

**Minutes of a Meeting  
of  
Blackburn Diocesan Synod**

**held on Saturday 19 October 2024 at St Cuthbert's Fulwood**

**Present**

3 Members of the House of Bishops (100%)  
38 Members of the House of Clergy (54.5%)  
40 Members of the House of Laity (62.5%)

**Apologies**

17 Members of the House of Clergy (24.5%)  
14 Members of the House of Laity (22%)

**1. Opening Worship**

The meeting commenced with the Eucharist led by **Bishop Philip**.

**2. Welcome and Presidential Address**

**Bishop Jill** welcomed the new Diocesan Synod, thanking all present for all they do in their parishes.

**Bishop Philip** addressed the Synod. His presidential address regarding assisted dying is attached. A prayer for those who are close to death and vulnerable followed.

**3. News and Safeguarding Update**

**Bishop Philip** remarked on the wonderful work being carried out in our diocese, parishes and schools including:

- £25.5m SMMI (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment) from National Church awarded to fund projects including the Ignite project, the relaunch of the parish renewal project, sustaining the M:Power project, transforming educational support for clergy and investment into urban areas. During November, parishes will hear how they can apply for funding to employ a youth and children's worker or lay pioneer in their parishes.
- Our Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal taking place in 2025. This is a call for the whole Diocese to pray for growth and renewal in preparation for our centenary year. A full programme of events will take place during 2025, ending with the launch of the new Vision in late November. Every parish should have received a communication on the consultation process for the new Vision and all parishes are invited to have an input in what should be included.

- The purposeful work being carried out in every department at the Diocesan Offices.

**Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary)** explained that, following a General Synod decision, our Diocese will be receiving an independent safeguarding audit. A consultation survey will be circulated in the next few weeks to all stakeholders as part of the self-evaluation process in preparation for our audit in February. A number of parishes will also be contacted in February to share their views as part of the audit. Following the process, the Diocese will receive an audit report with action points.

#### **4. Setting the Tone for the New Triennium**

There was a discussion around how Synod could be made more accessible.

**Susan O'Brien (HoL Tunstall Deanery)** suggested that clergy should give Diocesan Synod representatives a slot to report back on what is going on in the Diocese and to give parishes the opportunity for upwards feedback.

**Wendy Walker (HoL Whalley Deanery)** thought the induction training for new Synod members was very helpful.

**Esther Witham-Gregory (HoL Burnley Deanery)** felt that churches should be working together to encourage more people to join our Deanery Synods.

**Laura Oliver (HoL Preston Deanery)** said that as a General Synod member she would like more space between General Synod and Diocesan Synod as it is difficult to give up two consecutive weekends. Also, Diocesan Synod sometimes falls the week before half term.

**Naomi Lynas (HoL Whalley Deanery)** found the Synod election campaign helpful and thought the videos were engaging.

**Bishop Jill** explained the four postures for Diocesan Synod meetings: GENTLENESS, HUMILITY, COURAGE and FAITH.

**Bishop Joe** explained that it is a sign of health among Christians when we voice disagreements, and how fear drives us to silence and angry arguments. He pointed out that we all make mistakes and should not be fearful of making them. He invited Synod to speak, to disagree graciously and to listen expectantly. He reminded us that listening is a sign that we are living a life not centred on ourselves but centred on God and other people.

#### **5. Youth Forum Update**

**Bishop Philip** gave a summary of his update paper on the Youth Forum. He explained this is a consultative group that will be meeting once a term. The Youth Forum had met twice already.

Synod were asked to consider what and when we might need to hear the views of the Youth Forum. Ideas included, the new Diocesan Vision, the 'difficult' topics, environmental stewardship, racial justice and inclusion, serving in churches, gay justice, the link between churches and schools, getting away from a 'churchy' vocabulary and what turns people off going to church.

**Andrew Holliday (HoC Chorley Deanery)** asked why Youth Forum members couldn't be elected onto Diocesan Synod.

Bishop Philip replied that young people would not find it engaging and that there are alternative ways in which Forum can feed into discussions, eg via videos.

## **6. Board of Education 2023 Accounts**

**Sally Schofield (Deputy Director of Education)** presented the Board of Education's Accounts. Her slides are attached to the minutes.

Some of the highlights of the work carried out by the Board of Education during the last year included:

- A church toddler group grand tour of the Diocese, including the creation of a series of creative prayer activities "30 things to pray before you're four and a half".
- A Family Activity Day held at Whalley Abbey over the summer.
- Forming the plans for the annual Children's Ministry Conference taking place on the 28<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Linking in with the Diocesan Year of Prayer, the conference will be titled 'Pray It Forward' and will focus on how prayer should be a big part of our mission to grow the number of children in our churches.
- Abide saw 170 young people plus their leaders come together for a day in Chorley in April 2024 in which young people were involved in leading the workshops and main talks.
- Formation of the Diocesan Youth Forum; 30 young people are now part of the Forum, and approx 25 have attended both gatherings.
- The Youth Leader Conference held at St James' Church in Clitheroe earlier in October with youth leaders from across the Diocese coming together in one place.

Sally explained there are many different types of support and training offered by the Board of Education to headteachers and teachers. Examples include the Heads and Incumbents Conference, annual school visits, organisation of school buildings projects and chaplaincy support, among many others.

Synod were invited to contact Sally for any further information on the work of the Board of Education.

Questions and comments were invited but none were raised.

The Board of Education's 2023 Accounts were **received** by Diocesan Synod.

## **7. Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance followed. The minutes of the AGM were recorded separately.

