Environment Officers will meet with Caring for Creation Working Group as an 'extended group' formation every quarter, to facilitate sharing to and feedback from Archdeaconries.

### **Explanatory Notes**

- 'chaplains / churches' includes Cathedral and Pro-Cathedrals
- \* references as per [National Routemap approved General Synod July 2022](#)