



Net Zero
Carbon
2030

All you need to know about the new Decarbonising Churches Grant Fund



What is the Decarbonising Churches Grant Fund?

The Decarbonising Churches Grant Fund (DCGF) supports high-emitting churches and those with failing heating systems to plan and deliver major decarbonisation projects. It focuses on improving energy efficiency and moving to electric heating so buildings are fit for the future.

The fund can support:

- Churches/church halls with failed or failing gas or oil heating systems
- Churches/church halls with electric heating systems that have failed and/or have prohibitive running costs.
- Churches/church halls emitting over 10 tonnes of CO₂ annually

It supports both **project development** and **capital costs**.

The fund is from the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme, which is working to reach net zero carbon across the energy used to heat, light, and power our buildings. The Net Zero Carbon Programme aims to equip, resource and support all parts of the church to tackle climate change through reducing carbon emissions from the energy used in its buildings, schools and work-related transport.

[On page 12](#), there are some illustrative stories to help your church think about how you might approach decarbonisation.

What about previous and alternative grant schemes?

The **Demonstrator Churches** project will continue for those churches already involved. If you are a stage 1 Demonstrator ready to transition to stage 2, contact your stage 1 grants officer for guidance.

The original **Boiler Hardship Grant Fund** closed to new applications on 1 May 2026, but the DCGF contains a stream to continue this work by supporting churches with failed or failing heating systems.



The Church of England is also making support for smaller projects available through its separate **Quick Wins** and **Give to Go Green** grants streams available in all dioceses. More details of these grant streams can be obtained as follows:

- Quick Wins: Grants of up to £10k (although generally in the £3-£5k range. Details available from your diocesan net zero and/or church buildings team);
- [Give to Go Green](#): match funding grant for up to £20k decarbonisation projects focused on churches and church halls



How much funding could my church/church hall receive under the new DCGF?

Available to all churches

- Failed/failing gas or oil boilers. If your heating system has failed or reached the end of its life and other eligibility criteria are met, the DCGF can fund the difference in cost between a like-for-like replacement and a low carbon alternative (up to £45k). This is a continuation of the previous Boiler Hardship Grant Fund, and grants above £25k remain linked to the deprivation of the area where the building is located. See [Appendix A](#) for further details.
- Church/church hall’s existing electrified heating has failed or is failing. In some circumstances we will now support parishes to find and fund remedial actions where running costs have proven to be prohibitive. Only where the parish can demonstrate they sought and followed professional advice at the point of installation, and the proposed replacement can demonstrate substantial emission or cost reduction. See [Appendix B](#) for further details.

In cases where the parish is unsure of what an appropriate low carbon heating solution is in the above cases, up to £15,000 of project development funding may be available. Our Technical Advisory Service can also support when appropriate.



Available to high emitting churches or halls

The new grant stream within the DCGF will support high-emitting churches (over 10 tons CO2 gross annually) to implement decarbonisation projects (mainly heating schemes) up to these limits:

Project Development

- Access to an enhanced energy audit (if you have not received an energy audit since January 2024 that was organised by the National Church NZC Programme or supported/endorsed by your Diocesan NZC team);
- Up to £15k project development funding. Our Technical Advisory Service can also provide in kind support when appropriate and necessary.

Capital Funding

- Fully decarbonising your church or church hall: Funding of up to £80k covering 50% of the total project costs;
- Partially decarbonising your church or church hall: Funding of up to £50k covering 25% of the total project costs

At beginning of NZC journey	Decarbonising Churches Grant	Enhanced Energy Audit	In Kind
Developing approach into a shovel-ready project		Cash Grant: project development	£15k
		Technical Advice Service	In kind
Capital funding for a shovel-ready project	Fundraising Support	In kind	
	Capital Grant: Phased Project or Project fully decarbonises the building	Phased: Up to 25% of eligible project costs to a maximum of £50,000 Full: Up to 50% of eligible project costs to a maximum of £80,000	



What is full decarbonisation?