## **8. Net Carbon Zero Action Plan Update**

**Dave Champness (Senior Project Manager)** gave a brief update on progress since the action plan was agreed by Synod 12 months ago. His slides are attached to the minutes.

He explained that the ambition for the CofE to achieve net zero by 2030 is huge and he thanked parishes that had completed the energy footprint tool for 2023 data. The return rate was 69% in 2023, an increase of 16% from the 2022 data collection.

Parishes will need to complete the energy footprint tool to access net zero grant funding available from National Church. Support is available to help parishes with their returns and the portal should open for 2024 data in January 2025.

Schools are our biggest emitters of carbon and they are seeking government funding to help reduce this. All our schools have had a decarbonisation report along with the Cathedral and Clayton House. 50 of the highest emitting churches in the Diocese will be receiving either a free energy audit or decarbonisation plan and those in top 600 nationally will be eligible for a £3k grant.

Churches are being encouraged to engage on broader environmental topics beyond just buildings/energy by registering and working towards Ecochurch awards. Clayton House is also working towards a silver award over the next 12 months.

Questions and comments were invited.

**Cindy Rigney (HoC Tunstall Deanery)** asked how rural deaneries can offset emissions as they are particularly reliant on oil due to the lack of public transport.

**Dave Champness** explained that the Diocese currently wants to focus on the highest emitters, eg church buildings. The plan is to look at offsetting during 2026-2028.

**Mark Nelson (HoC Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** highlighted that single use cups were being used at Synod.

**Chris Krawiec (Hoc Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** asked if there was any joined up thinking between Synod, DAC, parishes and other groups dealing with buildings.

**Dave Champness** gave some examples of the joined up working taking place, eg a sub-group of the DAC has devised an environmental policy, Jamie Skuse (Church Building Support Officer) is currently overseeing 15 Ecochurch applications for grants, Dave and Jamie are also working on the demonstrator projects at Broughton St John and Thornton Christ Church, two of 70 churches selected nationally.

**Joseph Brookfield (HoL Preston Deanery)** pointed out that as organisations get better at measuring their omissions, the levels recorded can rise before action is taken to reduce them.

**Paul Bye (HoC Kirkham Deanery)** asked about making good decisions for both people and ministries and about balancing different priorities.

**Dave Champness** spoke about reaching out into our communities, the fifth mark of mission and how hearing from the under 30s on environmental issues is a good missional opportunity.

Synod thanked **John Rodwell** our **Diocesan Environmental Officer** for all his hard work and effort.

## **9. Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal Update**

**Mark Ireland (Archdeacon of Blackburn)** updated Synod on plans for the Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal. His slides are attached to the minutes.

He asked “Why a year of prayer for growth and renewal?” and explained this is because growth will only come from God and we need to spend some time asking God.

An ad clerum will be circulated very shortly and parish packs will be available in November. Further information is available from Joy Rushton (Being Witnesses Manager) and Sarah Marston (Making Disciples Co-ordinator).

A prayer for growth and renewal followed.

Synod were asked to consider how they might get on board with the Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal within their individual parishes.

**Wendy Walker (HoL Whalley Deanery)** commended the Leading Your Church into Growth event in Swanwick that she recently attended.

**Karen Herschell (HoC Whalley Deanery)** described how her parish had started to pray for growth a year ago and the signs of this starting to work.

**Matt Guilder (HoC Tunstall Deanery)** had started to pray for hope in his parish, pointing out that Jesus responds to prayer.

**Susan Stewart (HoL Garstang Deanery)** explained that some people do not know how to pray and how we sometimes need to teach them how to do this.

**Chris Boland (HoC Preston Deanery)** spoke about the small things that can be done to help growth such as including a prayer for growth at morning services.

Archdeacon Mark announced that lent devotional and advent devotional resources will be made available and there will be a number of clergy study mornings on the theme of prayer in the new year.

Some consideration will be given to an additional Synod in 2025 devoted to prayer as part of our Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal.

## **10. Link Diocese Report**

**Sam Cheesman (Bishop's Chaplain)** presented the report. His slides are attached.

Sam explained he is the Links Officer and Chair of the Links Committee. He described the inspiring work taking place in the Liwolo Diocese and Multan Diocese, highlighting the growth and learning we can gain from formalising our links with them without there being any financial impact to our Diocese.

Questions and comments were invited.

**Martin Keighley (HoC Poulton Deanery)** asked about the harvest appeal for Multan and Liwolo, and their expectations for future harvest appeals.

Sam Cheesman explained that whilst we will be channelling our harvest appeal to these links, they are aware each time that it will be a one-off and it could go elsewhere the following year.

**Mark Ireland (Archdeacon of Blackburn)** moved

“This Synod agrees to the establishment of a new Global Partnership Link between the Diocese of Blackburn and the Diocese of Liwolo in South Sudan.”

And

“This Synod agrees to the establishment of a new Global Partnership Link between the Diocese of Blackburn and the Diocese Multan in Pakistan.”

The motions were **carried unanimously**.

## 11. Proclamation of Canons

None.

## 12. Questions

Four questions had been received. These questions and the answers provided are attached to the minutes.

Supplementary questions were invited.

**Simon Cox (HoC Blackpool Deanery)** asked about the timescale for the work around PTO support, training and representation.

**Bishop Philip** assured that it hadn't been forgotten but explained the need to get it right. Once the CME Administrator role has been filled then it will be progressed.

**Susan Procter (HoL Pendle Deanery)** said she appreciated that the Diocese did not make the payment to the individual concerned but asked where the payment had come from.

