



Towards Net Zero

Inspired by the environmental focus of our District Synod a couple of years ago, the Wharfedale and Aireborough Circuit has invested prayer, time, energy, and finances on developing our eco-credentials as part of the “Sustaining Hope” aspect of our renewed Circuit Mission Statement.

We initially developed and adopted a Circuit Environmental Policy to guide our decision-making, and encouraged all our churches to embark on the Eco Church Awards scheme developed by A Rocha. A first step in this process was facilitating free energy audits for all of our churches, working in partnership with Groundwork Energy Management Services, alongside a review of our Circuit Grants Policy, to offer financial support for any church wishing to address issues highlighted for improvement in their energy audit. 75% of churches in our circuit have now been awarded Eco-Church Awards.

We have also begun the process of installing solar panels, storage batteries and electric vehicle (EV) charging points at all of our Manses, where this is feasible and effective. The cost of this work will be between £10,000 and £12,000 per manse, but installing both solar panels and EV charging points at the same time has enabled us to get the charging points for free! Since November, they have been installed at two Manses, with two more in the pipeline. The Burley Manse was the first to be updated in November 2023, and across the winter the yield from the solar panels has been 570kwh, which is equivalent to a 42% decrease in energy consumption from the national grid. The lifespan of the panels is between 20 and 25 years, and between the reduction in consumption and the export tariff paid by the energy company for energy exported to them, we are expecting to recoup the outlay within 12 years, which means they will comfortably pay for themselves as well as decrease our carbon footprint. We have been able to use money held in our Circuit Model Trust Fund from the previous sale of redundant assets to enable our ongoing journey towards Net Zero.

“I am delighted that our Circuit Trustees are using our new Circuit Mission Statement and Action Plan to implement changes to our ways of working and management of property in order to help us on the journey towards net zero”, said Revd Tim Perkins, Superintendent of the Wharfedale & Aireborough Circuit. “The installation of solar panels and EV charging points at Manses is just a first step to implementing environmental policy and expressing our concern

for the care of God's creation. It is a win:win scenario all round as it reduces energy costs for our Ministers, expense costs for our Circuit and it will bring money into the Circuit and improve the saleability of Manses in the future if needs be. Of course the main benefit comes in expressing our mission to sustain hope, care for creation and set an example for others.”

For further information, please contact our Superintendent Minister, Revd Tim Perkins (revtmp1971@gmail.com) or Circuit Manager, Juliana Caulkwell (circuitmanager@wandamethodists.org.uk).