

## How is my church impacting on the environment?

### Report from the Training Courses across the Diocese

The answer is we don't know! And if we don't know we don't know what to improve first. It's really hard to know what environmental impact your church activities are having unless we have some way of measuring them. That's why participants at the training course found out how to use the first ever Church Carbon Calculator.

This autumn four groups across the Diocese have participated in a two session training programme looking firstly, at why caring for creation is a gospel issue and then, exploring how to use the carbon calculator tool to start to measure their churches' carbon footprints.

"The course has been challenging, thought provoking and fascinating" said one Bradford Area participant. While someone from the Ripon group commented "I liked the practical examples of carbon emissions from foods, church processes and actions. As well as the chance for questions and comments from us all." And another added "I liked the worship and the games."



The Church Carbon Calculator is a new tool that Diocese of Leeds Environmental Group have had developed by leading experts Small World Consulting, part of Lancaster University. Andy Ive, Area Environment Champion for Ripon West, who has driven the project said "If we are going to reduce the carbon emissions of the church and meet the national and Diocesan targets we need to know what our carbon footprint starting point is and where our greenhouse gas emission comes from. It's all part of caring for all of God's creation."

In order to use the calculator participants have been collecting data about different aspects of church life which all generate greenhouse gases: energy use; congregational and staff travel; food served at church; other church expenditure; and waste.

"I was quite daunted at first by the spreadsheets that make up the calculator, but once I started it was easy to input the information" commented one Ripon Area participant. What surprised someone in the Wakefield group was "the number of conversations gathering the data started at my church. Explaining what I was doing and why helped us talk about what we can all do about climate change."



"Part of the process is helping Parish Environment Reps and others on the course to develop their carbon literacy," said Jemima Parker, Diocesan Environment Officer "as we move to a low carbon economy we need to understand the carbon value of our

choices, in the same way that we might weigh the financial cost when we make decisions. With a little bit of knowledge about greenhouse gases, *Should we serve a chick pea or lamb stew at the church lunch?* becomes an easy choice and one way we can witness to and show God's love, for our neighbours."

Now the participating churches will be finishing off their data gathering and we hope to have some initial results in January. These will be the first comprehensive church carbon emissions figures in the country. We are currently working with the national C of E Environmental Campaign to see how the Diocese of Leeds Church Carbon Calculator could be deployed nationally.

For those who missed the course Andy and Jemima will be running it again in 2019. A follow on "Carbon conversations" course is also planned for next year.