

## Frequently asked questions

### ○ **Who is Green Journey?**

Green Journey is an energy scheme dedicated to providing church and church organisations with clean, green energy in order to reduce their overall carbon emissions. Green Journey is based on building strong and proactive relationships with all our clients - working closely with Churches and Church Organisations at every level, Honesty and integrity are at the core of all we do, in line with Christian values and beliefs.

### ○ **Why choose to join the scheme?**

As stewards of the Earth, churches have a commitment to reduce their carbon footprint by 80% by 2050. Not only is this the nations general target, it has been implemented by the Church of England with an interim target of reducing 42% by 2020.

By coming on board with the Green Journey scheme, we can help you reduce your carbon footprint through contracting you with a carbon neutral gas supply and 100% renewable electricity supply as well as offering recommendations on how to reduce your energy consumption

### ○ **When was Green Journey established?**

Green Journey came to be after the Diocese of Leeds approached Green Energy Consulting - one of the UK's leading renewable energy experts- to help with the reduction of their carbon footprint. After working closely with the Diocese of Leeds for a number of years Green Journey has now been successfully implemented in a number of Diocese and synods

### ○ **What does Green Journey do?**

The scheme first and foremost aims to reduce the environmental impact of the church as well as improving green credentials with an opportunity to reduce overall costs the church may spend on their energy.

To reduce your environmental impact and carbon footprint, Green Journey will work closely with you put you on competitive gas and electric contracts which will be a 100% renewable electricity contract and/or a carbon neutral gas contract. The contracts we offer are fixed term baskets contracts which all have the same end date.

We offer VAT and CCL (climate change levy) reclaims where you may have been charged incorrectly. Charitable organisations such as churches only have to pay 5% VAT on their energy bills and do not have to pay any CCL..

On top of the procurement of green energy contracts, we offer a complementary energy & sustainability survey of the church and any surrounding church buildings. Following this, a comprehensive report on the church and any buildings will be sent out. This report will detail where your energy is being used most and offer recommendations of how to monitor, manage, reduce consumption, save energy and cut back costs.

- **What do the surveys entail?**

If your church is interested in receiving a report, our surveyor will visit your church to carry out a comprehensive survey of the church. When the surveyor arrives, they will be taking photos of the church and any buildings, photographing things such as the lights, the boiler and the gas/electric meters. This helps with the writing of reports as well as helping retrieve data. They will also have a survey sheet they will be filling out with information on your boiler, lights, and any appliances.

After the survey, when we have all the data back from your current suppliers, a report will be sent out to the appropriate person at church. The report details things such as where your energy gets used most along with an abundance of recommendations to help improve the efficiency of your energy use and save costs where appropriate.

- **Who needs to be at the survey?**

Anyone who is involved in the church is welcome to come along. I.e. Church warden/Vicar/Treasurer. Preferably anyone who has access to all the rooms especially the areas where the boilers and meters are located. This helps to streamline the report process.

- **Why do you need a letter of authority?**

The letter of authority gives us permission to carry out the activities involved with the Green Journey Energy Saving Scheme, including Energy Surveys, Invoice Validation, Renewable Energy Procurement and Account Management.

- **Who needs to sign the letter of authority?**

The LOA needs to be signed by the authorised person on the energy accounts.

- **Why is the Diocese recommending this project?**

Green Energy Consulting are offering a proactive and personalised approach to the Diocese through the implementation of this project; this is a major reason for our endorsement. Other schemes that have been available to the Diocese in the past have relied upon a reactive sign up in each parish resulting in poor take up rates.

- **Who can join the scheme?**

The scheme is open to all churches in the Diocese and any of their church buildings. Vicarages/Rectories may also wish to switch to a renewable electricity supplier but would need to do this personally. Green Journey has launched a renewable electricity price comparison website for domestic users, so that church members can take part for domestic properties.

- **Will there be any cost to the Parish or the Diocese?**

No Parish or Diocese will need to pay directly for the service.

- **If my church is in an electricity or gas contract already when can I join the scheme?**

You can join the scheme straight away, however, any contract negotiations on your behalf will be to commence at the end of your current contract. There is a strong benefit to buying in advance of your contract end date and this can result in maximizing any additional savings.

- **Can I still join the scheme if I use oil rather than mains gas?**

Yes, although there is no green oil option you can still switch the electric to a green supplier.

- **Will the Diocese remain involved?**

Yes, the Environment Officer or Social Responsibility Officer, will oversee everything that is happening to both ensure that the project is running smoothly and to also to monitor its effectiveness and progress.

- **Will Green Journey keep in touch with me after I have joined the scheme?**

Yes, we will keep in touch with you on a regular basis to ensure that any questions you may have and any assistance you require will be given. We will be constantly monitoring and managing your account with the suppliers to make sure you are always on the best rates available to you.