Bishop Philip explained that he was not able to disclose the information. He expressed his sorrow for the survivors and confirmed he is working with the House of Bishops to ensure the situation does not happen again.

**Joseph Brookfield (HoL Preston Deanery)** spoke about joining parishes, creating benefices and the number of new homes being built. He asked if there was any expectation for the size of parishes to grow over time.

Bishop Philip confirmed there is no strategy to make larger parishes. Individual circumstances and contexts are looked at and discussions are held with PCCs to decide whether it is appropriate to make changes.

## 13. Motions

None.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

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+ Philip Blackburn

Signed

**Dated:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

**Presidential Address to Synod**  
**October 19<sup>th</sup> 2024**

*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. (Job 1,21)*

On Wednesday, the Assisted Dying Bill was introduced to Parliament with the intention that MPs are given a free vote on the matter, probably at the end of November. I know that this is a highly emotive and complex issue, not least because we so rarely speak about death and dying.

Many of you here will have had painful experiences of sitting with a loved one during the last stages of their life. Certainly the clergy amongst you will be familiar with this through their own deathbed ministry. It is sadly the case that, for many people, the last weeks of life are filled with pain, sometimes agonising pain, and it is easy to understand the attractiveness to some of a solution that accelerates the peace that comes with death. A number of celebrities and some forceful media campaigning have made this solution a popular one with a majority in the nation.

But seemingly simple solutions often have unintended consequences. It is my strongly held conviction that the legislation currently before Parliament must be resisted and resisted strongly by people of faith and I invite you to do so.

I would give three reasons for this. The first is to avoid a slippery slope. The legislation before Parliament has been carefully drafted and is intended to apply only to cases where a terminal illness has been diagnosed and after consultation with two judges. But already in my mind there are questions. Anyone who has ministered to the dying knows that life expectancy is pure guess work and I know many people who have been given weeks or even days to live and have then gone on to live fulfilled lives for months and years afterwards. In our own Diocese, a priest who was widely expected to die before last Christmas has recently had the joy of meeting his two new-born grandchildren.

But more seriously, once the precedent has been set that medical staff are permitted to administer life-ending drugs, there can be no doubt at all that the range of cases in which this is permitted will increase. This has been so in every nation that has allowed assisted dying. The overwhelming evidence from Holland, Canada and other jurisdictions is that incrementalism is inevitable. Safeguards are dropped and medical killing becomes more and more the norm with the number of assisted suicides increasingly exponentially.

The second is to protect the vulnerable. Whatever the campaigners might say, the availability of assisted suicide will inevitably put pressure on elderly people and those who are near to death to put an end to their lives. Research from Canada and Oregon suggests that as many as half of those who have asked for assisted suicide have done so after pressure from family members. And even if pressure is not applied externally, frail elderly people who feel themselves to be a nuisance to their families will place such pressure on themselves.

Inevitably those who most feel such pressure will be those from the most income deprived backgrounds. Those who believe themselves to be a financial burden on their families will

be in an invidious and intolerable position. How can we conceive of a legislative change that puts the most vulnerable people in the country in that sort of dilemma? Much is being made about choice in this debate. But by giving choice to one group of people, we will be taking it away from another. To relieve some people of physical pain, we will subject countless more to intolerable mental pain and torment.

The third is God. *The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.* Human life is God's gift. It is precious and beautiful. When God looked upon the man and woman that he had made, he saw that it was good. Our life flows from God and will find its fulfilment in God. Our life is not our own possession.

And as Christians, we know that even suffering is caught up in the mystery of God. It is not purposeless. In our suffering we are mystically united with the suffering of Christ on the cross such that our suffering is part of the way God chooses to save us. We must not use legislation to put ourselves in the place of God.

We know that there is a social care crisis in this country. We know also that 100,000 people are unable to access the palliative care that they need. The way to address this is not to make it easier for people to kill themselves. It is not to turn doctors, whose task is to cure, into agents of death with all the consequences that will have on their relationships with their patients.

What is required is a Government that has the courage to address the social care crisis and an NHS that invests properly in palliative care such that people can have a dignified death according to God's timing, not their own. I believe that this issue takes us right to the very heart of the purpose, meaning and dignity of our humanity. And once a decision has been taken, there will be no way back.

So I would urge us as Christians to take action. What we can do?

First, we can raise the issue within our own congregations. Preachers, preach about it. Others, talk about it. And if that opens up a healthy conversation about death and dying, well all the better.

Second, we can write. The three Bishops will soon be writing to every MP in Lancashire and I would urge you to do the same. There can be no doubt that such letters have a real impact on the way MPs vote. Don't use standard issue letters that others have written. Write yourself, in your own words. Keep it short and keep it personal.

And third, we can pray. We can pray with all our hearts for the dying, especially those whose death may be lonely or painful. We can pray for our MPs and all who will have to make such a complex and agonising decision. And we can pray for our nation, that we will continue to be a place that values the beauty and dignity of every human person made in the image and likeness of God.

**+Philip Blackburn**

*October 19th 2024*



# **BOARD OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTS**

**Iain Parks, Director of Education**



# The Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Annual Report and Accounts

Sally Schofield 19<sup>th</sup> October 2024

'When You Ask, Something Happens'

1 Thess 5:16-18



# Duties of the DBE Measure 2021

- The DBE for each diocese must—
- promote or assist in the promotion of education in the diocese that is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England;
- promote or assist in the promotion of religious education and religious worship in schools in the diocese;
- promote or assist in the promotion of church schools in the diocese;
- promote co-operation between itself and other persons concerned with education in the diocese



## Additional duties assigned by Synod

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- 16.** In addition to the functions provided for in the Measure, the Diocesan Synod confer the primary responsibility to the Board of Education for the following:
- (a) The development of youth and children's work across the Diocese
  - (b) The support and development of Christian spirituality in Further and Higher Educations institutions in the Diocese
  - (c) The support of chaplaincy provision to places of learning across the Diocese, including church based institutions

# Children and Youth



# FAMILY ACTIVITY DAY

Wednesday 28th August 2024  
10.30 - 2.30

*Come as a family to Whalley Abbey for a day of games, storytelling and craft, as well as an opportunity to learn more about this incredible historical site.*

**£2 per family**



[www.whalleyabbey.org](http://www.whalleyabbey.org)

# PRAY IT FORWARD











# Schools



**BDBE Questful RE  
Syllabus (Primary)  
Has over 3000 users  
across the North West.**



**Statutory  
Inspection of  
Anglican and  
Methodist Schools  
– SIAMS**



**Every Blackburn Diocese  
Church School inspected in  
the last academic year was  
judged to be living up to its  
foundation as a church school  
and a place where pupil's and  
adults, flourish.**





## Training Courses and Conferences



## Equity Diversity and Justice Strategy



## Heads and Incumbents



## Pupil Conferences



**Collective Worship In Primary Schools**  
**A new episode of God's Big Story is available every week**



**Pilot Diocese for  
 The Christian Aid  
 Big Spring Sing 2024**



**100's of School Visits  
 are made by  
 DBE Staff and  
 Advisers  
 as well as Senior  
 Clergy**



# Chaplaincy

University Chaplains are now appointed in:

- **Preston Minster** to serve at **University of Central Lancashire** (currently a maternity cover)
- **University of Cumbria** now partnered with **The Priory, Lancaster**, ordained member of staff in place, discerning what the spiritual needs of the university are and providing opportunities for worship
- **Lancaster University** (part time - as its an interim arrangement) with a loose partnership with **St Thomas' Lancaster**, an ordained member of staff who has started up several initiatives and is making contacts with students and staff



## School Buildings

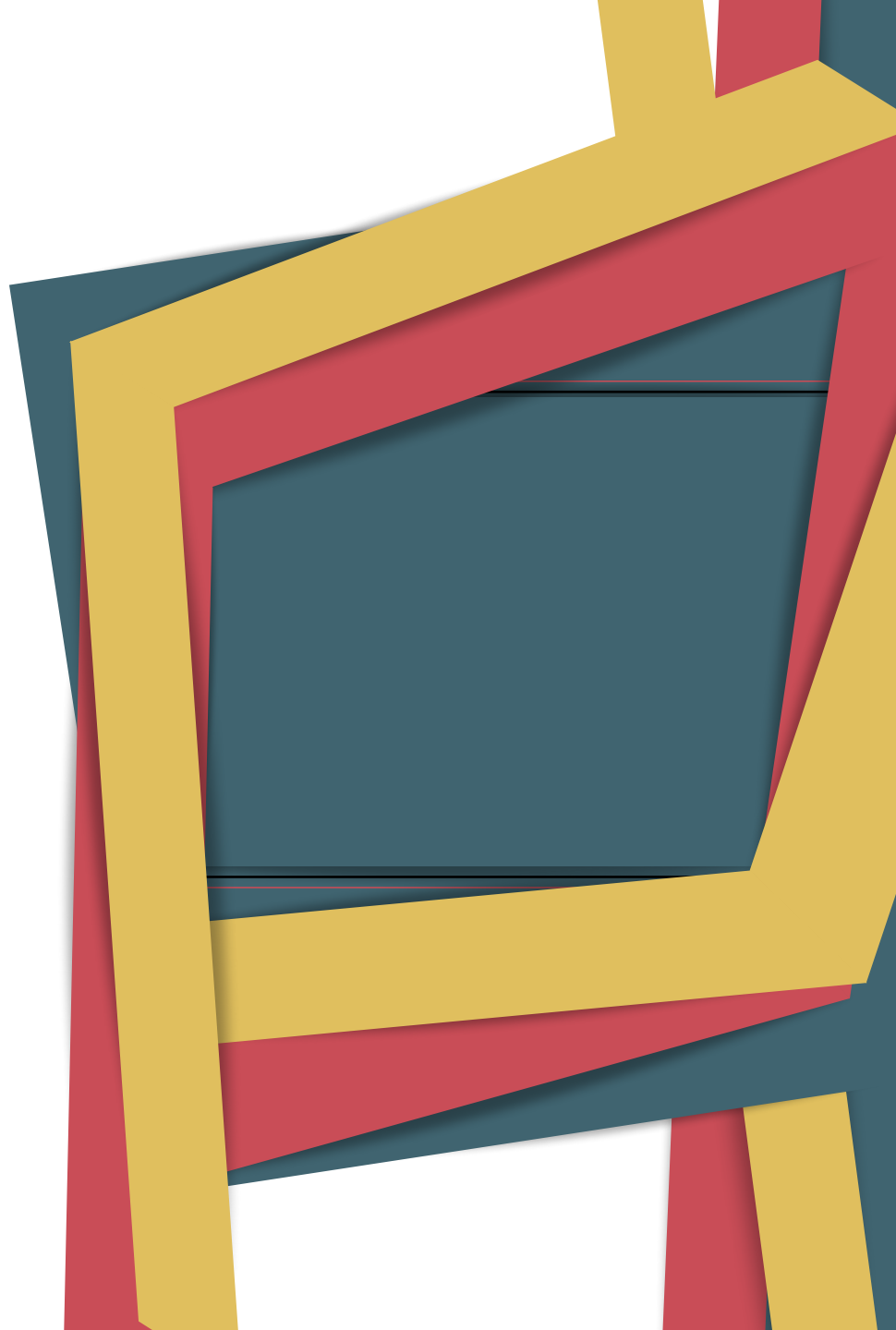
- The SCA system has been run effectively this year.
- Costs have risen through the year leading to reduced ability to deliver the number of programmes that had been hoped for
- A full programme of capital work has been planned and delivered to meet school needs. As in previous years, the level of need outweighed the funding envelope by around three times the amount.
- The DBE has sought to register a number of titles with the Land Registry for school properties
- The DBE continues to research trusts and land of church schools to build a complete picture of the school estate and ownership of land

