

# Scottish Episcopal Church Net Zero Progress Update (2025)

*By Paul Williams – Net Zero Delivery Director*

The organisational boundary for Net Zero by 2030 was established by the Provincial Environment Group (PEG) in the Net Zero Action Plan (2023-2030) (NZAP). This plan was presented at the General Synod of 2023 with a motion '*affirm and agree*' net zero as the direction of travel for the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC).

This Net Zero Action Plan (2023-2030) therefore provides a pathway for the church to follow. It prioritises areas that should be addressed at Provincial, Diocesan, and Charge level and proposes 'Desired Outcomes' that provide some milestones to measure progress. The hope is that these provide the SEC with a practical ability to monitor, report, and implement action in a credible and transparent manner.

Over the course of 2023 into early 2024, a Provincial Net Zero Team was created consisting of the Net Zero Delivery Director, Sustainability Officer, Clean Energy Advisor, Empowerment Coordinator, Innovation Coordinator, and Carbon Data and Projects Officer. This team has been working to build the movement of net zero, using wherever possible, the NZAP as the principle pathway.

## *How Net Zero Is to be Achieved?*

In simple terms, net zero is achieved when the SEC as an organisation has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions footprint to such an extent that the irreducible emissions can be ethically, sustainably and responsibly mitigated by other means. Achieving this balance is to achieve net zero. This is done by **measuring** what is produced, **reducing** this by 90% against the baseline, and **offsetting** the remaining 10% of what can't be reduced.

Further detail on how this is defined and achieved is outlined in the NZAP.

The organisational boundary for the SEC includes Scopes 1 (Direct emissions from operating our properties and staff travel), Scopes 2 (indirect emissions from purchased energy) and reimbursable work-related travel of Scope 3.

This report will outline the progress in each of these Scopes and provide a summary of net zero activity across the Province.

**Measuring Emissions**, including the results of the Energy Footprint Tool is covered from pages 2-6

**Reducing Emissions**, covers a summary of all the activities of the Net Zero Team on **engagement** (pages 7-10) and their experience of **engagement** across all the Dioceses (pages 11-13).

The report concludes with some **Emissions forecasting** by the Carbon Projects and Data Officer and some final remarks (pages 14-15)

# Scope 1 & 2 : Direct emissions from operating properties, purchasing energy, and staff/clergy travel

## Measuring Emissions of Properties

The SEC does not currently have a Provincial level method of determining the individual activities of charges when it comes to net zero interventions and energy efficiency improvements in their properties. In terms of tracking progress, it is difficult to measure the performance of these buildings in terms of their efficiency and evaluating that at a Diocesan or Provincial level. The only direct means of gathering emissions data from buildings is from their energy use.

At the start of 2024, SEC did not have a database that provided a list and overview of properties in one place, therefore this needed to be collected from the Dioceses to create a Provincial property database. Dioceses were able to share their data from the recent Register of Controlled Interests, which has made it possible to piece these together to give a picture of the full SEC property portfolio.

This is as follows:

288 Churches & Halls

6 Offices

175 Residential Properties (Rectories and Retirement Properties)

32 Other Buildings.

## Measuring Emissions of Purchased Energy:

The SEC completed negotiations with the Church of England to licence use of the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) which is the online tool used by the Church of England and Church in Wales. This tool takes the details from utility bills and uses the UK Government conversion factors to produce an emissions report for each property.

EFT Provincial Roll-out Timeline:

- **September 2023 – July 2024:** The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) negotiated a license for the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) from the Church of England to track its carbon footprint.
- **July 2024:** EFT was ready after legal agreements were signed.
- **August 2024:** Vestry Treasurers were notified first about the EFT roll-out.
- **September 2024:** EFT was rolled out to all seven dioceses.
- **October 2024:** Vestry Treasurers, Vestry Secretaries, and Clergy received updated EFT information and feedback responses. They were also informed of the reporting deadline (end of November 2024).
- **November 2024:** The Net Zero Team supported submissions until the deadline.
- **December 2024:** Data analysis began by the Carbon Projects and Data Officer.
- **January 2025:** Data reporting
- **February 2025:** EFT reopened for 2024 data and will reopen annually in February going forward.

The EFT results provide a snapshot of emissions from SEC properties in 2023 (as of January 2025) and includes churches, halls, offices and others buildings. The response rate from charges was higher than anticipated (68%), with thanks owed to the charges who provided the data. The SEC now has a measurement tool for energy consumption at Provincial level.

# SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH Energy Footprint Tool

Infographic summary of the recorded emissions of the Province

2023

Data as of January 2025

## RETURN

278 charges, were included in the EFT alongside Provincial and Diocesan Offices and auxiliary buildings



## EFT COMPLETION



188 Charges responded or had data supplied by their Diocese

**1,407 TONNES**

of CO<sub>2</sub>e was recorded for properties across the Province

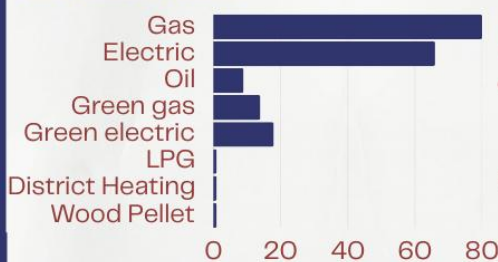
It is possible to estimate around **2,400-2,500 TONNES** in total for SEC charges and offices



### WHAT'S MISSING?

- Accurate data from **all** charges and office buildings
- Emissions of clergy housing
- Province wide staff and clergy travel emissions

## HEATING SOURCES



**The top 10 recorded emitters produce 32% of Provincial emissions**

While 21% of charges, mostly in rural areas, produce less than 1 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e\*

**16% of recorded charges are using green energy for heating**

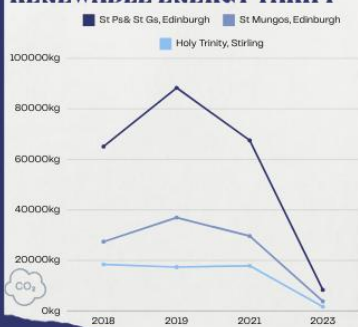
Only 2 charges reported having solar panels

Data from charges that did not submit a response could change these percentages considerably

### Changing to renewable tariff

62 charges that use non-renewable electricity and gas could cut their emissions by switching to renewable energy tariffs, thereby potentially reducing Province wide charge emissions by up to 908 tonnes

## IMPACT OF CHANGING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY TARIFF



## BIG EMITTERS

Lack of data from the biggest emitters leaves an incomplete picture

Five Cathedrals did not respond

Most of the data returned was from smaller charges leaving an estimated **1000t** of unreported emissions

### Key Insights:

#### • Strategic Planning:

Sufficient data allows for better strategic planning and support for charges in reducing their carbon footprint. The data helps prioritise support for those already on their way to reducing their footprint.

#### • Diocesan Data:

High response rates in Edinburgh (92%) and moderate in other dioceses (65-75%), except Glasgow and Galloway (less than 50%). This data supports Dioceses in forward planning and prioritising support to decarbonise the highest recorded emitting charges.

#### • Provincial Support and Tracking:

The data helps track the progress of charges leading by example and better support them with projects and funding applications.

It enables measurement of the impact of any Provincial grants given for net zero projects by comparing footprint data before and after net zero interventions.

#### • Renewable Energy Impact:

Significant CO<sub>2</sub>e reductions (up to 87%) observed in charges switching to verified green electricity and/or green gas tariffs. This demonstrates the impact of changing tariffs from non-renewable to renewable energy.

### Summary:

The EFT results provide valuable insights for the SEC to make informed decisions and support charges in their journey towards net zero emissions.

Despite some data limitations, the information gathered is crucial for strategic planning and prioritising efforts to reduce the carbon footprint across the Province.

\*36 charges with extremely low attendance have had their Diocese estimate their emissions for them, standardised as a notional 1 tonne of annual CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions

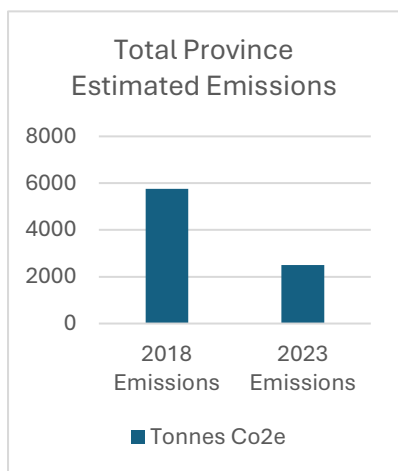
The SEC has all the tools in place to accurately measure the greenhouse gas emissions of churches, halls, offices and other buildings. This includes the energy burnt on site as well as the energy purchased from the grid.

In 2022, PEG released the Energy Footprint Analyser (EFA) which enabled charges to calculate their emissions associated with energy use for 2018, 2019, and 2021. 25% of SEC charges responded which yielded an approximation that the Provincial footprint would be around 5760 tonnes Co2e. This initial baseline is helpful to measure progress from subsequent data to gauge emission trajectories.

Data was not collected for 2022, however the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) in use by the Church of England was licensed in 2024 to collect more data from 2023.

68% of SEC charges responded which yielded significantly more data than had previously been quantified and provided an updated Provincial footprint closer to 2500 tonnes Co2e.

The 2023 emissions estimation is 56.6% lower than the 2018 baseline estimation, however there are numerous factors in play that influence this and only some of it is a direct consequence of net zero action.



