

# The Cool Church Toolkit

This is a resource sheet for Operation Noah, the climate change campaign. Further modules can be downloaded from [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah) (your local library will be able to help you if you do not have internet access at home), or by telephone from 01949 861516. Operation Noah is a project of the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Christian Ecology Link.



## Cutting your congregation's greenhouse effect

Global warming is the most serious environmental problem facing the world today, and the chances are your church is part of it. But you can be part of the solution too. This document shows you how. Operation Noah's *Cool Church Toolkit* helps your church become a witness to God's love for the earth.

Carbon dioxide, a 'greenhouse gas', is the single biggest cause of our climate crisis, and cutting of it emissions is the single most useful thing we can do to reduce the threat that climate change poses.

To become a low-carbon church, you will need to:

1. **clean up your electricity:** switch to a supply from renewable sources that do not make the problem worse
2. **count the carbon:** Work out just how much your church contributes to climate change using the simple 'carbon calculator' below.
3. **cut the carbon:** We've included a list of top tips and links which will enable your church council or clergy to reduce your church's impact on the planet
4. **keep an eye** on your church's emissions over time.

Your church might even be able to install technology which helps you generate your own energy – what an example that would set!

Operation Noah has a wide range of additional material to help your church put a stop to climate change. You are welcome to order campaign leaflets and download ideas for services and meetings free of charge.

The actions suggested here fit into the EcoCongregation programme. That means you can use what you do with the *Cool Church Toolkit* to count towards your EcoCongregation award.

For further advice or information, feel free to call the Operation Noah helpline on 01252 849904.

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## 1. CLEAN UP YOUR ELECTRICITY

Ask the person who pays your church's bills for the last full year's electricity bills (and also for 1995, if the records are that good!). While you are at it, ask for gas and heating oil bills as well, which you will use for section 3.

Send a copy of the electricity bills to some suppliers of 'green energy' asking for a quote. Operation Noah recommends:

- **Good Energy** at Monkton Park Offices, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1ER
- **Green Energy UK** at 9, Church Street, Ware, Herts, SG12 9EG.

Other green suppliers are listed on the following websites:

- [www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press\\_for\\_change/choose\\_green\\_energy/index.html#league\\_table](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press_for_change/choose_green_energy/index.html#league_table)
- [www.greenelectricity.co.uk](http://www.greenelectricity.co.uk)

You may find the quotes you get back are more expensive. Non-renewable electricity is cheap partly because price does not reflect the harm caused to the environment and to future generations. Your church council or officers will need to decide whether the church should pay any 'ethical premium'.

For more guidance on persuading your church to switch to green electricity, including a model report for your church council, visit [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah), and look at *Ethical Energy for your Church* and *Choosing Ethical Energy*.

## 2. COUNT THE CARBON

The *Cool Church* Carbon Calculator, set out in Box 1, will give you a rough estimate of emissions, which you can use for comparison purposes over time. It covers all energy consumption for which the church is responsible, including any hall or community facility, and fuel used for car travel to church.

It is worth estimating how much this consumption has increased or decreased since 1995. You might even be lucky enough to have bills going that far back. Under the Kyoto Treaty, Britain has to cut its emissions by 12% between 1995 and 2012 – and make much deeper cuts after that. Would your church be on target for the 12% cut?

### *Using the Carbon Calculator*

Before calculating your church's greenhouse gas emissions you will need to:

- look again at the electricity and heating bills for last year, and 1995 if you have them
- undertake a snapshot audit of travel habits on a typical Sunday, using the material on the next page.

When you have these figures, put them in the 'Figure for Year' column in Box 1, multiply by the figure in the 'Multiplier' column, and add up the totals to reveal the total tonnage of carbon dioxide for which your church is responsible.



## 4. KEEP AN EYE

Once you have introduced your energy management measures, keep things under regular review. You could do an annual review of how far you've got with the action plan, together with an update of your Carbon Calculator for the year. A good time to do this would be a month or so before your church's annual report is published or an annual meeting is held, so that you can publish the results. There is no better way than ensuring that everyone takes their share of responsibility for your church's energy.

## 5. AND THERE'S MORE ...

Churches can generate their own carbon-free energy. The main technologies likely to be suitable for churches are:

1. Solar water heating panels. Laid on a south-facing roof, these could meet most of your hot water needs
2. Photovoltaic panels. Large arrays of panels can even generate enough electricity to sell on to an electricity supplier
3. Ground source heat pumps. These use a long pipe under the church grounds to extract underground heat
4. Small-scale wind turbines.

Some churches have already successfully installed renewable energy installations. In practice there are a number of issues to consider, such as permissions to install the kit, and the likelihood of economic return. Work is being done nationally to make these decisions easier for churches and conservation bodies. For the time being, solar water heating panels on a church hall are likely to be the most straightforward and cost-effective option.

*Whatever you do, as a 'cool church' you will be leading your local community by example. So don't forget to get some publicity out of it. Local media are always looking for stories, and you might have just what they are looking for!*

### Box 3 – Top tips for cool churches

All of these ideas apply to any other buildings which your church may manage, such as the church hall. As you consider each tip, make a note of how you would go about it, who should be asked to do it, and what long-term arrangements it might need. Remember you might need to discuss alterations with a denominational official.

- Use the building efficiently – don't heat the whole church if you don't have to
- Cure draughts. Search for them on a windy day. Then draught-proof doors and windows, leaving enough ventilation to keep the building dry
- Consider installing cushions for comfort and warmth inside the church
- Install low-energy lightbulbs wherever possible
- Set heating controls so that comfort is reached as people arrive, and they turn off as the service ends
- Discuss with organisers of other user groups if they could schedule their activities for Saturdays or Mondays, so that the building is already warmed
- Take advice on the scope for installing insulation from the church's architect or Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- Set up a lift share scheme, and promote it not only to people with infirmities and disabilities, but also able-bodied member of the church
- Install cycle racks

*Much of this advice is abridged from CEL's leaflet Energy Use in Church Buildings. This, and a more detailed briefing paper by John Kibble, can be ordered from Christian Ecology Link Publications, 40 The Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JG.*

### Box 4 – Sample action plan

Energy and Emissions Action Plan for Christ Church premises.

| One-off actions                                | By whom      | When   |
|--|--------------|--|
| Replace tungsten with low-energy bulbs         | AB           | As they blow   |
| Draught-strip west door                        | PQ           |  |
| Seek permission for cycle racks inside gate    | AB           | After Ch. Council resolution 24.6.05                           |
| Commission the energy manager for her ministry | Minister, FG | Family Service on Environment Sunday (1 <sup>st</sup> in June) |
| ... etc  |              |  |

| Recurrent actions                                      | By whom     | Frequency | When                |
|--|-------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Switch on heating 15 hours before first Sunday service | ST          | Weekly    | Saturday p.m.       |
| Switch off heating at last Sunday service              | Sidesperson | Weekly    | Before Evg. worship |
| Switch on organ trace-heater                           | PQ          | Annually  | End of September    |
| ... etc  |             |           |                     |
| ...  |             |           |                     |