

QUICK WINS AND CONSUMABLES



BUILDINGS

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WHY?

'Every little helps!' Here are some small actions, drawn from the other resource papers, which will help reduce your carbon footprint as a church – and save money too.

HOW?

HEATING

Heating usually accounts for over 50% of a church's carbon footprint and energy bills, so here are some quick wins:

1. Thermostat – is the temperature set appropriately for different activities and user groups?
2. Timing – do you remember to amend the schedule for changing activities, weeks or holiday periods?
3. Running time – do you turn the boiler off at the right moment? (This may be before the end of the service as the room will take time to cool.)
4. Seasons – do you actively change the timing and thermostat with the changing seasons?
5. Zoning – can you put thermostatic valves on radiators in less well-used rooms?
6. Does someone have the responsibility for reviewing and implementing the above regularly?

It's important not to waste heat but to get it to the people who need it, when they need it, so see our paper on 'Insulation, double glazing and draught-proofing' and look at the websites below:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/kb/heating-and-energy-use/>

<https://www.cibsejournal.com/general/tidings-of-comfort-and-joy-cost-efficient-church-heating/>

CYCLE STORAGE

Having somewhere safe and dry to store a bike will encourage more people to cycle rather than drive to church activities. If you can't install your own, is there a neighbouring property that might be encouraged to do so, or perhaps your council will install lockable street storage?



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LIGHTING

The improvement in efficiency of LEDs compared to earlier forms of lighting is staggering, the sort of miles-per-gallon increase that car manufacturers can only dream about. Replacing standard light bulbs with LEDs can achieve the same level of brightness but reduce your energy use by more than 80%. More major changes to lighting are considered in our paper on lighting and there's more information on this website: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/getting-best-out-your-led-lighting/>

Do you have a floodlighting policy? This can be a tricky issue. Many churches wish to floodlight to show that the church is a living community, to highlight architectural features or to make an area feel safer. The dark sky agenda suggests we should limit night-time lighting for the benefit of both animal and human health, so consider agreeing a policy which aims to balance both. Using LEDs in floodlighting obviously reduces the carbon impact there too. Or what about simply turning lighting off or down more often?

DISPOSABLE CUPS

The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the widespread use of personal reusable cups. China washed properly can be Covid-secure, but it seems disposable cups are going to be around for a while. Historically many have not been easily recyclable, so do look for the increasing range of compostable or biodegradable single-use disposable cups:

https://www.vegware.com/uk/catalogue/double_wall_cups/

<https://kingdomcoffee.co.uk/disposables-cleaning/disposable-paper-cups?type=142>

Avoid styrofoam – it doesn't degrade and, although in principle it can be recycled, it rarely is as the processes are complicated. Like cling film, it'll still be in the landfill when Jesus returns.

If you use fresh coffee at church, you can recycle the grounds as compost or garden mulch.



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CLEANING PRODUCTS

Bleach, drain cleaner, all-purpose spray, even washing up liquid, are all designed to kill germs. The residues go down our drains into rivers and seas, gradually building up toxins and harming the wildlife living there. Many also contain ingredients harmful to humans and known to irritate the lungs: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/watch-what-you-wash-away>

<https://www.thoracic.org/about/newsroom/press-releases/journal/2018/women-who-clean-at-home-or-at-work-face-increased-lung-function-decline.php.org>

There isn't yet (2021) a standard for eco-friendly products but there are plenty of effective products which are much healthier for you and for the environment. Try suppliers such as the following: <https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/category/cleaning-and-household/> or <https://biod.co.uk/>

DIY natural cleaning products (lemon juice, vinegar, bicarbonate of soda) are worth considering if you are confident they will be used properly in your church context: <https://thegreenparent.co.uk/articles/read/make-your-own-cleaning-products#>

If you employ external cleaners, do consider their terms and conditions. Are they being paid a fair living wage which the company is properly declaring to tax authorities?

PAPER

The benefits of recycling paper are huge, using many fewer resources in its remanufacture than making paper from raw materials – less water, less energy, fewer chemicals and fewer trees. So don't just ensure you recycle your waste paper but also buy recycled paper products for toilet paper, kitchen/dining requirements, office use or printed materials: <https://paper.org.uk/CPI/Content/Information/Myths-and-Facts.aspx>

<https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/02/recycled-paper-and-bamboo-toilet-tissue-subscription-services-what-are-the-options/>



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TWINNING

Twinning the bins or toilets in your church can be a fun way to raise global awareness of pollution and hygiene issues: <https://www.bintwinning.org/> <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>

Note: Eco Church is not able to recommend any suppliers; some are provided above to give an idea of what is available.

LONGER READS & OTHER RESOURCES

Nigel Walters, a conservation architect, touches on some of the challenges for heritage buildings here: <http://www.churchbuildingprojects.co.uk/sustainability/>

The Church of England has a number of resources as part of their 'Practical Path to Net Zero' programme. They are applicable to all denominations.

There are lots of easy wins in this overview sheet: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church/practical-path-net-zero-carbon-churches>

This webinar recording discusses 'Housekeeping and Quick Wins': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XIFuU27xYO>

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Taking action on this topic will contribute to these UN Strategic Development Goals:

