The Green Journey, Diocesan of Leeds

What is the Green Journey?

The Green Journey is a package of measures to help parishes with their energy bills, including a bulk procurement scheme for fuel. The Diocese is working in partnership with a specialist energy procurement company, Green Energy Consulting (GEC), to offer good value 100% renewable electricity, as well as gas and oil to all churches in the Diocese that choose to join the scheme. This is a unique and pioneering scheme within the Church of England.

How does it work?

Each parish is offered a quote for their electricity, gas or oil by Green Energy Consulting. They can choose to accept it or stay with their existing supplier. Once the parish has given authority to proceed, this switching process is conducted by GEC who contact their existing supplier and move them on to the new supplier. GEC monitor the energy market and seek out the best value tariff for a bulk purchase.

Who is the scheme for?

Parishes in the Leeds Archdeaconry were offered the Green Journey as part of a pilot from March 2015, this was extended to Bradford Archdeaconry from August 2015. The Green Journey has now been rolled out to Richmond and Craven in April 2016, Wakefield in November 2016 and Huddersfield area from February 2017. A domestic switching service will also be available soon for clergy housing, members of the congregation or your local community.

What are the distinctive features of the Green Journey?

Moving away from fossil fuels

We were concerned to assist parishes respond to the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions. Greenhouse gases keep extra energy in the atmosphere, causing increasingly extreme weather, rising sea levels and changing our seasons. This is very costly for all of us and disastrous for our global and generational neighbours. So we need to reduce activities that produce these gases. We have, therefore, stipulated that the electricity must be generated from a 100% renewable source. This gives an average church a 30% reduction in carbon emissions. Bulk purchasing means that, for most churches, this “green electricity” is better value than their existing tariff. GEC are also working towards providing a competitively priced green gas tariff (bio gas is generated form anaerobic digesters and landfill sites, it is a non-fossil fuel source of gas).

Customer Service

Green Energy Consulting is providing an unprecedented service working with each individual parish. After an introductory letter form the Archdeacon to the Clergy and Church Treasurer, every Treasurer is contacted.
personally. A visit is arranged to each parish to explain the scheme, check the meters and conduct an energy audit of the church and any associated buildings. A quote is prepared and the church can then opt to switch fuel suppliers if they wish to. A complementary energy audit and VAT check is completed for every church, regardless of whether the PCC choose to switch with GEC.

**VAT rebates**

GEC also check the level of VAT being paid by the church and claim a rebate for them if they have been miss charged at the higher rate of 20%. To date a total of £29,190 has been reclaimed on behalf of 31 churches in the Diocese.

**Energy Audits**

An Energy Audit Report is written for each church after the visit. The report outlines where the churches current energy is being used and recommends efficiency saving measures. For example highlighting the inefficiency of an old gas boiler, which, year on year, uses larger quantities of gas to heat the church than a new efficient one would.

**How effective is the Green Journey?**

The key successes for the Green Journey so far are:

- The significant number of churches that are now supplied with a renewable electricity tariff. This is a substantial step forward in reducing our greenhouse emissions and will feed into the development of any future Diocesan or parish carbon reduction strategy.
- The level of annual financial savings achieved for churches.
- The energy efficiency information from the Energy Audits should equip every church to review its energy management strategy.
- The audits and the energy consumption data will also enable the Diocese to offer more strategic support to parishes.

**Summary of savings and emissions figures for churches in the Green Journey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Figures</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churches in Scheme</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity Annual Savings</td>
<td>£34,129</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Annual Savings</td>
<td>£44,196</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Annual Saving</td>
<td>£78,326</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ Reduction (tonnes)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>37%</td>
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**How is the Diocese managing the scheme?**

The Joint Diocesan Secretaries have oversight of the scheme. GEC meet with each Archdeacon to report on how it is progressing in their area. On a day to day level, Jemima Parker, Environment Officer and Ian Fletcher, Church and the World Chair, work closely with GEC.

**How is this different from the Church of England Parish Buying Energy Project?**

In some ways the Green Journey it is similar to Parish Buying, in that the procurement is conducted by an intermediary company (Parish Buying work with the company 2Buy2). However, Parish Buying does not have the capacity to offer a personalised service with a visit and energy audit for every parish. This pioneering project is now being explored by other Diocese.

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