## Summary position at the end of the year 2023

Unrestricted Funds:	£2,334,000
Designated Funds:	£2,990,000
Restricted Funds:	£419,000
Endowment Funds:	£92,000
Reserves policy	£1,826,000
Free reserves above reserves policy	£89,341

*(directors will designate this figure to meet the commitment of £700 000 to underwrite the DBE grant should the need arise in 2025/26)*

# Thank You





# **NET CARBON ZERO ACTION PLAN UPDATE 2024**

**John Rodwell, Diocesan Environmental Officer  
and Dave Champness, Senior Project Manager**

The Church of England's **ambition** to reduce the carbon emissions from our buildings to net zero is hugely challenging but caring for God's creation and reducing the impact we have upon our planet are fundamental aspects of our Christian mission.

The Anglican communion's fifth mark of mission calls for us to 'strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.'

By 2030 our vision is that our buildings will be bright, warm and welcoming spaces, consuming much less energy and emitting much less carbon than they do now.

+ Flora Winfield – Chair of national Net Zero Programme Board





**Phase 1 (2022-2025)** with £30m support from the Church Commissioners

1. Improve understanding of the carbon footprint across 32,000 buildings (churches + halls, schools, clergy houses, cathedrals, diocesan offices and retreat houses )
2. Undertake energy audit/heat decarbonisation assessments for schools, highest emitting churches/halls, retreat houses and offices
3. Undertake pilot/demonstrator and ‘quick win’ projects

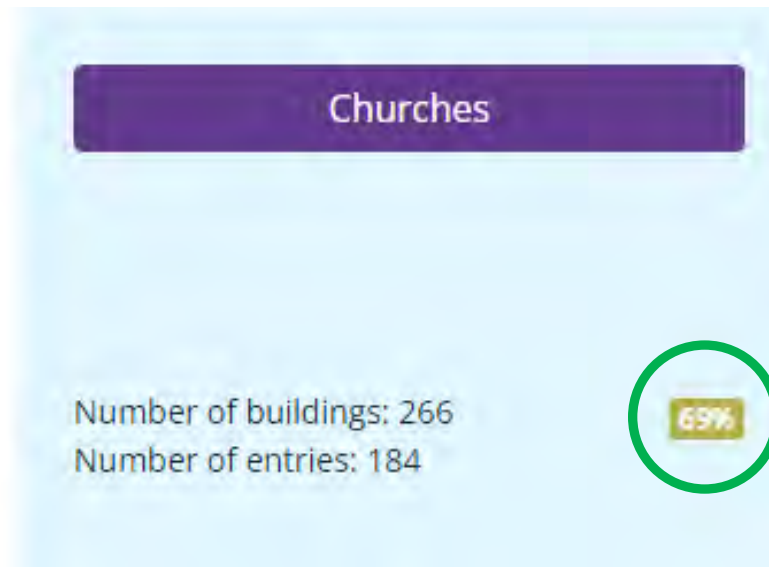
Learn from 1-3 ready for Phase 2 (2026-2028) and Phase 3 (2029-2031)