While the principal methodology of both tools are the same, the results are less reliable because the data is coming from different sources. The EFA was a much smaller survey where five cathedrals responded and most of the smaller charges did not.

The EFT gathered data from many of the smaller charges and five cathedrals did not respond. The extrapolation on the EFT data would assume charges are smaller than they are, that thus yields a lower figure. It is possible however, to use the EFA data to estimate that around 1000 tonnes of emissions have not been recorded by looking at the data from charges that provided data in the EFA but not the EFT.

Even taking into consideration that the 2018 baseline figure was likely too high and the 2023 is comparatively too low, what can be said about the Provincial Scope 1 emissions footprint is that they are coming down. Exactly by how much is still too hard to quantify, however some big emitting charges have drastically reduced their emissions. The conversion factors have also changed over time, mainly as coal has been phased out of electricity generation, passively ‘cleaning’ up the grid for those on non-renewable tariffs. The EFT data from 2024 will reveal if there is a trend in changing energy tariff since the General Synod of 2023.

Provincial level analysis of the 2023 data reveals a great deal about the SEC.

The data points to the low hanging fruit where further reductions can be made by comparing data from charges before and after changing from non-renewable to renewable energy tariffs. The data shows some charges have achieved an emissions reduction of up to 87% by changing tariff. Based on 2024 conversion factors, an estimated 908 tonnes of CO2e emissions could be cut if 62 known charges on non-renewables switched tariff in 2024 or 2025.

Further emission forecasting is outlined on page 14.

*Please note: This report was written using the available data as of January 2025. Some final submissions were still being submitted at the time of writing, therefore there may be some marginal difference in the data in other papers which have been written since .*

## SEC Offices:

The General Synod Office and the Edinburgh Diocese offices submitted EFT data, however there is still no data on from other Diocesan offices on their energy consumption.

## Residential Properties:

These fall into two sub-categories: Rectories and Retirement Housing.

At the start of 2024, there was no Provincial level inventory of Rectories, so a database needed to be created that held this information in one place. This data was requested from the Dioceses along with an indication of any plans for relevant properties.

At the time of writing, the SEC has a high confidence that it has a complete inventory of rectories for all Dioceses. Only the Dioceses of Brechin and Moray, Ross and Caithness have EPCs for all their Rectories.

Diocese	Total No. of Rectories identified to date*	Total No. of Rectories with a current EPC	Total No. of Rectories with no EPC / out of date EPC	Total No. of Rectories with EPC rate above 'C'	Total No. of Rectories with EPC rate below 'C'
A&O	12	4	8	1	3
A&I	15	5	10	2	4
BRE	9	9	0	5	4
EDI	33	20	11	7	13
G&G	33	12	21	4	9
MRC	16	10	6	2	9
St.A,D&D	22	14	7	2	13
Retirement	34	12	18	9	3
Total	174	86	85	32	58

\*Data from February 2025

There was no Provincial level understanding of how many rectories need updated EPCs without knowing the total number of rectories, which was an exercise undertaken by the Net Zero Team throughout 2024. Each Diocese will be working to ensure that their portfolio of residential properties are up to the standard EPC C in line with the guidance of the Provincial Buildings Committee as well as to prepare for incoming Scottish Government Legislation to ensure properties meet a minimum standard of EPC C by 2028.

The SEC was unable to take advantage of support offered by Home Energy Scotland in 2024 to acquire EPCs for all SEC Rectories due to there being no scheme of delegation in the organisation that could allow the agreements to be signed to work in cooperation with HES before the offer of support was withdrawn. This presented the first of several opportunities that have been missed due a lack of delegated responsibility for senior members of Provincial staff to agree partnership working on behalf of the SEC.

Retirement housing is the responsibility of Scottish Episcopal Church Nominees with delegated responsibility to the Retirement Housing Committee.

Retirement properties are on a rolling schedule of replacing or upgrading at the time of tenancy change. At the time of writing, there are 32 retirement properties, 17 of which need new EPCs to determine how many need further investment to reach a minimum EPC rating of C.

It is the current priority to ensure that EPCs are acquired for all residential properties so that plans can be made about which properties should be sold and which should be invested. Some Dioceses are already doing this and are being supported by the Net Zero Team.

Efforts are underway to clarify how a baseline emissions footprint can be established for clergy housing.

## Measuring Emissions of Travel:

The final scope of emissions that need to be measured relate to work-related travel by clergy in fossil-fuelled transport.

Getting travel data to establish a baseline across the Province remains a significant challenge. While most organisations do this, there is significant ground to cover between where the SEC is now and where it would need to be to get this sort of data at a Provincial level. The Net Zero Team has pioneered capturing this data at a staff level since it started. It is working with the General Synod Office at trialling new expense claim methods to gather travel emissions data among its staff with a view to providing support to Dioceses and charges to do this in the future.

