



Diocese of Ely

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

The role of Churchwarden has existed for over 500 years and at its heart is to be the chief representative of the people of the parish in the leadership of their church. You are chosen by the whole community, and you carry the responsibility of making sure their needs are held before the church and that the needs of the church are communicated to the community. In good times and bad, you uphold this task with faith, courage and kindness. Thank you!

In 2023, all Anglican churches reported on the projects that they host, run or support that serve their local community. The feedback tells us, among other things, that 60% of churches either host, run or support a local foodbank; 37% host activities for older people and 65% run some other form of social community care. From this, we estimate that over 10% of the population of our Diocese receive some form of pastoral care from our churches.

We recognise the role that Churchwardens play to make this happen. This is no small task, with 95% of our church buildings having listed status. It is perhaps not ideal that we care for such a large estate of medieval buildings, as well as seeking to fulfil the Great Commission of Jesus (Matt 28.19f) and loving our neighbour as ourselves (Mk 12.31), yet generally you do this without complaint, Thank you!

In 2025, we are recommencing the Archdeacon's Church Visits programme (formerly 'visitations'). We want you to experience these as reassurance, where we and the Rural Deans will seek to assist and support you. Please use 2024 to prepare for these visits and assure yourselves that you have in place secure foundations for the fantastic work that our churches do, in the name of Jesus.

God bless you,



Richard Harlow

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Churchwardens' Training Day 2024



We are pleased to invite you to attend this year's Churchwardens' Training Day.


We are working on a new format for the day. Several Diocesan staff

and colleagues will be sharing their knowledge and skills but also there will be more time for discussion and interaction between yourselves as well as possibly concluding with an open question forum. Further details to follow.

The training day will, as ever, be open to all Churchwardens, whether you are newly elected or have been in post for some time. Please do invite others within your parish who might be thinking about serving as a Churchwarden in the future, to come along too, as the day is a good overview of what to expect when in office.

Date: Saturday 28 September
Time: 9.45am to 3.30pm (tbc)
Venue: Etheldreda House,
206 Lancaster Way Business Park,
Witchford, Ely CB6 3NX

Email invitations will be circulated in due course and more information will be made available on the Diocesan website here:

 [www.elydiocese.org/
churchwardentraining-day.php](http://www.elydiocese.org/churchwardentraining-day.php)

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Building Better School Links with the Parish

Revd Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry

The benefits of a strong link between a school and its local parish church have been highlighted over many years. The Parish-School Covenant seeks to provide a framework within which such a relationship can be developed and grow. The



Covenant enables the parish and school to see the relationship as a mutually beneficial partnership and encourages both school and parish church to find creative ways of expressing it within the day-to-day life of the two organisations. At its most basic, the Parish-School Covenant enables a mutual conversation to take place where both the school and the parish can benefit from such a relationship.

Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry, commented that: *"Partnerships in ministry are important and it has been my experience that as the relationship between the school and the parish church grows and develops, we see new and exciting opportunities emerge which benefit the children, their families, the staff, the congregations and of course the wider community. The investment of time and energy is well worth it."*

We are investing in School Chaplains by providing training (in partnership with Ridley Hall) to people who wish to explore this ministry or who are already in a 'chaplainship type' role. Our first Authorised Chaplaincy Assistants 'graduated' at the beginning of February. We are about to launch the Licensed Chaplaincy Course as well as re-running the Authorised Chaplaincy Assistant Course again this year. For further information, please see the Diocesan website.

Development Officer for School Mission

The Revd Mandy Flaherty is our Development Officer for School Mission and is passionate about school chaplaincy and the development of a closer partnership between schools and parishes. She has a wide range of experience in both school and parish ministry. If you are interested in finding out how your parish can develop their relationship with the local school, please contact mandy.flaherty@elydiocese.org.



Parish Safeguarding Dashboards

Rebecca Boswell, Safeguarding Advisor

Good parish safeguarding can involve a significant amount of work. Parish Safeguarding Dashboards are making administration and governance simpler for parishes.

