

## Issues for rural benefices

Multiple historic and listed buildings and their heritage to care for and maintain

Small number of church wardens and volunteers

Small congregations that often don't reflect the make up of their local community

Low incomes, especially after Covid

Commitment to be Net Zero Carbon by 2030

Dwindling populations

Recovering from the pandemic

## Values of Church heritage

Memory keepers for their communities

Traditions of local communality and service

Persistence through time and societal change

Arks of biodiversity and beauty

Central locations within settlements

Spaces of solace and tranquillity

Open (if not yet accessible) to anyone



Inspired North East  
Rural Churches for Everyone

## Buildings Action Planning

Understanding the heritage of the church buildings and their grounds:  
**Statements of Significance**

Ascertaining the needs within our communities:  
**Growing a House of Good**

Determining roles for every church building in each benefice:  
**Mission Action Planning**

Accessibility, inclusion and safeguarding:  
**Fit for Everyone**

Reaching net zero carbon by 2030:  
**Practical Pathway**

Cutting our cloth according to our means:  
**Financial Planning and Budgeting**

## Benefits for rural PCCs

Actionable sustainability plans in place for each benefice, tested through pilot projects supported by Protected Landscape partners

Mission and needs for each local community will be enabled by reviewed Church building status

More people will be using our heritage buildings and their grounds more frequently

Buildings and grounds are open and easily accessible to the widest range of people possible

People feel welcome to enjoy the tranquillity, beauty and heritage of our churches and grounds

People donating time and skills in caring for the heritage and memories held within the churches

Retained buildings have a 'Practical Pathway' to achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2030

Clergy and laity have more capacity for mission as responsibilities for buildings reduce

Financial viability improves by rationalising building costs, increasing incomes, and evidencing eligibility for community grants

Aspire Award scheme, online toolkit, robust evaluation, and end of project conference will give confidence to other benefices doing similar work

## Research and Evidence base

RCfE began in 2019 and is expected to end in summer 2022. It has been reconfigured and extended to respond to the impacts of the pandemic. This research informed how we restructured our work:

**Taylor Review Pilot: Sustainability of Church Buildings.** Historic England, 2020

**Strategic Buildings Review template.** Church of England, 2016

**The House of Good: the economic and social value of church buildings to the UK.** National Churches Trust, 2020.

**Growing Good: growth, social action and discipleship in the Church of England.** Theos Thinktank and the Church Urban Fund, 2020.

**Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon.** Church of England Environment Programme, 2020

**Financial planning and budgeting for churches.** Stewardship, 2020.

[www.newcastle.anglican.org/rcfe](http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/rcfe)

## Rural Churches for Everyone

RCfE brings together the Rural Strand and the Transformation Project to help rural churches delivering the Diocesan vision in their communities:

### *growing church, bringing hope*

RCfE is developing a strategic and sustainable approach to help PCCs managing historic church buildings. It is being trialled in four rural benefices within the Diocese of Newcastle: Moorland, Upper Wansbeck, Bellingham North, and Embleton.

Rural Churches for Everyone invests National Lottery players' money so that the heritage we care for benefits a wider range of people in rural communities.

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## Rural Churches for Everyone

*“A partnership project helping rural benefices to transform their chosen church buildings into sustainable, community and heritage assets fit for today’s world”*

- The Rural Strand Guiding Coalition

