

Net Zero Report for Diocesan Synod Saturday 29th November 2025

Since June activities have focused on the following:

- **Recruitment:** Two posts were advertised over the summer, a local fundraiser and a renewable heating & energy adviser. No suitable applications were received so the heating adviser post was re-advertised, leading to the appointment of Robin Talbot. He started on 5 November, working 3 days a week and has attended the national annual heating advisers conference in Gloucester (12-13 November). His induction includes church visits with the DAC Chair and meetings with key partners such as Community Action Northumberland.
The local fundraiser role is being reviewed with different options being explored before re-advertising. Their focus will be to work closely with the energy adviser and signpost churches to appropriate funds for their projects.
- **Regional Fundraising Officer** covering 5 dioceses (Durham, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield, York): Newcastle led the successful bid and will be the employer for this full-time role, to be line managed by Marion Schooler. This role will focus on applying for national funding streams that meet the needs of the five dioceses. It is currently being advertised with interviews to be held online in early December, including a representative from the national NZ fundraising team. Funding to start from January for 3 years.
- **Grants:** The Quick Wins grant will be extended for another year with a slight increase in funds allocated to this Diocese; an application has been submitted to secure this funding. The Capacity Building Grant that funds the NZ team has also been extended for the next triennium (July 26-June 29), subject to a claim for this year and application for the extension being submitted by December.
- **GB Community Energy Fund:** Worked with Northumberland Community Energy Ltd to submit a joint bid (£36k) in October for funding towards costs of church roof structural surveys for 10 churches. It has been confirmed that bids won't be assessed until February.
- **Enquiries:** Continue to receive and respond to queries from churches, and have identified several who would benefit from a visit from the new energy adviser.
- **Hexham Abbey:** As a high emitter, the Abbey was nominated by the Diocese as a potential Demonstrator church, aiming to show how even the largest and most complex churches can drastically reduce emissions. Support was provided for their Stage One Demonstrator grant application, and the outcome should be known before the end of the year. As they were the only submission from this diocese, there is scope to nominate additional churches if large churches with plans in place and that meet the criteria can be found.
- **Energy audits:** A second round of subsidised energy audits was on offer from the national team for churches with CO2 emissions over 20 tonnes p.a. In this Diocese, only three churches who completed the Energy Footprint Tool last year met this condition, while most enquiries to date have been from small rural churches where the positive impact of a free audit could be high, even if emissions are low. A request was made to the national team to see if they could be flexible with this condition to take into account potential impact in small communities, however this was unsuccessful. Four churches were put forward and to date there have been no updates as to when these audits will take place.
- Other:
 - o Meeting held with new Bishop's Adviser on Climate Justice, now exploring ideas.
 - o Continue to engage with stakeholders/partners such as Community Action Northumberland, Net zero team at the NE Combined Authority
 - o Attended national NZ network online briefings.