



Diocese of Bristol
TRANSFORMING CHURCH.
TOGETHER.



Net Zero
Church Building
Diocese of Bristol

St John the Baptist, Colerne

Installation of heated pew seating.

The Issue

St John the Baptist was struggling with their gas heating system being inadequate to keep parishioners warm. People were no longer able to attend services as it was too cold. The gas-fired, hot air heating system was too noisy to run during services. Recognizing the importance of decarbonizing the church as Christians, they needed an electric heating system to move away from the high carbon and high-cost gas system.

The solution

The church already had some old-fashioned infrared heating and knew that the right approach was to heat the person, not the space. The Church decided to go for the heated pew system, they explored providers of electric heating listed on the Parish Buying website. They liked the heated pew option and obtained a quote to install heating in all of their pews, which seat 150 parishioners. The Diocese provided £10,000 of funding towards the pew heating, with the remaining £9,903 coming from the church. The heating system was activated at the beginning of March 2024.

The impact

The church will monitor gas and electric consumption over the next year and compare it with previous years. They realise the need for additional infrared heating to condemn their existing gas boiler.



"The effect of the pew heating is really quite remarkable. It's controlled with a dial like an old-fashioned volume control, and actually we needed to use this to turn it down as it's quite warm. The pew heating really does transfer all around the body."

"We are excited by the combination of infrared and pew heating. There isn't always a one size fits all solution, it needs a multi-pronged approach for all our building users"

Michael

Parochial Church Council (PCC)



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Benefits and challenges with the solution

Benefits

- **Carbon-efficient:** The new system reduces the church's carbon emissions.
- **Increased comfort:** The targeted heating approach enhances comfort during worship.
- **Lower costs:** By moving away from gas heating, the church anticipates lower heating costs per service.
- **Quick warming time:** The new system provides rapid heating, improving the overall efficiency.

Challenges

- **Funding:** Securing the necessary funds required effort and coordination, with a significant portion coming from the Diocese and the rest from the church.
- **Faculty application:** Navigating the faculty application process was a critical step to ensure proper approvals and compliance.
- **System performance:** Ensuring the pew heaters effectively meet the church's needs and that the congregation adapt to their use. Easy to use controller mitigates this.

Next steps

Following their free energy audit and free 3D scan provided by the Diocese, the church plans to explore new overhead infrared heating for their community activities. They are in discussion with Herschel to identify a way forward with infrared heating. The 3D scan has been sent to the suppliers to specify the right solution accurately.