

## **DIOCESE OF HALLAM**

### **Diocesan Commitment to Laudato Si**

The Diocese of Hallam is committed to Pope Francis' call and challenge to ecological conversion as outlined in Laudato Si.

We are taking small steps, and we have taken some small steps to respond to the call and challenge, and are committed to ongoing conversion.

We are at the early stages of forming a cross diocesan environmental group that will prepare our plan for the future. Under the diocesan environmental lead there will be representatives from the Trustees, the deans, the schools, the Historical Churches Commission and the Justice and Peace Commission. They will be tasked with advising us on the practical steps that are needed on the journey to becoming carbon neutral.

We have started collating the data on our energy use around the diocese. This is complete for the church buildings, but further work is needed on the school estates. We have not engaged professionals to undertake decarbonisation surveys as for a small diocese the costs are prohibitive. I understand that there are ongoing conversations among the Financial Secretaries about sharing the costs of surveys for different types of churches. For example the survey undertaken for a 1960's brick built medium size church, whilst not identical across England and Wales, will have common characteristics in terms of a decarbonisation plan and could be shared. It could be that a repository of surveys is created for dioceses to share?

The diocese has encouraged all churches to move to the Interdiocesan Fuel Management (IFM) scheme. This has been very successful and we can confirm that 100% of electricity is from renewable sources. We were particularly pleased when 80% of gas use came from non-fossil fuel sources and hope that it is possible to return to a similar position, contracts permitting.

We have encouraged our schools to engage with IFM. Unfortunately, whilst the schools may be supportive of the principle, financial pressures of the cost of fuel and reduced school budgets have resulted in little traction in this direction. The appointment of school representatives on the net zero group will help keep this on the schools' agenda.

The Diocese of Hallam already has a focus on the impact of our actions on the environment. As part of any plan submitted by a parish to make changes to a building we are assessing the environmental impact and are encouraging the parishes to be creative in making modifications that lower our carbon footprint. For example;

- The Cathedral Church of St Marie is located in Sheffield City Centre. The Cathedral is connected to Sheffield Energy Recovery Facility. This allows all of the Cathedral's underfloor heating to be provided from waste products in a tightly controlled environment.
- The Diocese provided financial support to a parish to install direct pew heating, rather than simply replacing gas fired boilers.
- We have a current project to renovate a large church hall where alternative building materials and additional insulation have been used, beyond what is required under building regulations, to provide a higher energy performance rating.
- The curial offices built in the 1900's as a school has had a pitched roof fitted made from recycled steel tiles. This has allowed for extensive insulation to be applied. In addition modifications to the heating system provides targeted zonal heating. As a result of these measures there has been a significant reduction in energy use.

The Diocese acknowledges that there is much more to do and would welcome advice and the experience of other dioceses. The Guardians of Creation have been invited to address the Trustees and the environmental group as part of that learning process.

+ *Ralph Heskott CSR*

Bishop of Hallam