Safeguarding Dashboards were designed with the help of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and Incumbents in a wide range of parishes. Safeguarding Dashboards are currently being used by 7,000 churches in 37 participating dioceses throughout the Church of England. Almost 80% of parishes in the Diocese of Ely have joined their Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Safeguarding Dashboards platform is free. Simply ask Sarah King (sarah.king@elydiocese.org) to send you an invitation to your Parish Dashboard. If you have already signed up but haven't updated your Dashboard in a while, please remember to review it regularly.

Safeguarding Dashboards has been designed to display a clear and simple dashboard on a smartphone, tablet or computer. The home page allows the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent, Churchwardens and other authorised users to see the current status of compliance at a glance. **Green** lights bring reassurance that all is well; **amber** means that action is needed, and **red** means it's urgent.

The Dashboard also contains direct links to other useful resources. The aim is to provide Dashboard users with everything they need in one place. It will even produce an Action Plan for discussion and approval by the Parochial Church Council (which has been a requirement since 2017). Data from the Dashboards also helps the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to identify where parishes need the most support.

www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding



Protecting the Earth

Revd Canon Nigel Cooper, Diocesan Environment Officer

2023 was the global hottest year ever, and by the greatest margin. Hopefully this year will not be as hot, but the trend is dramatically worrying.



What is less clear is what the impact of rapidly rising temperatures will be on humans and nature – apart from the fact that it could be severe. General Synod in 2020 ambitiously called for our Church to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZC) emissions by 2030. I am proud that the Church has responded swiftly and is being much more serious about the climate crisis than other organisations I know.

Our own Diocesan Synod endorsed an Action Plan towards this target last October. The Ely Plan frames the work within the Five Marks of Mission. The NZC programme is not a marginal concern for a few environmentalists but is core to our whole missional task: proclamation, nurture, service, justice and creation. NZC is not primarily an extra task, but a creative way to re-envision the core task of the church, i.e. our mission.

What does this mean for you at parish level?

I am just going to highlight some key first steps that every parish can take to get things underway on decarbonising heating, reducing energy use, and travelling sustainably.

1. **Complete the annual Energy Footprint Tool (EFT):** We need to monitor our progress. The national church already asks parishes to submit mission and financial statistics. For the past few years, alongside these, we are asked to submit our energy data on the EFT part of Parish Returns Online (churchofengland.org). Most of the data needed can be easily read off your energy bills. Please can you ensure that someone from your church provides the information asked by this Tool. See **Energy Footprint Tool | The Church of England** for more information.
2. **Change to a renewable electricity tariff:** About the simplest way to decarbonise is to switch your electricity tariff to one that is genuinely renewable. Suppliers who are recognised by the C of E as meeting this criterion, and also a list of green gas suppliers, can be found by searching online for the **Church of England's Energy Footprint Tool** website page.
3. **Study the 'Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon for Church Buildings'.** This path begins with simple, but essential, things such as maintaining the building well. It moves on to actions like changing to LED lighting or considering under-pew electric

heaters. Installing PV on church roofs comes late on in the path. At an early stage of working through the 'Practical Path' contact the DAC for advice. Some actions will require a faculty, and applicants now have to demonstrate how they are engaging with NZC as part of the process: see **Net zero carbon church | The Church of England**

4. **Enrol with Eco Church.** This is a brilliant resource for churches, helping them with all aspects of environmental engagement, not just buildings and NZC. Their website has lots of advice and ideas on worship, land, community engagement, lifestyle, campaigning and for children. The beauty is its framework. After you register, you then take a survey of where you are now and assess what you could do to improve your score and achieve a Bronze Award. And, then there are the Silver and the Gold Awards to aim for. If not already registered, do encourage your parish to register and begin aiming for Bronze.
5. **Because the nature and climate crises are intimately linked, General Synod is expected to further challenge us:**
 - a. Create a simple churchyard management plan to protect its animals, plants and trees. **Caring For God's Acre** – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK provides guidance and examples that can inspire your congregation and local community.
 - b. Record the biodiversity of your churchyard through taking part in **Churches Count On Nature**. This is a fun opportunity for local people to discover what is growing and living around your church and will help you devise your management plan.
 - c. You can receive support and encouragement through the local **Churchyard Award (wildlifebcn.org)**. This award also has Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

