Rochester Bridge is owned by medieval charity, the Rochester Bridge Trust, and comprises three structures crossing the tidal River Medway.

The Trust’s journey to Net Zero Carbon management began in 2019, with the calculation of its carbon footprint for all routine bridge maintenance activities. Between 2020 and 2021, options were evaluated to reduce emissions from routine processes and introduce low-carbon infrastructure. Since 1 April 2022, all maintenance activities on Rochester Bridge are carried out at Net Zero Carbon.

Working with Term Maintenance Contractor FM Conway, the Trust reduced emissions for core maintenance activities by more than 88%, with the remaining residual emissions offset by tree planting.

This was achieved in a three-stage process: reviewing the means and frequency of activities; switching to electric plant utilising renewable power; and replacing fuel such as diesel with more environmentally friendly alternatives.

Key to the pace and extent of carbon reduction has been the determination to “just do it”, getting on with making changes – no matter how small – as and when it became possible.

This was supported by creation of a bespoke calculator to evaluate the carbon impact of alternative solutions for each activity. Carbon impacts are converted from conventional units of tCO₂e (tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent) into the number of trees which would be needed to sequester the same amount of carbon. This simple approach makes it far easier to understand relative emissions quickly, and helps to communicate the consequences of options to engineers and the public.

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Tags: Management, Maintenance, Bridge Owner, Existing Bridges, Build Nothing, Build Less.