4. Engagement with Ecodiocese/Ecochurch

# 1. Improve understanding of the carbon footprint across our buildings

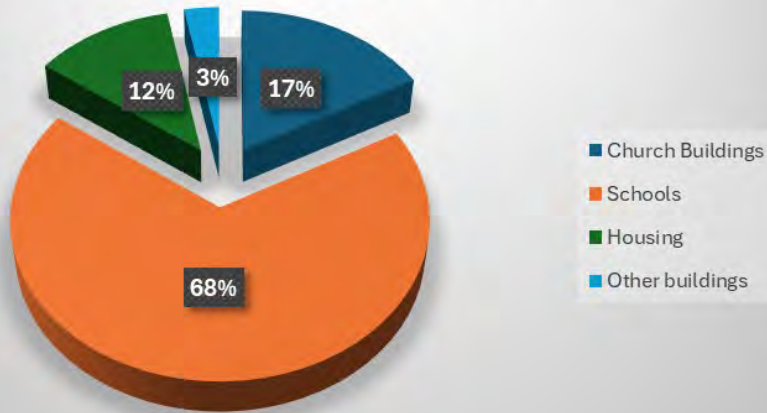


## Energy Footprint Tool

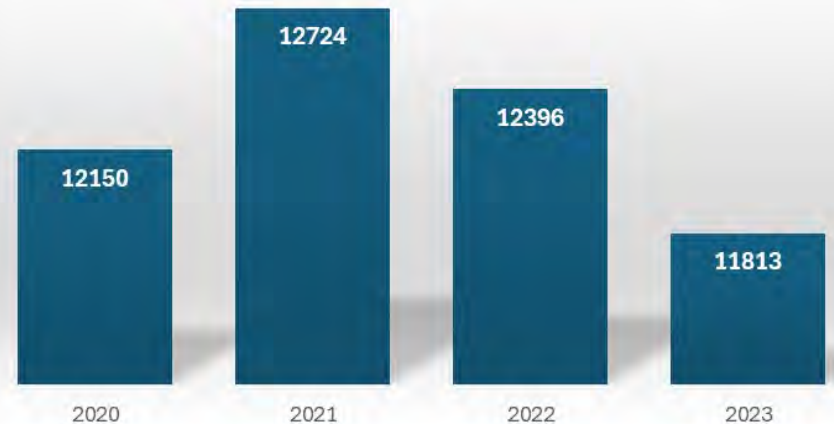


# 1. Improve understanding of the carbon footprint across our buildings

Contribution by building types 2023 data

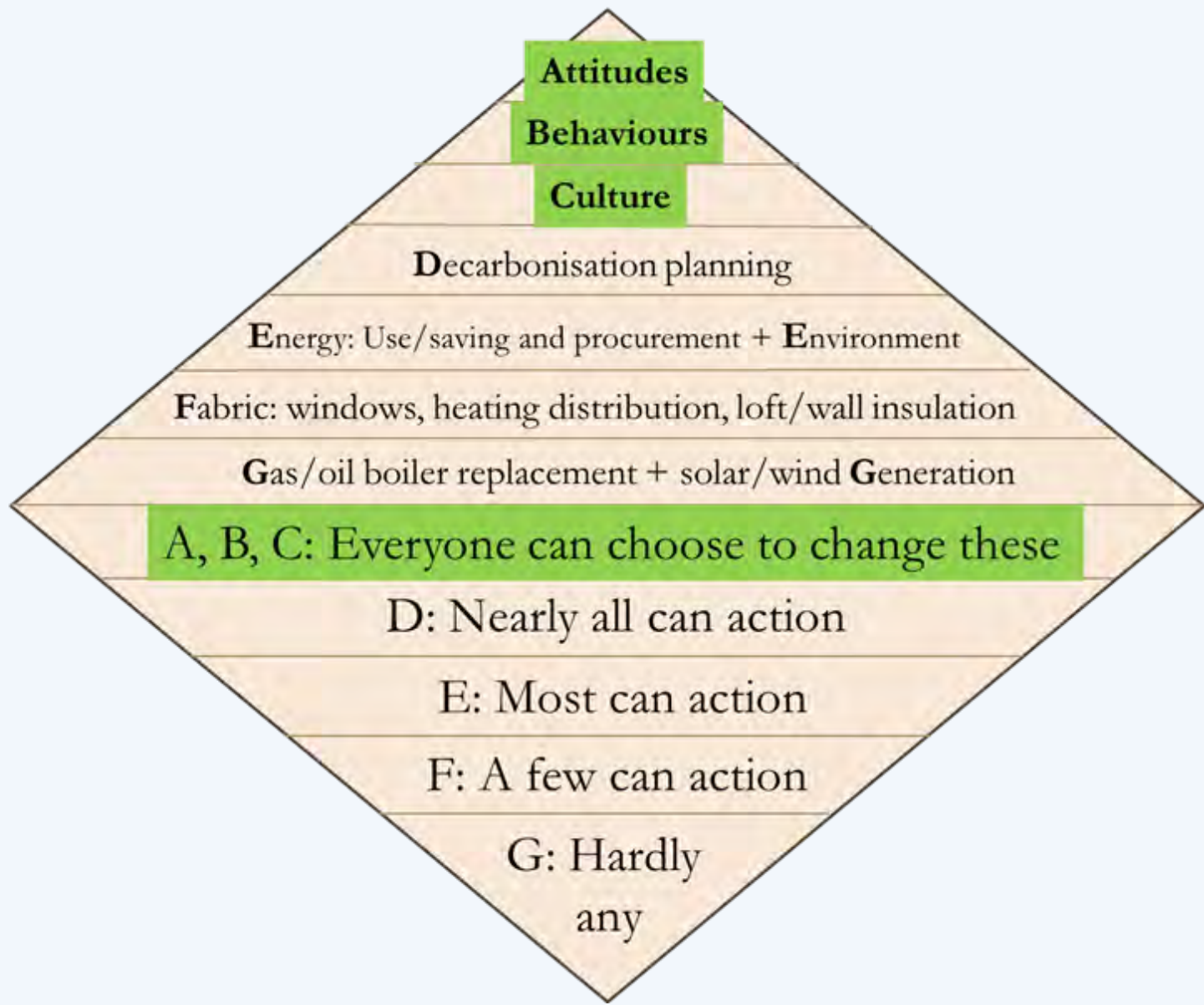


total emissions 2020-2023 (TCO<sub>2</sub>e)



Combined Blackburn Diocese' congregations' personal emissions: **>100,000 tonnes....**

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G



2. Undertake energy audit/heat decarbonisation assessments for schools, highest emitting churches/halls, retreat houses and offices



### 3. Undertake pilot/demonstrator and 'quick win' projects





## 4. Engagement with Ecodiocese/Ecochurch



The Eco Church survey provides a framework to support your church and its leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth. The survey covers five key areas of church life:

- Worship and teaching
- Buildings and energy
- Land and nature
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

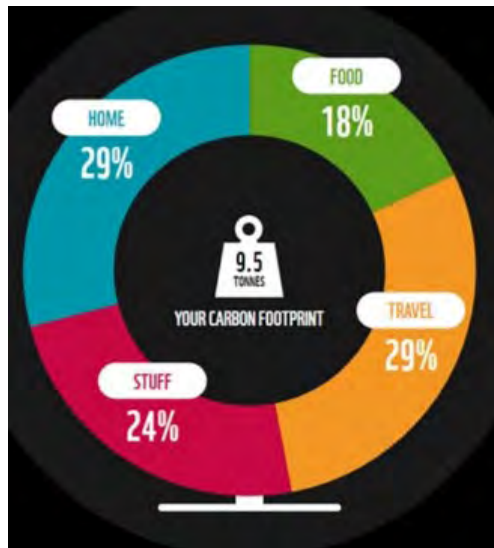
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/eco-church-survey/>

73 churches + cathedral registered: 10 silver & 17 bronze awards

Combined congregation personal emissions: >100,000 tonnes

And finally...what's your personal carbon footprint?

<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/questionnaire>





# **YEAR OF PRAYER AND RENEWAL**

**Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn**

**HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES**



**YEAR OF  
PRAYER FOR  
GROWTH AND RENEWAL**

‘I planted,  
Apollos  
watered, but  
God gave the  
growth.’

1 Corinthians  
3:6



# Delivery: Doing a Few Things Well



- Use the prayer for growth and renewal
- Set up a weekly half hour service or time of prayer for growth and renewal
- Rediscover the ancient spiritual disciplines: walking and praying the bounds of the parish
- Attend one of the Parish Quiet Days at Whalley Abbey

# Parish Quiet Days at Whalley Abbey



- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March
- Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April
- Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October

## **Outline of the Day**

- Opening service of prayer
- Structured and facilitated programme of prayer and reflection
- Lunch
- Prayer walk reflecting on the ruins of Whalley Abbey
- Closing Eucharist

# Inspiring Children and Young People

- Launched at Head Teachers' Conference in September
- Prayer Bingo Poster: three examples of nine different ways of praying from Advent to July
- Bible Podlets episodes
- DBE Children's Conference
- Worship Together: God's big story – one term will focus on prayer
- Year six leavers' service
- Half-termly head teachers' prayer meetings





# Launch and Resources

Resources for children and young people were launched at the Headteachers' conference.

Parish packs will be available to download in November.

For further information, contact:  
Joy Rushton and Sarah Marston-

[joy.rushton@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:joy.rushton@blackburn.anglican.org);  
[sarah.marston@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:sarah.marston@blackburn.anglican.org)



*God of Mission:  
Who alone brings growth to your Church,  
Send your Holy Spirit to give  
Vision to our planning,  
Wisdom to our actions,  
Joy to our worship,  
And power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
In spiritual commitment to you,  
And in service to our local community,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

[Leading your church into growth](#)





# LINK DIOCESE REPORT

**Sam Cheeseman, Bishop's Chaplain**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



THE  
DIOCESE  
OF  
BLACKBURN  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