Churches are considered fully decarbonised where they:

1. Remove all onsite burning of fossil fuels, including removal of the gas meter or oil tank as appropriate.
2. Purchase electricity from a tariff assessed by the Church of England as 'better' or best' in terms of being 'Green', with a PCC / governing body resolution in place to this effect (alternatively, if the PCC is currently locked into a non-qualifying tariff, a PCC resolution to change to a qualifying tariff as soon as able). We would expect the PCC to remain on the Green tariff for at least the next 3 years.
3. All reasonable cost-effective and practical measures have been taken towards energy efficiency (including LED lighting, insulation, appropriate SMART heating controls and other relevant measures mentioned in the [Practical Pathway to NZC for Churches](#)).
4. Evidence that self-generation via solar PV (or connection with a local initiative) has been considered and is either present, pending, or has been ruled out due to valid considerations (with robust reasons provided for why it has been ruled out).

To qualify for the higher rate of capital grant for projects which reach a fully decarbonised church or hall in one step all the funding to deliver the project to reach full decarbonisation must be secured within 12 months after conditional approval of the DCGF grant. During the period of securing the full funding, the parish would not be able to draw down any of the DCGF grant.

What if a PCC can only afford to decarbonise in stages?

We want parishes to make as much progress as possible with the decarbonisation of their church buildings and halls but recognise that this might sometimes need to be done in 'bite sized chunks' which are manageable for a PCC. Although managing to reach a fully decarbonised building in a single project can attract a higher grant contribution, a staged approach is still progress in a positive direction.



What sort of **projects** will be funded?

A good decarbonisation project should consider any conservation needs of the building or historic objects, the way the building is used for mission and affordability to run, alongside reducing carbon emissions.

For most churches, heating makes up most of their carbon footprint. We envisage that most projects funded under the DCGF will be for new zero carbon (electrical) heating systems, potentially complemented by solar PV and batteries and/or measures to improve the building's thermal efficiency through draught-proofing and insulation.

Projects such as LED lighting, energy efficiency and stand-alone solar PV are better funded through one of our other grant streams or locally.

Who is **eligible**?

Churches in all dioceses, which meet the criteria below, are eligible, including Sodor & Man and Europe, but excluding the Channel Islands where church repairs are funded through other routes.

Eligible buildings

- Churches and church halls where activities are taking place in a building owned by part of the Church of England. (Different criteria will apply for chaplaincies in the Diocese in Europe).

Ineligible buildings

- Church of England congregations meeting in rented or leased accommodation owned by others;
- Cathedrals, schools, housing, and other parish or diocesan building types.

Eligibility criteria for church/church hall

- For support available to high emitting churches and halls, a carbon footprint for that building over 10 tons gross CO₂ as determined by an Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) dated 2021 or later (not required in the case of a failing heating system)
- The most recent EFT must have been completed
- A registered (preferably awarded) Eco Church

As the EFT is not used for chaplaincies in the Diocese in Europe, they will be expected to complete the Climate Stewards 360 carbon calculator instead.



Capital Costs which can be funded through the DCGF

- This grant fund can cover the cost of:
 - Equipment;
 - Electrical work and connections to facilitate the low carbon technology, including 3-phase upgrades;
- Where solar panels are included in the project to reduce electricity bills and enable affordable running costs of the low carbon heating solution, the cost of solar panels, battery storage and installation can be funded from this grant.
- The scheme will consider supporting reasonable costs of work to 'make good' (e.g. when unsightly cables or electric controls in highly visible areas may need to be covered) but only when this is strongly justified.
- If a church does not have the capacity to manage the implementation of a capital project from within its own staff or volunteers, consideration will be given to allowing a proportion of the capital grant to be used to cover project management costs.
- This grant fund will **not** cover the costs of associated works that would be undertaken regardless of the type of heating system installed.
- The grant fund will **not** cover any ongoing costs associated to the new heating system – for example increased electricity costs in running air source heat pumps or annual servicing costs.

Cross-funding of projects with other Building for Mission or Net Zero Carbon grant streams

- A church which has previously received a grant from the NZC Programme (for example a Give to Go Green match-funding grant) is eligible to subsequently receive a Decarbonising Churches Grant.
- Funds from other NCI grant schemes (such as the Building for Mission Minor Repairs and Improvements Fund or Quick Wins Fund) may be used for a distinctly separate NZC project in a church or hall but, for a DCGF supported project, these other NCI grant sources cannot be used to support the percentage of costs that the PCC is expected to raise under the terms of the grant scheme.
- Within the DCGF, a church can apply for project development funding and subsequently capital funding within the same triennium.