Once the General Synod Office has started measuring its footprint using accurate travel expenses it may be that this is a useful template to provide to charges and Dioceses across the Province. However, it will be a great challenge to get all charges and Dioceses to report unless they are given additional resource and incentive to do so.

The Net Zero Team will continue to explore new ways of gathering this data to find methods that are the most convenient to the charges themselves.

## Reducing Emissions:

There are three parallel methods for reducing emissions of property: energy efficiency, clean energy, and renewable technologies. This section will summarise the routes of engagement that the Net Zero Team have been developing for charges as well as a report on general uptake.

## Practical and Financial Support:

The Net Zero Team have been working to develop a range of resources, guidance and tools to help charges on their net zero journey. Every church is a unique project, however there are commonalities and learning that can be shared between Dioceses.

### Net Zero Portal – Resources, Tools and Funding Sources

The Net Zero Portal launched at General Synod 2024 continues to be developed with new content being created on a weekly basis. The website is widely used with the most popular pages being those related to funding and case studies. The Portal now contains content on dozens of topics from heat-pumps to guidance on clean energy tariffs, webinars, events and supportive organisations. This Portal continues to provide a wealth of entry level net zero information for any charge starting on the journey. It hosts and complements the Net Zero Toolkit produced by PEG to steer churches towards the first stages of decision making.

On the Portal, charges will find regular case studies from around the Province, dozens of resources and direction to over 50 different sources of funding. The Portal now has over 100 subscribers and is experiencing a steady increase in views. The image below shows the top page views since launch in summer 2024:

All posts & pages	Views
Home page / Archives	4,328
Funding	1,639
Resources	1,398
Stories	1,083
Contact	477

### Webinars:

The Net Zero Team have been working closely with the Provincial Buildings Committee and Buildings Grants Group to align net zero guidance with property maintenance and how to access funding. This is an ongoing process to make access to Provincial funding as easy as possible while also supporting charges to have confidence in seeking external funds.

The Net Zero Team ran webinars with key funders such as the Benefact Trust, National Churches Trust, and National Lottery Heritage fund to break down the barrier to applying for funding. Webinars were also run with Historic Environment Scotland and the National Churches Trust on access to funding and guidance for historic buildings and guidance on preventative maintenance. All seven Dioceses were well represented at each of these webinars and more have been planned for throughout 2025.

### Workshops:

Ten charges have completed the HeatHack workshop programme (February 2025) with more in the process and another 21 charges have shown interested. The dedicated SEC workshops and associated 'cards' which were developed by HeatHack over 2023 are starting to show their age. As the workshop programme continues to be a useful entry-level tool for net zero planning, the Net Zero Team will continue to support charges enrolling in the programme.

Other workshops that have also taken place ad-hoc at the request of various Area Councils, charge networking events, and Diocesan synods.

## Networks and Representation:

The Net Zero Team have been networking and connecting with dozens of supportive organisations to pave the way for the net zero work and open doors for SEC charges. The Team network across the UK, connecting with the Net Zero staff at the Church of England, Church in Wales and other denominations and faith-based NGOs. Internationally, they have connected with other churches in the Anglican communion and the Porvoo Conference of Churches. They have regular contact with national organisations such as Historic Environment Scotland, Home Energy Scotland, and Energy Saving Trust to represent SEC charges in their attempts to decarbonise. The Team has also had contact with the Scottish Government civil service responsible for the Community and Renewable Energy funding (CAREs) to provide constructive feedback on how to make the application process easier and more accessible to churches. They have connected with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, and collaborated with the Church in Society, Provincial Buildings Committee, Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, and Scottish Churches Net Zero Committee to contribute the legislative processes on the energy transition and respond to Scottish Government Consultations.

Each of these touch points raise the profile of the SEC as a church that takes the climate crisis seriously and is providing new opportunities with organisations that have been inspired by it's leadership. This is directly evidenced by the success a new partnership with the Benefact Trust as well as the opening of the Baird Trust to SEC applications.

## Net Zero Grant Awards Programme – Benefact Trust Strategic Partnership

The SEC was successful in negotiating a new strategic partnership with the Benefact Trust for £490k of funding support for the pathfinding new Net Zero Grant Awards Programme. The combined funding of the Province and the Benefact Trust amount to £700k over the next two years (2025-2026) for net zero projects.

Each Diocese will be given the opportunity in 2025 and 2026 to invite eligible charges to apply for tailored support to reduce carbon emissions, and contribute towards a culture of net zero leadership within the SEC. The funding will be allocated to churches from each diocese, which will be identified as Pilot or Pioneer projects. Pilot churches will be awarded project development support through funding professional works such as consultancy fees, or through trialling innovative technologies. Pioneer churches will receive funding to enable the implementation of already developed project plans.

