Chester DAC fossil fuel boiler guidance

Executive Summary

This guidance is aimed at those with responsibility for church buildings under faculty, and their technical advisors, who are considering changes to the heating system that may involve the installation of replacement fossil fuel boilers. It incorporates national guidance issued by the Church of England (CofE Guidance) targeting Net Zero Carbon (NZC) emissions.

Responding to the prophetic call from General Synod for 'Net Zero Carbon' by 2030, the CofE Guidance recommends electrically powered systems and advises against the use of fossil fuel.

For the purpose of this document, fossil fuel refers to gas or oil.

The following sections provide an overview of the faculty process, including guidance which must be adhered to, the information to be submitted with your application and technical details.

Introduction

Parishes should plan ahead for replacing their heating before it becomes an emergency matter by reviewing their heating situation when the boiler is inspected

Sometimes, despite best laid plans, heating systems break down, usually just as they are most needed!

When this happens, if your chosen solution is the installation of a new fossil fuel boiler, you will need to apply for a faculty (unless your place of worship is outside of faculty jurisdiction). This is formal permission to carry out works in a church granted by the Chancellor of the Diocese (the Chancellor), on the recommendation of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

This guidance, produced by the DAC, explains the process for requesting permission for a new fossil fuel boiler.

It is important to be aware that the CofE Guidance NZC advises against the use of fossil fuels, and places additional obligations on those intending to install a fossil fuel boiler.

To gain approval, parishes will need to demonstrate in their faculty application that they have given 'due regard' to the recommendations contained in the CofE Guidance and explain clearly the justification for deviating from what is regarded as good practice. This requirement is mandatory, even in cases which are considered urgent.

According to the law, 'due regard' exists when the degree of consideration is appropriate for the specific circumstances of the decision or measure. Due regard means proper, genuine and realistic consideration. The parish under the duty is not free to disregard it, but is required to follow it.

For general heating guidance, the Church of England have published comprehensive and helpful guidance on all aspects of heating provision and planning. This is a useful source of information when considering your Net Zero Carbon pathway.

Applications

Your faculty application should set out the need and justification for a fossil fuel boiler, the alternatives that have been considered and how it minimises carbon emissions and running costs.

As always, any application for works should be made in collaboration with your Church Architect, who can also assist by recommending further technical advisors who might be needed (such as building services engineers or heating contractors). The DAC team are happy to advise if you need any assistance in completing your application.

You must provide a Statement of Significance (SoS) and a Statement of Need (SoN) including the following information (see the Explanatory Notes below for more detail):

- **Details of the existing boiler**
- **Details of the existing heating system**
- **The usage pattern of the building**

- **Your Energy Footprint Tool submission**
- **Photos of the church interior, boiler and heating system**
- **An assessment of any conservation and heritage issues that have been identified as impacted by or influencing your proposals**

For applications where a fossil fuel system is being proposed, the following additional information should be provided as part of the Statement of Need (the Explanatory Notes below explain these in more detail):

- A completed **Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon checklist.**
- Your **Energy Audit** where available.
- A long-term decarbonisation plan for your church.
- A **Heating Options Appraisal** including how the fossil fuel boiler design hierarchy has been followed: (See the Explanatory Notes below for more information).
- The financial position of the church.
- Proposal summary.

Once you have all the necessary information, your DAC team will be happy to carry out an assessment of your proposal and provide appropriate support. Every effort is made to progress cases as quickly as possible. We fully appreciate that an extended period without heating can be detrimental to mission and building care, and affect the welcome offered by the church to its congregation and community.

Should the parish not be able to supply the requested information with your application, the DAC, or its officers, may conclude that 'due regard' has not been taken of the CofE Guidance, and so may not be able to recommend acceptance of the application to the Chancellor.

Approval process

When providing advice to the Chancellor, the DAC will consider pastoral, missional, financial, environmental, architectural and conservation factors. The final decision to grant a faculty lies with the Chancellor.

