

# Heritage, Community and Climate

## A Sustainable Future for Otley Parish Church

### Carbon Net Zero Group

### Report for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2026

It is over a year since the Roof Appeal was launched and we want to say a big thank you for all the donations received and fundraising events organised. The amount raised stands at £82,200 and when other gifts received prior to the appeal and bank deposit interest are added, that makes a total of £87,900.

The CNZ Group knew that the only possible large funder able to consider our size of project was the National Lottery Heritage Fund and we have been in close contact with them since September 2025. At all stages of the project we have reported to the Parochial Church Council and they have been very encouraging and supportive.

It was advised that fundraisers be appointed and three were considered with Irving Patrick Consulting being appointed. Also, some architects were invited to submit proposals to develop the project and we were pleased to be able to appoint our existing church architect, Carl Andrews, following that process. He and the fundraisers have worked together on other church projects.

The first stage was to enter an 'Expression of Interest' submission to the NLHF which included replacing all of the church roofs (including good insulation), replace the church ceilings, install solar panels on the south facing roofs and a new air sourced heating system to replace our two gas boilers.

We were encouraged to have this stage in the process approved by the NLHF and the feedback we had was that, when we moved on to submit a comprehensive 'Stage 1 Application', we should 'dream big'. They asked that we include all that we would like to see happen to the church building over the next six to seven years. They emphasised that the project should also state how we would engage with the population of Otley and other community groups, as well as visitors to the town in promoting the heritage of the oldest building in Otley.

We embarked on more detailed planning with the architect, also working closely with the fundraisers. It quickly became clear that an underused area of the present building was the mezzanine level above the Parish Room. Plans have now been produced to use this space for additional meeting rooms and a separate storage area extending with flooring in the bell tower at that level. There would be a remodelling of the north porch incorporating a platform lift to the upper level.

We would commit to the employment of a 'Heritage Officer' on a time limited contract who would help in the promotion of links to local schools and other community groups. Organisation of heritage focussed events would be part of the job description. This would result in a greater use of the church premises and a possible income stream.

The project has been fully costed at around £2,500,000 which is a far larger sum than originally reported to the church. If our bid to NLHF was successful, they would meet between 80 - 90 per cent of the cost. If we failed, we would be back to the drawing board and reduce the scope of the project considerably.

The date for submitting the 'Stage 1 Application' is 29 May 2026 but there is an alternative to submit at the end of August 2026. The NLHF are understandably 'risk averse' and there are a few factors that need consideration by the CNZ Group, the PCC and our advisors.

1. There are 17 possible applicants with projects of various sizes totalling £50M. The amount of funding which will be awarded is £13M.
2. At this stage it is unlikely that planning permission for solar panels would be granted for a Grade 1 listed building in a conservation area. We have therefore decided to only include cabling and other preparatory works with the panels being installed as a separate contract later.
3. Our NLHF contacts are able to advise on the quality of our application documents and the best timing for submitting our application and we are still awaiting that advice.

Norman Barr  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2026