

Since the last Eco Church Magazine Article, we have, as I hope many of you know, been awarded a Silver Eco Church Award. However, this does not mean we can now rest on our laurels – at the very least we have to maintain what we have been doing but, ideally, we need to continue to take further action to lessen our impact on the environment and set a target of applying for a Gold award in two to three years' time.

The Church of England and Zero Net Carbon

As I am sure you are aware, the General Synod voted in February 2020 for the whole of the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The vote recognised that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation and a fundamental injustice.

The Church of England defines Net Zero Carbon as the reduction as far as possible of all in-scope carbon emissions (from the oil, gas and electricity we use in our buildings and petrol and diesel transport) and the removal of an equivalent amount of carbon from the atmosphere for the remaining in-scope emissions by use of accredited offsetting schemes. Whilst much of the focus is on the carbon footprint of Church Buildings, we as individuals are encouraged to undertake a personal carbon footprint audit.

So how can we do this? A useful and simple way is to access the WWF Footprint Calculator ([www.https://footprint.wwf.org.uk](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk)) but there are many other footprint calculators available.

If you access this, you are then asked to answer questions in the following categories:

- Food (4 questions)
- Travel (7 questions)
- Home (8 questions)
- Stuff (7 questions) – this includes things like how much we spend on clothes, phone, internet and TV contracts, and what types of waste we recycle.

All the questions are multiple choice, so no input of data is required (the data corresponding to all the answers have been provided by research carried out at two UK universities). For example, the first question asks: "How best would you describe your diet?" and the choices are:

Meat in every meal	Meat in some meals	No beef
Meat very rarely	Vegetarian	Vegan

I have recently done this survey myself and was shocked to find that my carbon footprint is significantly above the national average of 8.4 tonnes per year. It is also possible to see the average carbon footprint of your local area. In my case – and I suspect for many of us - that is for households in the WA5 postcode where the average is even higher.

Having calculated my carbon footprint, the challenge I now face is to reduce it. There are hints in each category as to how that may be done. I have also downloaded the WWF app which provides challenges to help reduce our carbon footprints by initially doing various challenges

every week for a month, such as a cold fast wash (clothes not self!) so that they become a habit.

Wouldn't it be good if together we could reduce the average carbon footprint in WA5?

Margaret Emsley

On behalf of the ECO Church Team