

CARING FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR WORLD

This month, our focus is on the church itself. Making a building as old as St John's more 'eco-friendly' is a challenge. This is reflected in our original score on the Eco-Church award scheme survey – 75 out of a maximum score of 525, with a score of 140 required for a bronze award. Improving the energy efficiency and insulation of St John's will be difficult, and to an extent, we are likely to have to accept the shortcomings of Norman architecture and building techniques. On the other hand we do have beauty! We're rather less hampered in this regard in respect of the other buildings for which we have responsibility – the Parish Rooms and the vicarage, but only the latter is built to modern energy saving standards. Nevertheless, reviewing our original survey answers in respect of these properties has improved our score to 120/525 – so some positive progress already.

Whilst improving insulation within St John's itself is going to be difficult, there are a number of things that can be done to reduce our energy costs and thus our carbon footprint. We need to analyse our energy usage and perhaps set ourselves targets. Already we are looking at lighting and have reduced the floodlighting around the church (the time it's on) and are considering a general move to LED bulbs wherever possible. An initial expenditure in new bulbs will save energy and money over time. Then we are looking at our gas and electricity contracts and like any prudent householder we are planning to move to the most economical suppliers. This may well be via the established Parish Buying Scheme for energy supply.

More radically we are exploring the potential for renewable energy. In the first instance, the Building and Grounds sub-committee of the PCC is looking into solar panels on the church roof. This was explored about four years ago but at the time we were unable to proceed due to cost. Now, we are fortunate in having a potential source of funding for such a scheme and thus investigations are being resurrected.

If any readers have expertise in this field of energy conservation, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Anyone interested in assisting with this work, or who would like to comment or make suggestions, please email: mccllland753@icloud.com