This is a very exciting time for the church. We can be an inspiring witness to our communities, where many people are anxious and fatalistic. We can demonstrate and speak of our hope in God, who creates and restores us.

Please contact me for further information and encouragement

Revd Canon Nigel Cooper, Diocesan Environment Officer, at:

- ✉ nigel.cooper@elydiocese.org
- 🌐 www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/environment-and-sustainability



Get Your Church Noticed

Holly Robinson (née Isted), Historic Church Buildings Support Officer

Many people first encounter a church online. Whether they are looking for a place to worship at or to visit whilst on holiday, having a strong online presence is important. But you don't need to become a website designer or social media guru to do it; take advantage of what is already available.

A Church Near You and **Explore Churches** are two excellent national websites which every church should be featured on.

A Church Near You (www.achurchnearyou.com) is a great place for general information, including news, events and activities. Whilst Explore Churches (www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore) is aimed at tourists and other visitors.

Information is easy to upload and keep updated – if your church is already on these websites, please make sure the information and images are current (use good quality photographs). It is really useful if you add a link on A Church Near You to your webpage on Explore Churches and vice versa, that way everyone should be able to find the information they want in a way that appeals directly to their interests.

If you already have a church website, remember to add the basic information to these national sites and then include a link to your own parish site. Look out for other local and regional websites such as <https://explorewestnorfolk.co.uk> and the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust's Church Directory (<https://camhct.uk/churches>).

An open church



It is also important that when people visit your church, they find it open and welcoming. Contrary to popular belief, insurers generally recommend that churches are left unlocked during daylight hours. If you cannot do this, use a well-produced sign to display the detail of a key holder and replace/clean the sign when it starts to look untidy.

Wherever possible open your church

for national events such as Ride + Stride and Heritage Open Days, and local events.

For more tips, see **Open and Welcome Guidance** on our website.

Localised Support for Parishes



Revd Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry

The Mission and Ministry Department consists of a network of different teams and working groups. We seek to work collaboratively with local parishes to ensure that we are enabling the local church to **grow in their engagement with the local community** and **grow deeper in their discipleship**.

We recognise that there is no 'one-size' parish and so our support is not 'one-size-fits-all'. We seek to be flexible and responsive in terms of our support as we seek to embrace the national aspirations of being a church that is growing younger and more diverse as well as equipping a mixed-ecology of ministry pathways for a mixed-ecology of church. These are exciting and at the same time challenging times for the local church and we seek to help the local church build in confidence, capacity and creativity.

We offer a variety of short courses (soon to be offered through our *Open Christian Learning Portal*), flexible training pathways for authorised, licenced and ordained ministries as well as coaching/mentoring for parishes and those in leadership. We work closely with other departments within the Central Support Team of the Diocese to help provide support for parishes.

We also seek to help share good practice across the Diocese so that no longer are we all reinventing the wheel. If you have a got a 'good-news story' – something that you think has gone really well – why not contact Holli Bielby (our Development Officer: Communications) who would love to hear from you.

✉ holli.bielby@elydiocese.org

You can find out more about who's who in the Mission and Ministry team on the Diocesan website here – www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/mission-and-ministry.

Why not sign-up for the weekly ministry mailing to keep up to date? You can follow this link to do just that. To subscribe to the **Ministry Mailing Newsletter**, visit www.elydiocese.org/subscribe-to-the-ministry-newsletter.php.

For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **X:** @churchmatters

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