In some instances, it may be possible to have your proposal deemed an emergency faculty application, which provides exemption from the usual statutory 28-day public notice period. This is at the discretion of the Chancellor. The DAC office will send any request for emergency status on your behalf.

Where appropriate, a series of provisos may be recommended for inclusion in the Chancellor's approval.

Explanatory Notes

Information for the Statement of Need

Details of the existing boiler - including fuel type, age, output (kWh), location and flue arrangement.

Details of the existing heating system - for example, radiators: how many are there? how effective are they? and what is their total heat output?

Details of building use - for example, the kind of use, how many users and the weekly operational hours of the heating system.

Your Energy Footprint Tool submission - this will confirm your annual heating bill and carbon footprint.

Photos of the church interior, boiler and heating system - these are very helpful for us to understand all parts of your building that will be affected. Details such as whether the church has fixed or movable pews, or other seating, are also very helpful.

Your Statement of Significance should include an architectural chronology of the construction of the church. Please provide an assessment of how your proposal may impact the character of the building. For example, are any changes to radiators proposed or do you have significant historic building fabric which may be sensitive to temperature and humidity changes? Examples of this may include wall paintings or organs. You may find the information you need in your Quinquennial report.

Further details required relating to the proposed heating solution:

Completed checklist of the Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon. This should be realistic and proportionate to the size, frequency of use and energy consumption of the church.

An **Energy Audit** report if you have one. If the advice of the Audit is not being adopted, please explain why.

Long-term **decarbonisation plan** for the church. This should be based on your 'Practical Path' conclusions and include a programme for the implementation of any 'Easy Wins' recommended in an Energy and Audit.

Heating Options Appraisal which demonstrates that all other options have been considered. You should refer to the Church of England **Heating Guidance,** and include a **Heating Checklist.** You may need to engage a professional, such as a Building Services Engineer. (In some cases, the Energy and Carbon Audit may fulfil this requirement). You will be expected to have considered each of the following options (listed in typical order of priority), below:

1. **Maximize the use of existing fossil fuel boilers,** by making repairs and reusing parts from other boilers, where possible, or interconnecting to any other heating systems within the church site. (Where existing boilers cannot be reused, a report from a contractor confirming this should be included)

2. **Make use of temporary solutions,** to provide heating via alternative means until a lower carbon permanent system can be installed. (These may include a temporary fossil fuel boiler, warm air heaters, temporary mobile heat pump units, radiant electric and pew/seat heating systems.) Please include an appraisal of their suitability if in an historic environment.

3. **Consider the use of reconditioned boiler plant,** to reduce the installation cost, increasing funds available for future lower carbon heating solutions.

4. **Maximise the efficiency of operation.** In addition to selecting a high efficiency boiler, insulate exposed pipework, upgrade circulating pumps and provide efficient and flexible controls to minimise wasted heat.

5. **Futureproof the heating system,** by including features that facilitate the future transition to a heat pump system. The system temperature should suit heat pump use and any pipework changes that are being made should provide valving or capped off pipe connections for future heat pumps.

6. **Consider a future hybrid system,** should the transition to a full heat pump solution not be possible as the next step towards Net Zero Carbon. This would ensure that the installed capacity and modularity of the boilers recognises the future likely addition of an air source heat pump, as a hybrid arrangement. Please

consider how this could reduce heating carbon emissions, maximising the heat pump contribution and minimising that of the fossil fuel boiler.

7. **Minimise the installed capacity of the new proposed boiler(s),** taking into account the heating load reduction from the 'Easy Wins', fabric and controls improvements and the output of the current heat emitters (radiators etc.), thus increasing funds available for future lower carbon heating solutions (and reducing embodied carbon).

Financial position. If your decision to opt for a fossil fuel boiler and not an electric heating system is based chiefly on cost, please explain and describe how you have explored ways of generating additional funds (such as grants or loans or other sources).

Proposal summary. Please outline the reasons for your decision, with reference to the points listed above.

Contacts

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