

Synod June 2023

Bishop Martin's Presidential Address

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. That is the fifth of the Five Marks of Mission embraced by the Anglican Church world-wide. Every day, the urgency of living this mark of mission increases. Yesterday we may have seen in the news projections that many of the world's ecosystems face collapse within our children's and grandchildren's lifetimes. And rising sea levels will generate mass migrations the scale of which we have not yet imagined, and would expose the current preoccupation with immoral inadequate non-solutions to immigration for what they are.

So as Christians we are at the forefront of changing attitudes, practices and lifestyles to pursue with determination our commitment to safeguard all creation. I am hugely grateful to parishes across the diocese who have engaged with this, and indeed have seen this as key to their mission. It is as many have discovered, a real point of mission connection with young people, and they and we know we have an obligation to work together for the sake of the future and for the sake of their future. Signing up to Ecochurch, looking at the carbon footprint of our buildings, and embracing changing lifestyles in terms of consumption and waste, are all part of this, and give us a basis upon which we can challenge other institutions and structures to do the same.

The Church of England General Synod voted in February 2020 to aim for net zero for her buildings by 2030. I supported the amendment that changed the original goal of 2045 to 2030 simply because we would do what we are doing now which is to only really get galvanised to act a few years before the deadline. And if we get 80% of the way there for 2030, that will be a great deal further than where we would be if we had set 2045 as the deadline.

We need to act now, with vision, hope and determination. I am proud that we endorsed that target in our Diocesan Synod **in ...**

The Diocesan Office staff have been working hard to get us on the right track, supporting parishes and schools in working out plans and a route map on which to act. The Archbishops' Council has allocated funds to support dioceses in scoping the task and taking on staff to help parishes and schools to address the challenges.

I am immensely grateful for the support, advice and partnership opportunities we are developing with Professor Darryl Newport, Director of the Suffolk Sustainability Institute and Professor for Energy and Sustainable Development at the University of Suffolk. Darryl has attended numerous meetings with our diocesan staff, has provided generous advice, and shared his expertise and experience. I am grateful that he is willing to continue to do this.

We see from the slide behind that different types of buildings present different challenges. 47% of carbon emissions come from school buildings. This is a huge challenge because the public funding pot to support the changes needed is very limited. Daniel has carried out the huge task of working through and analysing the current carbon footprint for our schools. He has successfully bid

for funding to commission heat decarbonisation plans for our MAT schools and VA schools. In fact, he has provided the template for other dioceses. The schools which are in scope of the Church of England's net zero target are those where the DBE has "a significant degree of influence", i.e. the 21 Diocesan MAT schools and 9 voluntary aided schools.

The UK government is working to a 2050 net zero carbon target for schools, but the Church of England is sticking to the 2030 target for those "significant degree of influence" schools. the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme Board has agreed to support the establishment of a National Framework for Church of England Schools. An initial desktop exercise will take place to begin to focus on where the priorities for capital funding bids should lie. We here have begun working with some schools individually where opportunity presents, using identified grant funding. It is estimated that a single form entry primary school will cost between £800,000 and £900,000 to decarbonise.

For Parsonages, Dawn has been working for several months on updating the EPC's for all 155 of our properties to create a baseline of current CO2 emissions. Whilst still in draft, she has identified an initial plan of works to reduce our emissions by 40% with an indicative cost of £2.5m. Several iterations are required to improve the emissions savings significantly and to be able to come up with a fully costed plan. As an indication of the scale of the challenge, it looks likely to cost an average £100k per property, to achieve close to 0% emissions. That is why we are looking at what we can sensibly achieve, hence the 40% target, and we need to look at what the quick wins are in this. We also need to recognise that some elements of these costs we

would be incurring anyway – a boiler needs to be replaced, for example, so we need to make sure we have the greenest solution, but the expenditure for the boiler would have been incurred anyway.

Churches, church halls and cathedrals add up to 37% of emissions, but most of that comes from a minority of the buildings. Our work is still at an early stage and will require significant effort over the coming months to create an accurate and detailed baseline. We are, though, really grateful for the 135 churches (28%) who have already completed the Energy Footprint tool return and we would encourage as many churches as possible to complete this in the coming weeks. We wish to create a realistic approach to understanding our total emissions for churches, recognising that the use of our buildings can be very different across Suffolk, with consequent variations in emissions between different contexts. The national net zero office is encouraging dioceses to look at the top 20% carbon emitting buildings. For many of our churches the carbon issue is quite modest, not least because they are not used every day or even every week. So the places we need to focus on, including this building, are those that need to be heated most days. The important consideration to make is to ensure that when a heating system needs to be replaced it makes the shift to green energy. Again, we are talking about costs some of which would be incurred anyway. I should just add a comment on Tony Allwood's brilliant heated cushion plan. For many small congregations – so most of our churches – this may be the ideal response.

Tony has also asked me to add this - that if any highly used church is considering doing a major change to become "Net Zero" there is a possibility of

bidding to be a “demonstrator” for the rest of the church. So if you are interested in showcasing your church for other churches across the region, and want to cash in on the grants available, then get in touch now with Tony or Gary because there are limited funds available.

To bring this all together, and to enable us as a first step to draw up a fully costed route map, we have submitted a bid to National Church for funding a Net Zero Carbon Officer over the next two and a half years, having already been awarded a £15k start up grant towards formulating our decarbonisation plans. Our bid was made jointly with the Eastern region Dioceses (of Chelmsford, St Albans, Ely and Norwich), the first of its kind, to learn and share expertise and resource together. In addition to the Net Zero Carbon Officer posts, we have all included a shared application to fund a Regional Learning Co-ordinator, to support the collaborative approach we wish to embed and minimise duplication in our local activities and ensure good exemplars of decarbonisation projects are shared more widely. We will know the outcome of our bid by the end of July.

So that is what we are doing at the moment. And we are doing it to live out our calling to love God and love our neighbour. It is my great privilege and honour to welcome and introduce to you the Revd Amon Jackson, the Principal of the Kagera Christian Theological College, who is visiting us for a couple of weeks. And of course we know the huge impact of climate change on Kagera already and I have asked Amon to introduce himself and say something about that.