Will diocesan officers have visibility of grant applications from parishes in their diocese?

Yes, progress of the application will be shared with diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officers, Church Building Support Officers, DACs and parishes.



How does my church apply?

The first step should be to meet with your diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer or equivalent to discuss the project and gain their support.

Except when a PCC is applying to receive an Enhanced Energy Audit, a three-way meeting with a grants officer from the Net Zero Programme and your NZC Officer will then be arranged for a preliminary conversation with you before your submission. Either the church or diocesan officer should email nzcgrants@churchofengland.org to request this.

Look at the requirements below and ensure you can provide as many of these as you can at the point of application. This will speed up the process.

To get started with an application process via the Church of England's Grant Portal:

- Step 1. Create an account on the portal via [this link](#).
- Step 2. Log into the Grants Portal.
- Step 3. Select 'Funding Opportunities' from the top blue bar.
- Step 4. Select the following funding round:
'NZC -Decarbonising Churches - PCC - June 2026'

Parishes that are currently not contributing their full 'parish share' (or 'parish offer' in some dioceses) should also discuss this with their Diocesan office to ensure their Diocese would be supportive of them receiving assistance under the DCGF.

What information do I need at the point I apply?

This information will differ depending on what support you are seeking through the DCGF. You may wish to refer to the [full list of questions](#) which the application asks to ensure you have the right information ready.

For all applications:

- Contact details;
- Basic information about your church;
- A PCC resolution authorising the application;
- Latest EFT data, Eco Church status, and information on your electricity tariff;
- Information on how the church's Net Zero Carbon plans relate to your overall mission strategy.



To request an **enhanced energy audit**:

- Details of any previous audit carried out;
- Information on why you are requesting an audit and what you will do with its findings.

To request **project development funding**:

- Information about your energy audit and/or details of any consultancy or professional advice received;
- A summary description of your church and its buildings;
- Information about what consultancy/advice you are seeking and how you hope this will help you significantly move forward towards net zero;
- A project budget;
- Two members of your Parochial Church Council to agree and sign the Grant Award Letter on the PCC's behalf.

For **capital projects**:

- Statement of need, this should include the following information:
 - What is your current heating system, and why are you replacing it?
 - What is the alternative heating system you are proposing, and what options have you considered?
 - Where you have multiple boilers or buildings on site, please be specific about what will be served by the new low-carbon heating solution.
 - What measures are included in the capital application to reduce energy use?
 - Are you including solar PV and batteries in your application?
- Evidence of professional advice:
 - Who has provided advice about your proposed solution?
 - Please provide copies of the advice received.
- Quotes for proposed low carbon heating solution; this should demonstrate good procurement practice and capture all associated costs in a bill of quantities format;
- If you are intending to also install solar on affordability grounds:
 - Clear assessment of an increase in running costs due to switching to an electric heating system, and how the proposed solar solution will offset this;
 - Quotes for solar system; this should demonstrate good procurement practice and capture all associated costs in a bill of quantities format;
- Evidence that the church/church hall and the project meet the eligibility criteria;
- Confirmation that the parish have considered affordability of running costs, in selecting the alternative heating system;
- A project budget.
- In cases where you are applying under the failed gas/oil boiler hardship criteria:
 - Quotes for replacement oil/gas boiler system; this should demonstrate good procurement practice and capture all associated costs in a bill of quantities format;
 - Evidence that the parish is eligible for this grant fund in terms of the hardship criteria – e.g. a copy of the parish's most recent financial return.



- In cases where you are applying for support to address a **failed electrical heating systems**:
 - A description of the failed system (including when it was installed and if it ever worked as expected) and the problems now experienced.
 - Details of any specialist technical advice obtained at the time the system was installed and how this was implemented.
 - Details of any specialist technical advice obtained to try to solve the problems described?

Note: you do not need to have all necessary permissions in place at the point of application or grant offer. But if not, this will then be a grant pre-condition.

What happens after a grant application is submitted?

- A Net Zero Carbon Programme Grants Officer will assess your grant application. If we require further information, we will contact you at this point.
- We may also discuss your project with your DAC, and/or diocesan Net Zero Carbon Lead.
- If it is successful you will need to electronically sign our grant agreement and confirm that acceptance of the grant terms and conditions are contained in the minutes of a PCC meeting.
- If you did not have all necessary permissions in place at the point of application, you will need these to be in place before work commences.

