

Newport Methodist Church - Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

Introduction

As Christians, we are called to be stewards of God's creation. There are many ways to do this, from protecting biodiversity to making lifestyle changes. One way we care for creation is through our work to reduce carbon emissions and reach net zero. The term net zero means that the amount of carbon emissions added to the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed. Carbon emissions can be significantly reduced by utilising renewable energy sources and improving insulation in buildings. Any residual emissions can be offset by investing in environmental projects that reduce or remove carbon emissions, thereby mitigating the carbon footprint of an individual or organisation.

In response to the climate change emergency, the Methodist Church Conference committed to an aspirational target to reach net zero by 2030. The Methodist Church has produced a net zero plan which is guided by the 'Action for Hope' initiative. The key components of the plan include assessing carbon footprints, improving the energy efficiency of buildings through measures such as insulation, using renewable energy sources and promoting sustainable travel and lifestyle choices. The Methodist Church also encourages participation in award schemes such as A Rocha UK's Eco Church to provide a structured way for local churches to work towards sustainability. One of the Eco Church criteria is for individual churches to have a net zero action plan.

This net zero action plan has been adapted from the 'net zero checklist for churches and ancillary buildings' published on-line by the Methodist Church. The checklist is a tool for reviewing the carbon emissions of church buildings and identifying actions that can be taken to help a church reduce its energy use and associated carbon emissions.

Description of the NMC premises

Newport Methodist Church was constructed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with ancillary buildings added at various intervals until the early 1970s. It comprises a main church with a refreshment servery, a large hall with kitchen, offices, toilets and a smaller connected single storey meeting room with a kitchen and toilet (Victoria Room). There are also upstairs meeting rooms, storage areas and a shower and toilet. In addition, there is a separate two storey building owned by the church and used as an office and storage by the Isle of Wight Methodist Circuit (the Circuit Office).

The church is heated by radiators from gas boilers. Gas is also used for cooking and hot water in the main kitchen and for hot water in the toilets. There are overhead gas heaters in the main hall, although these are approaching the end of their serviceable life. There is no gas supply to the Circuit Office or the Victoria Room. There is a smart meter for the gas supply and billing is monthly based on actual readings.

Apart from lighting, electricity is used for supplementary infra-red overhead heaters in the main hall and the Victoria Room, where it is the sole source of heating. There are also overhead small electrical fan heaters in the church, although these are seldom used as they are inadequate to heat the space. Conventional electrical heaters are used in the Circuit Office. There is a smart meter for the electricity supply to the church premises and a standard meter for the supply to the Circuit Office. Billing for both meters is monthly and based on actual readings. The bills relating to the Circuit Office are paid by the church and the full amount recharged to the Circuit.

All utility bills are reviewed monthly and consumption levels monitored.

Newport Methodist Church Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

The NMC action plan covers the next five years and is intended to be used to identify ways to reduce our carbon footprint and monitor progress being made. Further technological breakthroughs will inevitably come forward in the future, and the plan can be adapted to take these into account. The most important thing is that the church has started on this crucial path.

In addition to calculating the church's carbon footprint, one of the first steps to consider is whether to commission an energy audit. Energy audits assess a church's current energy use and building condition, using this to identify the suitable energy efficiency works that can be undertaken. Audits will recommend actions an individual church can undertake, as well as ruling out any which are unsuitable for the building's heritage, construction or usage. A decision on whether to commission an energy audit will depend on grant funding being available from the connexion, district and circuit. Further information is expected in due course.

There are links between the NMC action plan and the A Rocha UK's Eco Church award scheme. However, the Eco Church framework is much broader, having five key areas covering all aspects of creation care, with buildings and energy being only one of the themes. This NMC action plan focusses on ways of reducing carbon emissions by improving the energy efficiency of buildings through measures such as insulation and using renewable energy sources. The NMC approved an Environmental Policy for 2025-26 at the Church Council in February 2025 and it is important to recognise that many initiatives resulting from the policy that contribute toward creation care have already been adopted, including:

- Recycling waste and minimising items sent to landfill
- Water management by installing self-closing taps, dual-flush toilets and water butts
- Eating green by consuming locally produced goods to reduce transport miles
- Buying goods that have been fairly traded
- Using recycled paper for photocopier use
- Minimising paper consumption by encouraging the use of personal devices at meetings
- Car sharing and using public transport to attend worship and meetings
- Freely sharing produce grown in our gardens
- Developing a management plan for the outdoor spaces of the church, to include low-maintenance sustainable planting that is drought-resistant, attractive to pollinators and supports biodiversity
- Worship services focussing on creation care
- Educating and informing individual church members, children attending Messy Church and the wider community about the actions they can take and the influence they have.

We want everyone in our church community and other users of the buildings to be involved in the journey towards net zero. We look forward to reducing emissions from NMC activities and would encourage us all to review lifestyle choices so that personal carbon footprints can be reduced, particularly in the three key areas of energy, travel and diet.

This action plan is intended to be updated annually and reported to Church Council so that progress can be monitored as the 2030 net zero target date approaches. Due to factors such as the age and layout of the church buildings, it is appreciated that the aspiration to be completely net zero by 2030 may not be realistically achievable. However, taking these actions over the next few years, together with the creation care initiatives already implemented, will significantly reduce the church's carbon footprint.

Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

| Ref | Action | Details | Timescale/ Progress |
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| 1 | Calculate the carbon footprint of the church buildings. | By use of the 360° carbon online tool. Baseline figures calculated for 2023-24 and updated for 2024-25, showing a year-on-year reduction. An update to be undertaken annually following the end of each connexional year. | Achieved and revised annually. |
| 2 | Commission an energy audit. | A comprehensive assessment of the church building's energy use, aimed at identifying inefficiencies and recommending improvements to enhance energy efficiency and reduce costs. The audit cost may mean that the commissioning is dependent on grant funding being available. | Within 12 months. |
| 3 | Attend to maintenance issues highlighted in annual and quinquennial inspections. | Work done as funds allow. Difficulties with access to high parts of buildings. | Between 1 year and 5 years according to maintenance priorities identified in quinquennial inspection. |
| 4 | Maintain roof and gutters to prevent damp entering the building's structure, which can increase heat loss from inside the building. | Work done to roof when problems identified. Gutters cleared when access possible. | On-going review. |
| 5 | Boilers and electric heaters have a service or maintenance plan. | Annual serving is carried out. | Achieved. |
| 6 | Any broken windowpanes are fixed and opening windows are shut tightly and draught proofed to reduce heat loss. | Where possible. Access to high level windows is difficult. | Achieved. |
| 7 | The gaps around doors and their frames been draught-proofed, or a door-curtain put up. | The glass front doors to the church require a draft-proofing solution. | Review feasibility within 12 months. |
| 8 | Heating pipes are insulated and reflective foil fitted behind radiators. | Where possible. Reflective foil may not be suitable for the type of radiators in use. | Within 12 months. |

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| 9 | Electricity is from a 100% renewable source. | A 100% renewable electricity contract will commence on 1 st April 2026 at the end of current contract. | Within 6 months. |
| 10 | Gas is from a 'green' source. | The current gas contract expires on 31 st March 2028 when 'green' gas options will be considered. | Within 3 years. |
| 11 | Smart meters have been installed to better measure the energy used. | One of the two electricity meters is smart and the gas meter is smart. The other electricity meter has been requested to be smart but this is not feasible for technical reasons. Monthly readings for the standard meter are taken and submitted. Monthly bills are issued by suppliers. | Achieved as far as possible. |
| 12 | Appliances be replaced with A rated versions at the end of their life. | Where this is feasible. | Ongoing review when appliances need replacing. |
| 13 | Heating timers are used to suit the timing of use and activities in the building, so the heating is only on when necessary. | Timers used for services in church. Heaters used in other rooms as required by manual switch. | Achieved. |
| 14 | Radiators in the church are set to turn off before the service ends. | Church heating is controlled by timers which are set to turn off at the optimum time. | Achieved, but on-going review. |
| 15 | Lightbulbs are replaced with LEDs | Phased replacement as old bulbs need replacing. | On-going. |
| 16 | Timers or motion sensors are installed so that the lighting will automatically switch off in areas that are unoccupied. | Recommended by quinquennial in toilets. | Review feasibility within 12 months. |
| 17 | Switches have labels and there is signage to remind people to turn the lights off when not in use. | Sited at main entrances/exits. | Achieved, but on-going review of effectiveness of signs. |
| 18 | The annual carbon footprint calculated by using 360° Carbon Tool is reported to Church Council. | Forms part of the Eco Church progress report. | Achieved, and on-going. |
| 19 | A Net Carbon Zero Champion has been appointed who tracks bills | The church treasurer tracks the utility bills and reports to the Finance & | Achieved. |

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| | and encourages people to undertake energy efficiency actions (e.g. not leaving electronics on standby, closing doors and windows, turning lights off). | Property Committee. Encouraging energy efficient actions is a shared responsibility by Finance & Property Committee and church stewards. | |
| 20 | An energy efficiency procurement policy has been written and implemented which is committed to renewable electricity and A rated appliances. | No specific policy, although imbedded in the Environmental Policy 2025-26. The Quinquennial report recommends that a review be carried out of the heating needs how these are currently met. This should ensure that there is clear and coordinated action when the present system needs to be replaced. | Ongoing review. |
| 21 | Initiatives such as The Great Big Green Week or Net Zero in our Neighbourhood will be supported and active involvement encouraged. | To demonstrate the church's engagement with community action alongside individuals, schools, businesses and other faith groups. | For further investigation. |
| 22 | Smaller events are held in smaller rooms that can be heated separately. | Smaller events are already held in one of the smaller meeting rooms. | Achieved, but on-going. |
| 23 | Service times in winter are held early afternoon when the building is warmer. | Under review by Circuit for ministerial coverage reasons. | Ongoing review. |
| 24 | Double-glazing or secondary glazing to be installed on suitable windows in well used areas such offices, vestries and halls. | Considered for windows in Victoria Room subject to funding. | For further investigation. |
| 25 | Walls in well-used areas such offices, vestries and halls have been internally insulated. | Need to obtain expert advice. The high cost outlay may make this uneconomical. | For further investigation. An energy audit may provide guidance. |
| 26 | Cavity wall insulation has been installed if appropriate. | The church is not suitable but may be an option for the Victoria Room and Circuit Office. | For further investigation. An energy audit may provide guidance. |

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| 27 | External insulation or render which is appropriate for the age and nature of the building has been installed. | Church is in conservation area, so unlikely to be feasible. May be an option for the Victoria Room and Circuit Office. | For further investigation. An energy audit may provide guidance. |
| 28 | Where there is no alternative but to rely on fossil-fuels, old gas boilers will be replaced with a new efficient gas boiler. | This will be considered when the existing gas boilers become unserviceable. The existing boilers heating the church are relatively modern. | Ongoing review. |