This programme will enable Pilot and Pioneer churches to reduce the carbon footprint of their own buildings and contribute to emission reductions across the Province. Most importantly, they will act as exemplars to inspire and encourage others both within and beyond the Scottish Episcopal denomination.

The first year of funding will be available from April 2025 from which it is expected that some projects will commence.

## Baird Trust Funding

The Baird Trust has agreed to fund Scottish Episcopal Church net zero projects after a direct request made by the Net Zero team. At a meeting of the trustees in 2024, the request that the Trust consider SEC net zero projects in it's eligibility criteria was considered and agreed on.

The Baird Trust prioritises the work of church extension and improvement, and charges are welcomed to apply using the 'Repairs / Upgrading / New Build' grant stream. Thanks to the efforts of the Team, this unrestricted funding stream can now also be used for any net zero works that relate to physical decarbonisation of church buildings and halls, or other sustainability projects.

## Provincial Buildings Grant Fund and Rectory Green Fund

The SEC continues to offer funding support for net zero projects via the Provincial Buildings Grant Fund and Rectory Green fund. It has been recognised that there is room for improvement in the application process and the Net Zero Team are collaborating with the relevant Provincial committees to streamline and simplify the journey. The Rectory Green Fund has been under subscribed, and investigation is ongoing to determine what the reason for this may be.

## Sustainable Travel

The Net Zero Team has been working hard to develop practical support to deliver on the original Active Travel objective of the NZAP (2023-2030). The objective outlined in the plan aims to reduce work-related travel by clergy in fossil-fuelled transport to address the emissions included within the Net Zero 2030 target. To do so, the NZAP (2023-2030) was aligned with the Scottish Government's 'active travel' framework which supports the goals in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

What has become clear is that the SEC is still a way off from having a clear and inclusive approach to addressing travel emissions. The Net Zero Team have been working on this throughout 2024 and into 2025 with a view to providing new ways of addressing this problem.

While the NZAP places emphasis on 'Active Travel', the Net Zero Team, in consultation with the Provincial Environment Group, are working towards a more holistic and inclusive approach to travel which focuses on sustainability. The priority being that wherever travel is required for staff or clergy business, it is undertaken in the most sustainable way. This is not only reflective of changes in Scottish Government planning in recent years but also in response to feedback from clergy in rural areas or for whom travel is a major part of their service that improved messaging and support is needed where travel choices are more limited.

The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy continues to be a useful model for everyone on church business will inform choices will reflect both (1) what options are available and (2) any personal circumstances that will affect or limit their travel choices.

The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy is explained in detail by Energy Saving Trust [here](#). In essence, digital communication has the lowest carbon footprint while flights have the greatest impact. In between these extremes are walking, cycling, and public transport while private car is reserved for circumstances where these are impractical or impossible.

The Net Zero Team acknowledges that it may not always be practical to walk, cycle or communicate digitally. Sometimes people need to meet face to face or make visits. There may be no public transport, the distances may be too far to reasonably travel on foot or by bicycle, the person travelling could be limited by disabilities or require a car to transport equipment. Similarly, while flying is to be avoided because of its high carbon footprint, for intercontinental journeys there is no alternative that allows for travel within a relatively short timeframe.

Anyone travelling on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church will be incurring a footprint and it is therefore important that everyone adopts the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy when travelling. How the systems are managed in terms of record keeping and reimbursement and whether this happens at charge, Diocese or Province level has yet to be thought out. It must not be understated the role Clergy can play by being more publicly visible, showing leadership in the establishment of new norms.

### *Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging*

It was PEG's intention in 2023 to produce a cross-committee EV Charge Point Strategy for 2024, however this has not been developed. The Net Zero Team have been engaging with the Scottish Government consultations on EVs charging, contributing via the Church in Society committee and Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, however a strategy would still be useful to assist charges in rural areas address range anxiety and the reliance on the sparse public charging infrastructure in rural regions.

There may be mileage in establishing a network of chargepoints at churches which would be available both to church members and the wider public. However, a feasibility study would be an important precursor to any commitment. The key issues to be understood including the demand for rapid charging against the higher costs of rapid chargers and the possibility of needing a three-phase electricity supply. To illustrate the dilemma, if a priest were to be at a church for 2 hours to conduct a service, they would need a chargepoint that delivered a sufficient charge for their EV during that time.

The cost of electric cars has reduced significantly in recent years, especially in the second-hand market. When compared in price to an equivalent car with a petrol or diesel engine, EVs are more affordable. EVs are more affordable than ever, including those with a range of around 250-300 miles that do not suffer the same range variability as earlier models. Leasing and salary-sacrifice schemes are also more widely available for the adoption of EVs. The key issue is less about the cost of these vehicles and more about charging infrastructure and range anxiety for staff and clergy dependent on vehicles for their service.