Timelines for review and a response

- We recognise that your situation may be urgent, and you will want a reply from us as soon as possible.
- We will aim to an initial review of your grant application and providing you with feedback within three weeks of receipt – excluding the Christmas holiday period.
- The time taken to reach a final decision will depend on whether further information is needed from you.
- The detailed assessment of applications will include a review by a technical advisor from our Technical Advisory Service Panel. The technical advisor may require a conversation with you or further information to support this review. Their review may also lead to suggestions or guidance in how you approach your project.
- We know you will be keen to make progress on your project but please note that our grant cannot fund work which is carried out, or equipment purchased, before the grant agreement is signed.



Payment Profile for the Grant

- All permissions must be in place before work commences, and before grant claims can be submitted.
- Grant drawdown will be phased.
- For development funding, this will generally be in thirds over the lifetime of the grant (though with flexibility to meet needs).
- For capital grants:
 - An initial upfront payment in advance to support deposit payments to suppliers. This will be 80% of the total grant.
 - The remaining 20% of the grant will be paid on completion of the project, on presentation of the supplier invoices.
- Payment will be made to the bank account information you provide in the application form.

Timescales

- If you are offered a grant, you may have further funds to raise before the project can get underway, permissions to receive, and other aspects of planning to complete.
- We would expect that the project would get underway within 12 months of your grant offer and be complete within a further year.
- Sometimes our best plans don't go as we hope, so stay in touch with us as the project progresses if timescales need adjusting, we can consider this through the change request process.

Monitoring and follow-up

As this is a grant-funded opportunity, we are obliged to monitor the great work that churches will do with this funding. To do this, we will require a short update on your decarbonisation project when it is completed, and this will form part of the terms and conditions of the grant.

We might also ask you to participate in case studies to showcase the progress you have made in decarbonising your church/church hall so other parishes can learn from this. We will also require that you complete the EFT in future years so we can understand the impact on energy usage and carbon emissions.



The examples below are illustrative case studies, drawn from real projects. They combine common situations to show how different churches might approach decarbonisation.

Example 1

St Peter's has a busy church hall, separate from the church, heated by 15-year-old gas boilers. Although they are regularly serviced, maintenance and running costs are increasing, and the hall, a mid-twentieth century building, is draughty and tired. The PCC, having joined Eco Church, completed their EFT (showing annual emissions of 12 tons CO₂) and after commissioning an energy audit, decide to apply to the DCGF for project development support. They are successful and the support they receive funds a heating options appraisal which recommends, due to the usage pattern of the space, an air-to-air system (with running costs similar to the current system), better insulation of the space including cavity wall and loft insulation, and solar PV and batteries to support the electricity supply. This will fully decarbonise the hall.

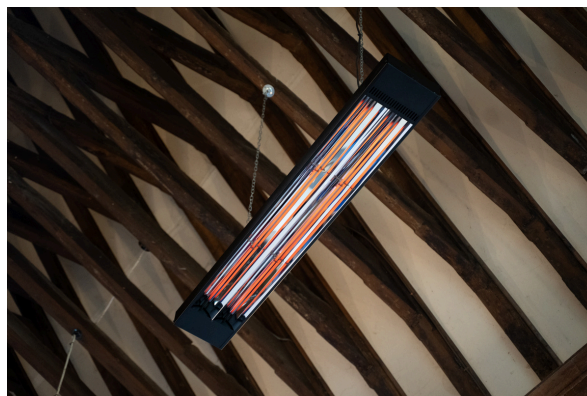
Having tendered the scheme, and having the project ready with permissions, St Peter's now applies for a capital grant of £60k towards the scheme which totals £120k. Further grants are gained from the Benefact Trust and Garfield Weston Foundation, and a fundraising campaign in the local community brings in the remaining funds.

The project is a success, and St Peter's reports a warm and welcoming hall, increased bookings from local groups, and reduced utility costs. The diocese runs an open morning at the hall to demonstrate what has been achieved, and St Peter's is pleased to feature in their local newspaper as a sustainability pioneer.



