



# St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

## Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 16 February 2026

### Present:

Will Wake (Chair)  
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)  
David Houghton (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech  
Sonia Bowen  
Stephen Cheetham  
Sue Cooper  
William Hopkinson  
Richard Nightingale  
Anne Scull  
Christine Walters

Ian Hill - Hereford Diocese Net Zero Project Manager  
Imogen Pearce – CofE Environment Programme  
Lee Westcott – Worcester Diocese Net Zero Project Manager

### Apologies:

Ian James, Sue Simpson

**1504.** The meeting voted that Will Wake should chair the PCC on this occasion.

**1505.** Will introduced Ian, Imogen and Lee, who attended the meeting via Teams. He had circulated a summary of the current situation. The church had been granted Net Zero Demonstrator Church status and hence had reached the starting blocks. This meeting was to consider whether to proceed further, to Stage 1 of the process. Funding was available in Stage 1 essentially to get the church to the stage where it's final plan (which would constitute Stage 2) was known and understood. It thus includes funding for drawing up plans, for fundraising advice and for a bat survey (which for some reason is required). Up to £18,000 is available for Stage 1. Stage 1 funding is available, even were the church to decide that to proceed would be unsustainable, and that the church should not proceed to stage 2. It was expected that Stage 1 would take between three and six months.

**1506.** Stage 2 would be the installation phase. Up to £85,000 is available from the central church towards this. It was acknowledged that costs are high, although the maximum identified (£350,000) is a worst-case figure. Firstly, the cost of air-source heat pumps is reducing all the time, and their efficiency is increasing. Secondly it is very possible that no increase in the power supply to the church would be needed, reducing the estimated cost

considerably. A more accurate estimate of the actual cost should emerge as a function of Stage 1.

**1507.** Imogen Pearce explained that the role of her team would be to see the St Michael's project to completion by acting as a go-between between the PCC, the DAC and the national team. One immediate need identified is for the CofE Technical Advisory Service to work with Ian Mather to agree the heating needs of the church. Essentially, the TAS believe that the energy requirements identified by Ian are over-stated. This is a technical debate that it was hoped Imogen would be able to facilitate<sup>1</sup>.

***Action: Will Wake***

**1508.** As well as the church offering advice to other potential candidates (a requirement of Stage 1 funding), Will Wake mentioned the need for St Michael's also to learn from other churches further down the road towards Net Zero. Specifically, he mentioned the need to explore how they set up their teams, and allocated work within them. He and Andrew Beech had already met the team from St George, Clun, Shropshire. St George's is the only other NZ Demonstrator Church in the diocese, thus far.

***Action: Will Wake***

**1509.** There was a discussion about the installation of an increased number of PV cells on the church roof. St Michael's is a Grade I listed building, so opposition from Historic England could be expected to any proposal that would allow PV cells to be seen from ground level. The attitude of the planning authority (Herefordshire Council) was unknown, although it was noted that they had declared a climate emergency, and hence might be expected to be more sympathetic. Ultimately the decision lay with the council and the Diocesan Chancellor.

**1510.** After Ian, Imogen and Lee left the meeting, Will Wake said that the next stage, if the PCC voted to proceed to Stage 1, would be to set up a team to raise funds for the project in conjunction with an external team that would be funded as part of the Stage 1 grant, and another team to follow up the technical aspects. These would report back to the PCC in four to six months.

***Action: Will Wake***

**1511.** Will, seconded by Sonia Bowen, proposed that the church should proceed to Stage 1 of the NZ grant project. This was agreed unanimously.

**Date of Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be at 7.15pm on Wednesday 18 March in the Chapter House.

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Mather has said that he would be willing to hold discussions with the Technical Advisory Service

## St Michael and all Angels Ledbury Net Zero Carbon Summary

### 1. Overview

#### Stage 1 Net Zero Carbon Demonstrator Church Funding

Involves up to £18k support to prepare for Stage 2 Capital award. It is conditional on:

- Decommissioning gas boiler (when alt. in place, but max 2-3 years)
- Getting our Solar / Air Source heat pump plan checked (Technical Advisory Service), and prepping a full schedule and tech spec for the heating solution proposed
- Providing a basic carbon action plan
- Providing (with Net Zero officer) a plan to “share” with other churches
- Bat Survey
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Fundraising plan with “Action Planning”

### 2. Today’s meeting - PCC vote required to progress approve Stage 1 (funding condition)

- Joining us to explain their role:
- Ian Hill, Diocesan Net Zero Officer, Diocese of Hereford
- Lee Westcott, Net Zero Project Manager (Church Buildings Lead), Diocese of Worcester
- Imogen Pearce, Net Zero Carbon Grants Officer – Church of England Environment Programme

The project will require a “team” at the church, but there is interest and we haven’t formally asked yet!

### 3. Longer Term (from Email Circulated Paper)

- Solar Array / Air Source heat pump installation
- Up to £350k (very conservative, includes items we may not need)
- £75k from NZCDC funding
- ~ £175k from fundraising (Friends, Lottery, Trusts, Community, etc.)
- - Up to £100k from Church Funds

The church could offset all current heating costs and sell energy back to the grid, with a net benefit of around £20k a year (we have a favourable sell back tariff and a new array could generate up to 4 times the energy yield).

### 4. Consider:

- We may be required to meet net zero requirements anyway (via faculty), but funding on this scale is unlikely to be available again.
- There is an “opportunity cost” of the funding, we could use it on something else. The same is true of people.
- The project will draw significant attention and probably support, from a local council that have declared a climate crisis, a Green MP and those within our community who are supportive of creation care and/or sustainability. It may also help us partner with other churches.