

# **Action for Hope – Net Zero Grants Scheme in Lincolnshire Methodist District**

## **Guidance Notes**

Before you start to fill in the application form, please read these Guidance Notes.

## **Introduction**

Lincolnshire Methodist District has been awarded almost £64,000 from the Connexional Action for Hope budget to use within the District to help churches and circuits make progress towards becoming net-zero by 2030. In addition a further £30,000 has been designated from the District Advance Fund for the same purpose. These guidance notes tell you how to apply for a grant from this total of almost £95,000.

## **Criteria for applying for a grant**

Methodist Connexion stipulate that before a church or circuit applies for a grant certain criteria must be met:

### **Church Congregations**

- Churches/Congregations must be registered as an eco-church. This is the first step needed to work towards an Eco-Church Award which includes building improvements. Please register at <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/how-eco-church-works/>
- Churches must have a Growth Plan (formerly Mission Action Plan) which includes consideration of creation care and climate justice within it. See [https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Our\\_Churchs\\_Future\\_Story.pdf](https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Our_Churchs_Future_Story.pdf)
- An application must be consistent with the Growth Plan/Mission Action Plan.
- The church must agree to share its story – this could be locally or nationally
- The District would also like your church to have started/or completed a measurement of your carbon footprint using a tool such as the 360°carbon tool from Climate Stewards. See <https://360carbon.org/en-gb/?r>

### **Circuits**

- Circuits must be registered as an Eco-Circuit
- Circuits must have a Growth Plan (formerly Mission Action Plan) which includes consideration of creation care and climate justice.
- The proposal must be consistent with the Growth Plan/Mission Action Plan
- The circuit has a project plan which includes the building (s) current carbon footprint and an estimate of the footprint once the project is complete as well as a feasibility assessment to ensure that the proposed changes are appropriate to the context.

### **Size of Grant**

The standard grant will be up to £3,000 however in exceptional circumstances the grant may be raised up to £10,000. However, it is hoped to share the grant funding with as many churches as possible.

## **Eligible Buildings**

- Churches and church halls where activities are taking place in a building owned by the Methodist Church.
- Alternative energy for manses may also be considered.

## **Eligible Works**

A grant can help to pay for any of the following:

### **1. Building Repairs and improvements which help improve energy efficiency may include:**

- Repair to the roof or rainwater goods (e.g. gutters, downpipes) (i.e. to solve damp problems)
- Fixing any broken windowpanes and making sure windows shut tightly
- Insulating round heating pipes
- Draught-proofing the gaps or putting up a door curtain
- Where there is an uninsulated, easy to access roof void, insulating the roof
- Installing a glazed door within your porch or draught-lobby
- Creating one or more smaller (separately heated) spaces
- Installing a false ceiling to reduce heat loss

### **2. Heating and Lighting improvements may include:**

- Matching heating settings better to usage
- Replacing lightbulbs with LEDs, where simple replacement is possible
- Replacing floodlights with new LED units
- Installing a HIVE or NEST type heating controller to better control heating.
- Improving heating zones or controls
- Installing Thermostatic Radiator Values (TRVs) on radiators in meeting rooms
- Installing thermal and/or motion sensors on lighting
- Installing energy saving devices such as Savawatt on fridges etc
- Installing a smart meter to better measure energy use
- Installing a magnetic sludge filter to extend the life of the system

### **3. Temporary heating solutions, which enable a church or church hall to avoid undertaking a like for like oil or gas heating replacement, when their heating breaks down may include:**

- Boiler hire
- Electric heater hire or purchase

Please note that it is expected that these temporary solutions will last for no more than a year during which the church makes plans, seeks advice, applies for permission and fundraises.

#### **4. Professional advice which may include:**

- An audit carried out by a professional company which understands the fabric of a church to assess ways to work towards net-zero.
- An Architect or other professional fees associated with a scheme to work towards net-zero.

The first step towards a larger scheme such as changing the heating system or source of energy may be to commission an independent Energy Audit. Typically these would be carried out by a professional company which should understand the (often) historic fabric of a church. An Energy Audit can help outline the steps towards net-zero including suggestions of the most appropriate form of alternative energy. In addition an Energy Audit may be required by an external grant funder as evidence of your intent and evidence of having properly thought through a proposed scheme. See <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/net-zero-carbon/energy-audits/> and also speak to the District Property Secretary for ideas of appropriate companies. Circuits may wish to commission several audits at once to benefit from economies of scale or circuits may wish to join with other circuits for the same reason.

In addition a Connexional Feasibility Funding Grant might pay for some of the above exploratory work. See <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/property-grants/feasibility-funding/>

#### **5. Transition away from using oil or gas**

- Electrical upgrades to enable direct electric heating (e.g. infra-red panel heaters), heat pumps or solar panels
- Installation of Solar PV or a heat pump where a church can demonstrate it has completed all other measures to transition to net zero and where independent professional advice has recommended this is the solution.

#### **Other requirements:**

- A completed application form
- Quotes or evidence of a tendering process as appropriate. See page 34 of Church Stewards' handbook at [https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Church\\_Stewards\\_Handbook\\_2025.pdf](https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Church_Stewards_Handbook_2025.pdf)
- Work should not have started or been paid for
- A property project logged online in order that the grant can be drawn down.
- In the case of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas ensure that you liaise with the Methodist Conservation Officer before embarking on any scheme.
- For all schemes that are larger than, for instance, simply replacing light bulbs please speak to the District Property Secretary
- Include the latest set of church or circuit accounts