# Link Diocese Visit

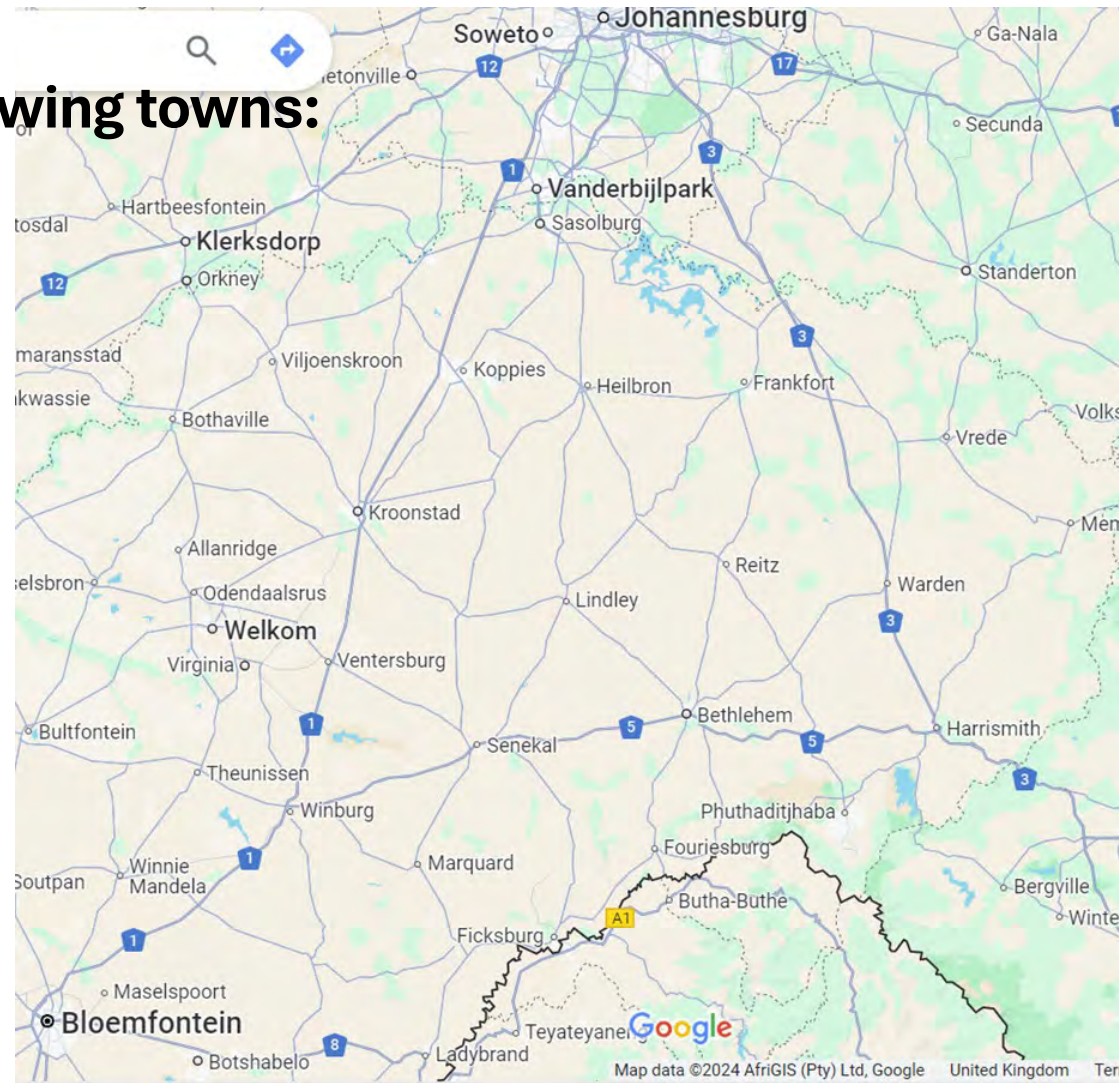
The Free State of South Africa

Visit by Tash Green, Elisabeth Sawle and Joy Rushton

October 2024

## Churches visited in the following towns:

- Sasolburg
- Welkom
- Brandfort
- Bloemfontein
- Thaba N'chu
- Tweespruit
- Westminster
- Ladybrand
- Clocolan
- Hlohlolwane
- Ficksburg
- Bethlehem
- Moodeport
- Phuthaditjhaba
- Harrismith
- Qwa Qwa
- Namahadi



# Snapshots of Schools and Churches



# Sharing the Gospel and our Lives

So, we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

1 Thessalonians 2v8

**Diocesan Synod on 19 October 2024**

**Questions Received**

From	To	Question	Response
<p>Simon Cox (House of Clergy Blackpool Deanery)</p>	<p>Bishop Philip</p>	<p>Following the report submitted to the Synod about the future deployment of retired clergy with PTO across the Diocese, what progress has been made and what part have the Retired Clergy Officers played in progressing the report's recommendations?</p> <p>What steps are being taken to ensure that retired clergy with PTO, identified as a significant part of the Diocesan Clergy workforce, are receiving training, encouragement and representation at all levels of the Diocese?</p>	<p>I would like to answer the two questions from The Rev'd Dr Cox together as they are linked and the answers to each are relevant to both questions.</p> <p>I am hugely appreciative of the work of our two Retired Clergy Officers, the Venerable Anne Dawtry and the Revd David Ward. As we continue to work towards launching a new category of 'PTO Clergy with Additional Responsibilities' in the diocese, the Retired Clergy Officers have had input throughout. They have contributed to all relevant discussions and their voice has been sought and seen as key at every stage.</p> <p>The ministry of clergy with PTO is essential and much celebrated in the diocese and before making as large a change as the one planned we must first ensure that the administrative capacity is in place to support this programme and the clergy who would take part in it.</p> <p>Within the SMMI funding for a CME administrator, there was extra capacity to support our clergy with PTO so that they can in turn support licensed clergy, especially as they will be encouraged to</p>



			<p>take the holidays due to them and go on retreats, sabbaticals and training themselves. This administrator will facilitate the triennial renewal of PTO as well as making sure the right training, support and encouragement is in place so that the ministries of our retired clergy can continue to play a significant part in the mission and ministry of the diocese.</p> <p>Once we have appointed to this post, we can better launch 'PTO Clergy with Additional Responsibilities' and ensure it has the support behind it to succeed.</p>
Susan Procter (House of Laity Pendle Deanery)	Bishop Philip/The Dean	When the Diocese terminates the employment of unsuitable clergy could golden goodbyes stop being paid?	<p>As it is asked of the Dean and me, I presume this question relates to the recent File on 4 report entitled 'The Priest and the Payoff'. Whilst there are many lamentable aspects of what has been reported and many lessons which must be learned by the whole Church, it is misleading to suggest that the priest in question was paid a 'golden goodbye.'</p> <p>It is also important to note that no Diocesan Body (either the DBF, the Bishopric or the Cathedral) made any financial contribution to the resolution of this matter.</p>
Joseph Brookfield (House of Laity Preston Deanery)	Bishop Philip	Is there any diocesan or national church guidance on the optimum size of a parish in terms of either size of local population or surface area and what factors are taken into account when deciding whether a parish or proposed parish is too large?	<p>There is no such guidance.</p> <p>There are roughly 12,500 parishes in the Church of England, varying in population size from a few hundred to 40,000 to 50,000. In the Diocese of Blackburn a rough population range would be from about 4,000 to our largest parishes at just over 20,000.</p>

			<p>As well as population (and population density) there would be a number of factors that could impact the viability of a parish such as: geography, buildings available for ministry, transport links, average attendance at services, number of lay and ordained leaders and so on. Inevitably urban parishes tend to be much larger than rural ones.</p> <p>As these factors can be so varied there is no formula by which the correct size of a parish can be determined and what could be seen as 'too large' in one setting could be 'too small' in another and vice-versa.</p>
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