#### *Where is the proposed 'Active Travel' grant?*

An 'Active Travel' grant was proposed to support clergy to purchase an electric vehicle, install a charge point for an electric vehicle, purchase a bicycle or purchase an e-bike. Upon attempting to deliver this grant, it was discovered that the proposal was not feasible. (1) As previously noted, other people besides clergy travel on church business and (2) where a personal benefit is incurred there would be tax implications in providing a grant to clergy for an electric car. (3) The 'Active Travel' grant contained mixed mode transport criteria, confusing its messaging and purpose.

The Net Zero Team would like to reimagine the proposed grant to make it more inclusive to all charges and vestries who wish to make their travel more sustainable. The grant conditions should not prescribe in specific terms how it is spent but should instead provide a credible and compelling case for making the investment in a charge. Possible projects might include: installing bike racks at church buildings, EV chargers at church buildings or rectories, investing in training for congregations and clergy who wish to become proficient and confident cyclists, investing in a pool bicycle or installing signage that will encourage more sustainable travel, it could be a grant to support disabled people to travel more sustainably or enable train travel (rather than flying) to an international event relevant to the church's business. The key point being that the vestry applying for funding should articulate and evidence why the investment will enable people from that charge to travel more sustainably and reduce their emissions. The sustainable travel grant could be offered on the condition that the vestry revises its travel and reimbursement procedures to adopt a process that allows for a systematic recording of travel emissions.

The Net Zero Team continue to develop this area with a view to addressing the issue of both measuring and reducing the carbon footprint of SEC travel and helping charges take action on climate change by enabling sustainable travel choices.

## Engagement:

At Provincial level, it is not feasible to measure the energy performance of each property nor record what technologies are being used. It is possible to measure the consumption of energy, however this can only be done retrospectively and is a poor indicator for projections.

Since the SEC is, in effect, a conglomeration of independent charities, it is not possible to forecast emissions reductions or the rate at which they will decrease, the most accurate indicator is through observing their engagement.

The Net Zero Team have attempted to contact every one of the charges across all the Dioceses to determine their state of readiness when it comes to Net Zero. This has yielded mixed results, with proactive charges readily engaging while others remain silent. An ad-hoc picture is being formed over time as to what churches are doing, but this is largely a result of case-by-case information sharing from conversations, site visits, and general enquiries. Most Dioceses have an active 'environment group' which vary greatly in approach and direction.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to how the charges in different Dioceses are responding but there appears to be a correlation between charge level engagement and the encouragement they receive from the Diocesan administration.

Dioceses have regular contact with the Net Zero Team. All Dioceses made time in their Synod's for a presentation from members of the Net Zero Team and some Dioceses have also invited a net zero representative as a regular guest to the Buildings Committee Meetings.

## Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness (MRC) Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Daniel Prince – Net Zero Clean Energy Advisor & Diocesan contact for MRC:

*All 35 charges in the Diocese have been contacted and nine (ten if we include the Cathedral) have had (or are planning) a site visit with a member of the net zero team. Nine charges have shown a visible interest in decarbonising and the Cathedral is developing a carbon reduction plan support from the Net Zero Team. The Cathedral is a big emitter for the Diocese and is an evident priority. It is hoped that as this project develops, examples and learning can be collated locally to showcase solutions for the smaller charges. The Cathedral apart, there are no known 'net zero projects' in the pipeline or any stand-out leading charges yet. The charges as a whole do not appear to readily engage with the Provincial process but this is not necessarily an indication of anything other than their capacity to do so. 18 charges have yet to respond to offers of assistance, although 12 charges are very small and not a high priority for net zero interventions (less than 1tonne emissions per annum). The Diocese is taking a methodical approach to addressing the state of it's rectories and the EFT data provides a valuable insight into where the focus should be to curtail emissions.*

## Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Iain Johnstone – Sustainability Officer and Diocesan contact for Glasgow and Galloway.

*All 85 charges have been contacted by a member of the net zero team, initially with offers of assistance but also with general net zero updates. The response rate has been very low with only a handful of charges choosing to engage. There are a good number of net zero projects in the pipeline and evidence of engagement, however only six charges in the Diocese have taken up offers to receive visits from the Net Zero team. Many charges do not respond to Provincial offers of support or to the data requests via the EFT. It is hoped that engagement will accelerate as the known net zero projects go ahead in 2025, which will offer valuable insights and learning for the Diocese.*

*The Net Zero Team is aware of a core group of highly engaged charges that are driving ambitiously towards net zero, exploring initiatives such as lighting upgrades, electrified heating, solar installations and energy projects. There are other broader projects that charges have taken forward, such as eco-festivals and biodiversity*

projects. The Net Zero team will continue to support the charges that come forward to ask for help on their net zero journey.

