

Towards Carbon Neutral Churches in Craven

St Mary's: Countdown to Carbon Zero

Background to the project

Making Our Church Carbon Neutral

The Church of England has a target to be net carbon zero by 2030.

That's a tough challenge but a vital one if we are to play our part in making a sustainable world for our children to grow up in.



St Mary's church is part of a group of 5 churches collaborating as 'Towards Carbon Neutral Churches in Craven' which are sharing their approaches to this goal - you can find a lot of information about this wider project [here](#). Together we have made this video, which we hope gives some background to this project.

In June 2022 St Mary's Church Council adopted a detailed [plan](#) to make our church Carbon Neutral by 2025. You can see the resolutions which were adopted [here](#). The implementation of these is being steered by our Zero Group with involvement from the people of our two villages of Embsay and Eastby.

Most of our carbon emissions at St Mary's - 82% - come from our gas boiler, so we will need to change our heating system in order to get to net carbon zero. Our plan outlines our researched options for this together with other steps which we are taking.

We anticipate that most of the funding for a new heating system will come from grant awarding charities together with some match funding from ourselves. We have set up a fundraising group which is investigating these possibilities.

We see our work as being a '**Countdown to Zero**', and view this as something to benefit the wider village community. Here are some of the activities we have been involved with as part of our Countdown...

Fundraising concert: 10 September 2023

A concert was given by Perfect Fourth Saxophone Quartet on Sunday 10 September, which was very well attended and raised funds for and awareness of our electric carbon zero heating project.



Report to congregation and PCC meeting: 27 August 2023

We gave a report to the congregation and PCC about the proposed plans for carbon neutral electric heating and we had a discussion about the proposals.



Electric Heating

As part of our move towards carbon zero, we are investigating how to replace our gas boiler with electric 'person-centred' heating. We are drawing up a plan.



Diocesan Open Day: Saturday 18 March 2023

We hosted an Open Day on 18th March 2023, postponed for a week because of heavy snow! There were two sessions, open to anyone from across the Diocese. More than 40 people, from 25 parishes across the Diocese of Leeds, came to see and experience the new electric heaters.



Each session began with an account of how this rural church community has progressed from almost total ignorance to having a plan for implementation. The key message was that there is no single one-size-fits-all solution and that it is vital to carefully consider the local context: the building and its heritage dimension, the pattern of usage and the involvement of the community. The available resources of people, skill and know-how are likely to affect the rate of progress but do not need to be blocking factors. There are various small, low-cost steps which may be taken quite quickly, and which can make a difference and help to get things going.

Following the presentation, there was a chance to progress between five types of heating: two pew-mounted and three wall or overhead examples. At this point the participants were able to share their own experiences, their progress and frustrations as well quizzing the St Mary's group on the details of the project there.

The Open Day was reported in the [Leeds Diocesan News](#) on 30 March 2023:

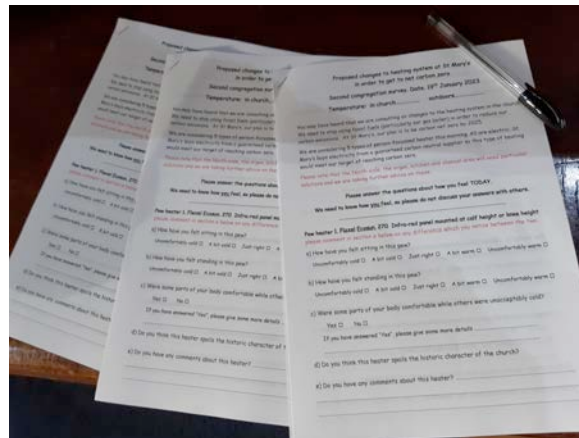
The screenshot shows the website for 'Loving. Living. Learning.' under 'THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Diocese of Leeds'. The navigation menu includes 'Who we are', 'How we can help', and 'Our Christian Faith'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Homepage > Who we are > News and Communications'. The article header features a search icon, 'LOG IN', and 'SIGN UP >'. The main article is titled 'Try our Pew Heaters' and is dated '11TH MARCH 2023' from '10.30am - 12pm' at 'St Mary's Church, Embsay with Eastby'. The article text reads: 'An Open Morning, for visitors from other churches across the Diocese, to try out a number of electric person-centred heaters.' A 'SHARE' button is visible above the article title. A 'SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT' logo is in the bottom left corner of the article preview.

Electric heating trial (Winter 2022-23)

We have held a trial of five different kinds of electric church heaters, as the next phase in our project for finding a replacement for our carbon-emitting gas boiler. These heaters have been selected by members of the St Mary's Carbon Zero team, based on 18 months of research, attendance at national Church of England and other webinars and speaking to other churches in similar situations.

We believe that we have selected five types of heater which are suitable for St Mary's, but it is very important that the whole church community takes part in the final selection process. So, we have been carrying out a trial of heaters. First, we asked everyone to comment on the existing gas heating, and then carried out trials of the new electric heaters throughout January and February, at times when the gas heating is not running, with varying outside temperatures. At each session, participants were asked to complete a short survey. This is so that we can assess which heaters are judged to be the most effective for our circumstances, with an acceptable visual impact. We will also be able to make some broad estimates of running costs. If you would like to take part in the trial, please contact the leaders of the Carbon Zero team via the Vicar, Marion Russell, or the Carbon Zero team on tcncc2021@gmail.com.

On 9 February 2023, we had a short service, using only the electric heaters, and again asked everyone to complete a short survey. This was followed by a discussion about possible ways forward:



The following heaters have been selected for the trial:

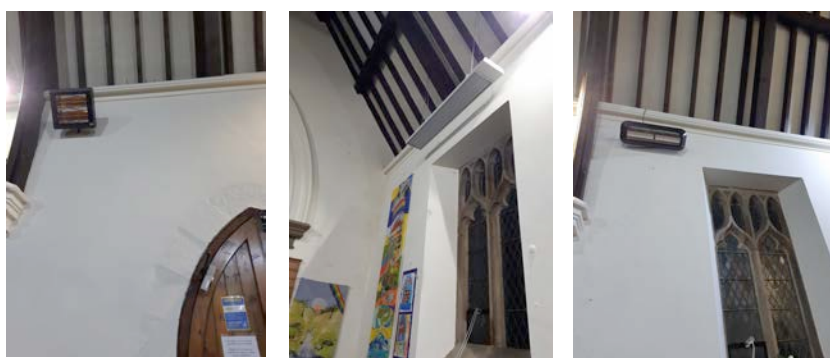
Pew heating panel



Underpew heater



Wall-mounted heaters



Twelve volunteers took part in our first survey of the trial heaters on 19 January 2023 - thank you all!



Before this trial, we carried out an [assessment](#) of the congregation's view of our current gas-fired heating in December, when 95% of the congregation reported that they felt uncomfortably cold, and no-one said they felt warm. We have also identified some areas of draughts, which appear to be caused by the current fan heaters. We will use all this data, together with the results of our electric heating trial, and with the help of a professional church heating specialist, we will plan a suitable new electric heating system.

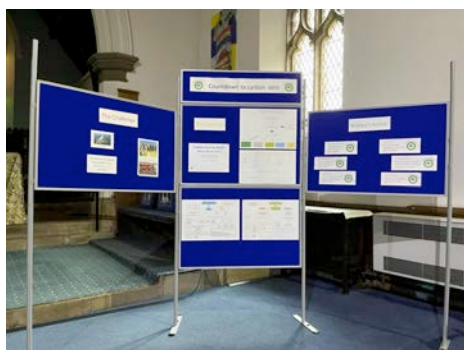
Fundraising concert: We held a fundraising concert with **Perfect Fourth Saxophone Quartet** on Sunday 18 September 2022.



As part of the season of **Creationtide**, on 18 September 2022, Peter and Diana took part in the morning service, talking with Marion about climate change and what we are doing in our carbon zero project to reduce our carbon footprint at St Mary's.



Yorkshire Churches Day, 10 September 2022: An Eco Exhibition at St Mary's Embsay with Eastby includes a display about the Countdown to Carbon Zero as well as information about Eco Church work. The exhibition will continue throughout Creationtide 2022, until 4 October.



We took part in the **Climate Emergency and Greening Skipton** event at Skipton Town Hall on 6 September 2022, with a stand about the work of TCNCC and the Zero Group at St Mary's Embsay with Eastby.



We talked briefly about the project at the **Music in the Meadow** event on Sunday 10 July 2022 and had a stand at the **Embsay with Eastby fete** on Saturday 16 July. Thank you if you came to one of these events!



If you would like to join our group, or if you have expertise which you would like to share with us or, indeed, if you just want to find out more about what we are doing, we would be delighted to hear from you! Please contact us on tcncc2021@gmail.com. Or chat to one of us:

Diana Linford, Lesley Higson and Peter Edwards