- **When would the contract with this scheme end?**

The current contract end date for our group procurement basket is September 2023. You could then choose to stay in the group buying package or leave to find your own supplier.

- **Is there a national Church of England Energy scheme?**

Yes, it's called "Parish Buying". It is a good scheme, they do offer a green electricity tariff but not a green gas tariff. However, their staff team does not have the capacity to offer a personalised local service 'phoning and visiting each parish and providing additional services such as the energy audit of your buildings and installing AMRs.

- **Is this different from the Big Switch Campaign run by Christian Aid and Tearfund?**

Yes and No. Christian Aid and Tearfund have similar objectives to Green Journey whereby they are encouraging all churches to switch to renewable energy to help cut our carbon footprint, reduce the impacts of climate change as an act of loving compassion for our global and generational neighbours.

Green Journey Energy Saving Scheme differs from the other firms in the suppliers that they use. Green Journey work with a range of Green suppliers and do not direct all churches to a single supplier like Parish Buying. Green Journey also offer a range of other sustainability and renewable solutions, including energy auditing of church buildings – Helping the church to further reduce its carbon footprint and improve its overall sustainability.

- **Who is Green Energy Consulting?**

GEC are a specialist cost management consultancy company based in Gateshead. They have been working closely with the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Pentecostal Church and the United Reformed Church to deliver the Green Journey Energy Saving Scheme elsewhere throughout the country.

## **Green Energy**

- **What is Green Energy?**

Green energy is generated from natural and renewable energy sources that can be replenished. Green energy sources are called renewable energy because they will not run out.

- **Is Green Energy more expensive?**

Green tariffs now account for many of the cheapest deals on the energy market, despite many consumers still wrongly believing renewable energy deals are more expensive.

- **What is the source of Green Energy?**

Green Gas comes from Anaerobic Digestion. The electricity comes from the following renewable sources:

- 43% Wind
- 53% Hydro
- 43% CHP (Combined Heat & Power)

- **What is Anaerobic Digestion (Green Gas)?**

Anaerobic Digestion is the process by which organic matter such as animal or food waste is broken down to produce biogas and biofertiliser. This process happens in the absence of oxygen in a sealed, oxygen-free tank called an anaerobic digester.

- **What is carbon footprint?**

A Carbon Footprint is defined as the total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities. Examples of this may be: driving a vehicle and heating your home.

- **How can I reduce my carbon footprint?**

Carbon Footprint is an important part of any organisations environmental policy. Through green contracting and effective energy management Green Journey can provide churches with carbon reductions of nearly 40%. Renewable energy is clean, safe and generated by natural/renewable energy sources that won't run out. After your survey we will also produce a report which advises you on the different ways you can reduce your carbon footprint and how we can help you achieve this.

- **What is a FIT charge?**

The FIT charge (Feed in Tariff) is an environmental programme aimed at promoting widespread uptake of small-scale, low carbon, electricity generation technologies. The FIT scheme requires electricity suppliers to pay fixed tariffs to micro and small renewable energy and micro Combined Heat & Power (CHP) generators for the electricity generated and exported to the National Grid. SSE like all suppliers is exposed to this increasing additional cost and will pass this on to customers. For transparency, SSE always show this as a separate item and do not include this within the unit rate which may other suppliers often do. Electricity suppliers with more than 250,000 customers, such as SSE, are required to pay generators accredited under the FITs scheme a fixed tariff for the electricity they generate as well as the surplus electricity they export to the grid. Suppliers with fewer than 250,000 customers can voluntarily participate. The scheme is only available for sign up until 2019 and has been capped by the government to a budget of £100m.

- **What suppliers do Green Journey use and why?**

Green Journey use a wide range of suppliers. However, SSE & Crown form the majority of our procurement basket. SSE is one of the most experienced business energy providers in the UK. They provide sustainable energy solutions designed to help meet Green Journey's specific targets. SSE has the broadest portfolio of renewable energy generating assets in the UK and Ireland and through SSE Green, they can provide electricity that's backed by Ofgem's Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin scheme which could help your church report zero carbon emissions for the electricity you purchase. Since April 2007 SSE has invested over £4bn in renewable sources of generation with over 2,500MW of wind (onshore and offshore) and Hydro assets in operation. They also have under construction approximately a further 400MW of onshore wind generation.

For Gas meters, Green Journey use Crown.

Crown Gas and Power are a single fuel, energy supplier renowned for their committed service, competitive prices, and fixed term supply contracts. Being a single fuel supplier, their extensive experience enables them to provide Green Journey with Carbon Neutral Gas and includes service alterations and smart upgrades. Crown's carbon neutral gas is offset by quality efficiency schemes that provide sustainable development in communities around the world. With Crown, you can choose gas which is all carbon neutral. They offset the carbon footprint of your gas through energy efficiency and community schemes and you get a certificate to show that you have chosen a carbon neutral supply.

We have been working with these suppliers for many years now and have great relationships with both of them. Both suppliers provide us with green energy contracts which can radically cut carbon emissions, reducing your environmental impact and helping you on your journey toward sustainably.

## Understanding the Markets

### ○ **The Energy Market**

- The energy market deals with the trade and supply of energy.
- The market is regulated by Ofgem (Office of Gas and Electricity Markets)
- Supply and demand of gas and electricity play a major factor in how much you pay for your energy. Through February to March 2018 there was a spell of extreme cold which drove the prices on the electricity market to almost double and gas prices to almost quadruple due to high heating demands.
- In 2018, the energy industry reached a milestone with renewable energy producing a record output. Enough energy was produced from renewables to power more than 50% of midday power demands.
- Due to the gas market being oversupplied, the market has seen deep declines of prices, falling approximately 2-3% and the UK is expected to receive four more LNG (liquefied natural gas) cargoes throughout December.

### ○ **Industry Charges**

- The current electricity market is in backwardation. This means the prices for electricity are decreasing the further in to the future it is to be delivered. The costs of electricity are higher in the current year than that for future years.
- Energy bills are made up of a combination of commodity costs (the fuel you use) and non-commodity costs. Non-commodity costs are made up of governmental charges and 3rd party charges.
- Non-commodity costs for electricity (3rd party costs such as network costs, the cost of delivering electricity to the meter) are set to rise 12% in 2019-2020. Wholesale costs are set to decrease by 3%.
- In April 2019, climate change levy (CCL) is set to rise. This is because in March 2016, the government announced it would scrap the carbon reduction commitment energy efficiency scheme (CRC) at the end of the 2018/2019 compliance year. This means that CCL will now be the only government tax on carbon on energy bills. The government are therefore increasing the rate of CCL to recover the revenue that will be lost from abolishing the CRC. CCL on gas is set to rise up to 67% and on electricity 45%.

## Standing Charges & AMRs

- **What is a standing charge?**

A standing charge is the cost of having a gas and electric supply. The standing charge is the fee you pay to your supplier for the benefit of having energy. Your standing charge pays for costs such as meter readings and keeping your church connected to the main gas and electricity supply. Your standing charge also covers costs for government schemes. Some of these government schemes include schemes that aim to reduce CO2 and aided homes in need.

- **What is an AMR (Smart Meter)?**

An AMR is an automatic meter reading. This meter automatically collects consumption, diagnostic and status data from your meter. Once it collects this data it transfers it to a central database for billing, analysing and troubleshooting.

- **What are the benefits of an AMR meter (Smart Meter)?**

An AMR meter comes with many different advantages. Firstly, it takes all the hassle away from you. Instead of taking meter readings every month the AMR meter automatically does this for you and sends it to your supplier. So, no more waiting in long queues on the phone to submit your meter reading or estimated bills due to late submission of readings. You will get accurate bills and meter readings. The smart meter tracks how much energy you are using in pounds and pence. Through this you can track how much energy you are using and find new ways you can reduce your energy usage. This can help you use energy more wisely and avoid wastage.

- **How much will an AMR meter cost (Smart Meter)?**

AMR meters do cost slightly more than your traditional meters. Annually it will only cost you about £50 more and this will be included in your standing charge. Although AMR meters will cost you slightly more, they do have many additional benefits that will make the job of managing your energy accounts easier.

## Account Management and benefits of the scheme

- **What benefits do we get from the scheme?**

Green Journey aims to provide a total solution to Churches where we will take on all aspects of utility management. The team at Green Journey will not only provide renewable energy quotes and offer guidance and assistance on carbon reduction, but we will also help take on the administrative burden of energy management, so our Churches can focus on their mission and ministry.

Green Journey is built on developing relationships with our church clients. We pride ourselves on providing a highly personal service where knowing our clients and their individual needs and interests is of the utmost importance.

We aim to answer all calls within 30 seconds. So, you will be speaking to our Green Journey team within seconds. Instead of sitting in long call centres queues call us and we will contact your supplier for you.

Here at Green Journey we will validate each bill to make sure you aren't paying excessive VAT charges and assist you in reclaiming any over payment if you would like us to. Every Church is a charitable organisation and therefore entitled to pay VAT at 5%.



Full Account Management



Energy Surveying



Smart Meter Installation



CCL (Climate Change Levy) & VAT Investigation and Rebates



Renewable Energy Procurement

- **Who should I contact if I have further questions?**

If you have any further questions about the energy procurement scheme, please do contact us.

Green Journey Team,

Craig Hogg  
Ecclesiastical Account Manager  
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[info@greenjourney.org](mailto:info@greenjourney.org)

Or contact your Diocesan Environment Officer or Diocesan Social Responsibility Officer