## Diocese of Brechin Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Jack Nevin – Innovation Coordinator and Diocesan contact for Brechin

*All 23 charges in the Diocese have been contacted, 19 of which have welcomed a visit from a member of the Provincial Net Zero Team. 14 charges show evidence of engagement even if there is variation in capacity and determination. There are six charges that are showing strong commitment to decarbonisation and moving forward with ambitious projects. The Net Zero Team is aware of nine net zero projects that are either funded or in the pipeline and have also identified nine charges that are a low priority for net zero interventions due to their size/emissions footprint. Only 3 charges have not made any response.*

*It is evident that Net Zero has the full support of the Diocese. The Diocesan Environment Group does not formally meet on a regular basis; however this does not appear to be a barrier to engagement. The Cathedral is also actively engaged with developing a response to net zero with a robust group having been established.*

## Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Jack Nevin – Innovation Coordinator and Diocesan contact for Brechin

*All 36 charges in the Diocese have been contacted, 27 of which have welcomed a visit from a member of the Provincial Net Zero Team. 24 charges have shown some level of interest and engagement with net zero and only four that have not. There are 15 known net zero projects either underway or in the pipeline and nine charges that are showing leadership in their net zero ambitions. 13 churches have been identified as a low priority for net zero interventions due to their size and/or emissions footprint.*

*The response to the Net Zero team has been very open across the Diocese and there is evidence of a strong commitment to sustainability and building maintenance which clearly motivates many vestries. Charges throughout have been well represented at webinars run by the Net Zero Team and have been engaging with the Provincial resources. There is a sense that net zero as a response to climate change is uniformly supported across the Diocese and has the support of charges as well as the Diocesan administration.*

*There is a Diocesan Environment Group (known locally as the Climate Change Group) which meets bi-monthly and has the support of the Diocesan Standing Committee. This group is supportive of net zero as the direction of travel and predominately focuses on messaging and communications.*

## Diocese of Edinburgh Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Neil Rawlins – Carbon Projects and Data Officer & Diocesan contact for Edinburgh

*All 52 charges in the Diocese have been contacted with responses from all but four. 26 charges have been visited or will receive a visit from a member of the Net Zero Team. There are 10 net zero projects underway or in the pipeline and seven charges that are showing leadership in their net zero ambitions. 14 charges have shown little evidence of engagement with the net zero programme and eight have been identified as a low priority for net zero support due to their size.*

*The Diocesan administration is very supportive, and the Net Zero team has welcomed at Diocesan Synods as well as in the Standing Committee and Buildings Committee meetings. There is a groundswell of engagement across the Diocese in charges of all sizes, epitomised by the high response rate of 92% to submitting data. A key challenge for the Diocese will be whether the Diocesan office has the will and capacity to support the growing number of charges that will need to navigate the planning permissions required for net zero projects.*

*The Diocesan Environment Group (DEG) has been under new leadership since the Spring of 2024, however the Province is not aware of any group activity or regular meetings since that time. The Net Zero Team have met*

*with and continue to offer support to the DEG Convenor but there is a need for a group that can connect with and represent the grassroots movement across the Diocese.*

## Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld, & Dunblane Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Bethany Nelson – Empowerment Coordinator & Diocesan contact for St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane

*All 46 charges in the Diocese have been contacted, 18 of which have been visited by a member of the Net Zero Team and 13 charges that show evident engagement in the net zero process. There are five very ambitious charges that are showing net zero leadership and 7 that have not yet responded. The Cathedral has the highest of the recorded emissions for 2023 and is an evident priority for the Diocese. There are 17 charges with very low emissions footprints that are a low priority for net zero interventions.*

*The Diocesan Environment Group (DEG) has good visibility in the Diocese and links with the Standing Committee and Buildings Committee of the Diocesan administration. The DEG was the first to produce a net zero action plan which was approved in 2024 and has a reporting structure that feeds into it's synod. The DEG also runs an annual gathering which is well attended. The net zero team is also involved in the Buildings Committee process to support net zero projects.*

## Argyll & The Isles Net Zero Engagement

Comment from Iain Johnstone – Sustainability Officer and Diocesan contact for Glasgow and Galloway.

*All 26 churches have been contacted and visits are planned throughout 2025. There are eight know net zero projects funded or in the pipeline and 20 charges responded to the EFT request. The EFT data shows that the Diocese not only has a relatively small carbon footprint compared to other Diocese, but also has a large number of very small charges. 17 charges have a carbon footprint of less than 2 tonnes and are therefore not a high priority for Provincial level carbon reductions. Four charges have demonstrated some net zero leadership and the highest emitters will be key players in the Diocesan approach to net zero.*