Example 2

St Agatha's is a small grade 2 rural medieval church, used for worship monthly with a small congregation. Occasional weddings, funerals and community events also happen in the church. Its elderly oil boiler has failed, and the PCC, having spent most of their reserves on repairs to the tower, decide to apply to the DCGF under the boiler hardship route for new infrared heaters (a heat the people solution appropriate to infrequently used spaces, and with running costs below that of the oil system). A new oil boiler would cost £10k, whereas the infrared system is costed at £25k. A £15k grant is awarded and the pattern of services and events can continue uninterrupted thanks to the new heating.



Example 3

St Mark's has an end-of-life gas boiler, which services a complex of buildings including the main church, which is flexible for worship and a busy programme of community events, and some smaller parish rooms which host a Food Bank. The PCC has explored options and, being a gold-awarded Eco Church and having carbon emissions of 15 tons CO₂ as determined by the most recent EFT, decides to opt for a zero carbon air-to-water system powering existing underfloor heating. They have already raised £100k towards the total £200k cost. They make a capital application to the DCGF for £80k. It is noted that the project will not fully decarbonise the church due to gas cookers in the kitchen. The church is therefore awarded £50k (25% of the total) and is able to secure the remaining funds from their county council. They plan to apply to use Give to Go Green the next year to replace their cookers with induction hobs and complete the net zero carbon journey.



Appendix A: Further Information for parishes with failed/failing oil or gas boilers on the Boiler Hardship Pathway within DCGF

Running as a separate grant stream until May 2026, over 40 churches were helped in replacing their failed fossil fuel heating systems with new zero carbon electrical systems.

This grant stream has now been brought within the DCGF with some changes:

- It is now possible to request up to £15k of project development funding to ensure the right solution is developed for your building;
- The scheme now also includes failed electrical heating systems. See [Appendix B](#) for more details.

The grant is subject to demonstrating hardship, i.e. the church cannot afford the new zero carbon solution from its own funds, and the grant offered will vary depending on the deprivation index of the area in which the church or hall is situated.

Parishes must be able to demonstrate that they cannot afford the cost of the appropriate low carbon heating system alternative to replacement of their existing oil or gas boiler. For example, they do not have significant unrestricted reserves which could contribute to this, or if they do, they can provide an explanation of why these cannot be committed.

The level of grant available for your church will vary according to the indices of multiple deprivation by ecclesiastical parish as shown in the [Church of England Parish Map](#), as follows:

- Grant will cover the full cost differential up to a threshold of £25k (to enable smaller systems to be supported in full)
- Above £25k, the grant will cover the following amounts, varied by deprivation index:

Parish Deprivation Rank	Amount of cost differential covered by the grant (up to a maximum grant of £45k)
6,236 to 12,307	£25k + 50% of the cost differential above £25k, up a maximum of £45k grant.
5,012 to 6,235	£25k + 60% of the cost differential above £25k, up a maximum of £45k grant.
2558 to 5,011	£25k + 75% of the cost differential above £25k, up a maximum of £45k grant.
1 to 2,557	£25k + 90% of the cost differential above £25k, up a maximum of £45k grant. (or a higher percentage if exceptionally justified)



Appendix B: Further Information on the failed electric heating system pathway within DCGF

This applies when a church/church hall's existing electrified heating has failed or is failing. This can include considering remedial actions where running costs have proven to be prohibitive.

A key eligibility criteria for support is that the parish can demonstrate they sought and followed professional advice at the point of installation. In the application process we ask the parish to describe the current heating system, including such details as:

- When was it installed?
- If it ever worked as hoped?
- What is the situation now and what problems are being caused? E.g. not meeting heating need, creating a financial burden that impacts wider parish mission.

Assuming initial eligibility criteria are met, the following support would be available:

- Cash grant support for project development (technical fees etc) – up to £15,000
- Access to a technical panel for independent advice.
- Capital Grant to support rectifying or replacing the failed system (up to £45k to cover the full cost. Above £25k, the grant would be varied by the deprivation index in the same way as described in [Appendix A](#) for the Boiler Hardship Pathway.)

Whilst some parishes applying for this fund might have a solution in mind that has been developed through a robust process with appropriate technical support, we expect most parishes applying will initially need support to assess what went wrong with their current failed system and why, and then develop an agreed plan for rectifying the situation.

Any proposed replacement system must be able to demonstrate substantial emission or cost reduction to be eligible for a capital grant.