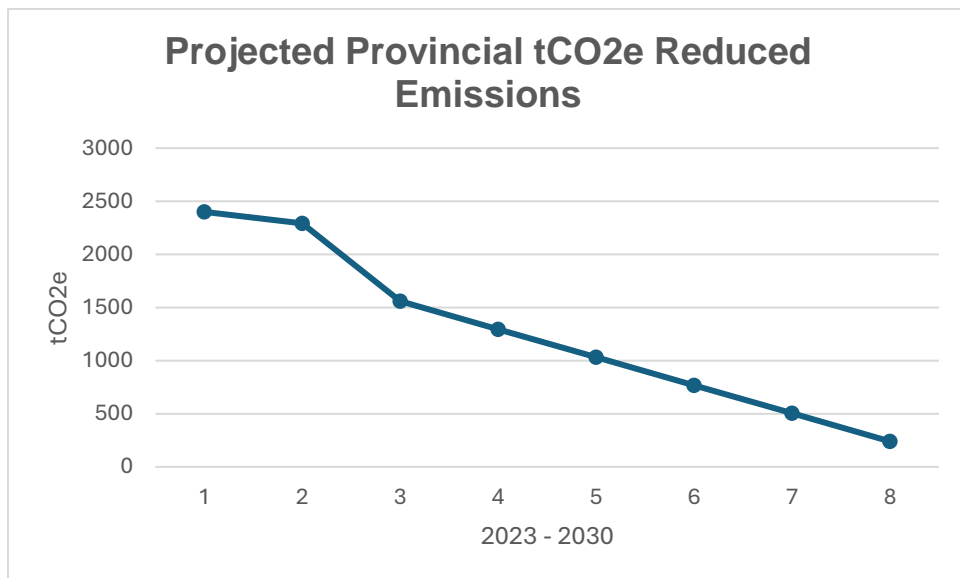
*In most cases, there is a lack of capacity at charge level to engage with the Provincial process. This is evident by the number of charges that had difficulty submitting EFT data and were reliant on support from the Diocese and Net Zero team to respond. The Diocesan Environment Group has grown in confidence and benefited from the handful of leading charges. They actively contribute to the Diocesan administration and collaborate with the Provincial Team.*

*A targeted approach is likely the most effective way forward for the Diocese, with a focus on supporting the decarbonisation of the Dioceses biggest emitters while ensuring smaller charges can easily access Provincial resources.*

## Emission Reduction Forecasting

By Neil Rawlins: Carbon Projects and Data Officer

The total estimated property emissions for the SEC in 2023 is approximately somewhere between 2400-2500 tonnes. To achieve a minimum reduction of 90%, roughly 2250 tonnes need to be addressed between now and 2030. Based on 2023 data, 908 tonnes can be reduced if 62 charges switched to renewable tariffs, which leaves 1342 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> which need to be reduced through installation of renewable technology.



- Year One (2023) has annual estimated emissions of tCO<sub>2</sub>e as 2,400 tonnes based on EFT and EFA data
- Year Two (2024) should see a reduction of 108tCO<sub>2</sub>e (4.5%) due to better reporting of data and confirmation of charges being on renewable tariffs.
- Year Three (2025) assumes the 35% of charges not currently on a Renewable tariff have switched, leading to a further saving of 731tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- Year Four (2026 - 2030) assumes that the estimated 48% of charges who use non-renewable gas, oil or LPG transition to renewable gas or electricity at a reduction rate of 264tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- Years Three to Eight assumes several charges install solar panels and batteries to reduce their reliance on renewable electricity
- Year Eight has a target of 240tCO<sub>2</sub>e (10% of the 2023 total\*). Absolute zero cannot be achieved as there are emissions associated with the transmission of renewable energy, and not every charge will be able to install solar panels.

\*Note that this projection works off a 90% reduction target based on the 2023 emissions which is sets a target of 240tCO<sub>2</sub>e instead of the 576tCO<sub>2</sub>e it would be using the 2018 baseline. This target is more ambitious, however it 1) utilises a larger and more reliable data set and 2) provides a confident buffer for where estimations are made in other Scopes.

## Concluding Remarks

The high response rate for the Energy Footprint Tool is a landmark achievement for the SEC. The data provided, while still incomplete, likely makes the SEC the first denomination in Scotland to have such a detailed knowledge of its own carbon footprint. This is not only the result of a practical exercise conducted at scale, but also a statement about the SEC's own position on climate justice. This data, and that of subsequent years, will also provide the Dioceses with useful information about the size and usage of Church buildings which can help with long-term visions and mission planning. The SEC being able to visualise the collective contribution of it is making to climate change, can continue to lead in curbing emissions and providing a vision for the future.

It should be an encouragement to see that many SEC congregations have risen to the challenge set by the Net Zero ambition and that there are churches in every Diocese that are showing the way. There will always be the challenge of determining what zero carbon solutions are appropriate for each individual charge and how far they can decarbonise. This does show, however, that for the growing number of churches taking action, net zero is rooted in a deeper spiritual and moral motivation to do their best to reduce their contribution to climate change and mitigate the impact it has on the global community of God's creation.