



Diocese of Chester

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

Barring an unexpected twist, we are back in person for the Archdeacons' Visitations this year. We have been really looking forward to seeing you in person after what has been such a difficult time for so many. We'd also like to pay tribute and register the deep thanks for the whole diocese for the amazing service which wardens, along with other church officers, have given Christ's church over the last two years. It has been a great story of resilience and faithfulness under pressure. Thank you!

Although many of us have learned to love Zoom, Teams and the rest, there is something wonderful and personal in meeting together which we have missed. And this reminds us of something very important about the role of a Churchwarden. Like Archdeacons, Churchwardens can often find themselves spending lots of time on buildings, rules and regulations, finances, and so on. And indeed, all of those things are vital to the working of the local church. But again like Archdeacons, the ministry Churchwardens hold is at its heart a people ministry. As you work with other leaders, lay and ordained, at a time when everyone is under pressure, the health of relationships in that leadership is critically important for the church. And thinking of the congregations more widely, you have a greater role than you might imagine in setting the right tone of welcome and warmth. It's about people.



Writing to the Colossians, Paul says:

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

As he prays for the Christians in Colossae, one of the things Paul really wants to give thanks for is the love they have for all the saints (that is, all of the followers of Jesus). As we look around the diocese, it is so encouraging when we see church leaders, including Churchwardens, loving the people, because of the hope we share in Christ. May it be our aim this year to be loving in our words and actions, for Jesus' sake.

Ian and Mike



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The Finance Department

We are the transactional and functional department of Church House. You might say that the finance team are the service centre of the organisation. Focused on managing our funds effectively, we aim to support our departments and serve our parishes.

Meet our team

Gill Ellis – Finance Officer

Gill looks after the day-to-day accounting function of the diocese. She joined the team in 2013 with her meticulous approach to the bookkeeping, Gill keeps a watchful eye over all funds arriving into the diocesan bank and makes sure that all supplier payments, parish grants and reimbursements happen seamlessly. As well as looking after the transactions for Church House she also supports the accounting function of the Foxhill conference centre.

Emma Hathaway – Office Manager & Finance Assistant

If you visit or ring Church House, you will undoubtedly be greeted by Emma. She has been a familiar face at Church House for some 28 years. Emma provides the team with superb admin support. She has an amazing memory for names and numbers and her years of knowledge of the parishes proves invaluable. As Office Manager, Emma oversees all the activity related to events at Church House if you have attended an event here at Church House, Emma will have been pivotal to it running smoothly.

Maxine Southwick – HR Officer

Probably the longest-serving employee in the diocese is Maxine. Although Maxine's work now concentrates on Human Resources, she was up until recently part of the finance team. With this in mind, Maxine has a breadth of knowledge and experience to support Parish Treasurers, Churchwardens and clergy in understanding all aspects of Stipends and clergy moves. She offers guidance to parishes in vacancy and is able to answer general queries relating to clergy fees.

Nigel Strange – Head of Finance

Our Head of Finance is Nigel, a long-standing member of the diocese. He oversees the department, leads the creation of Statutory Accounts as well as managing the IT requirements of Church House and Foxhill. He has a wealth of charity law and charity finance knowledge.

Sharon Taylor-Booth – Assistant Accountant

The main source of income for the diocese is Parish Share. Prepared and communicated to the parishes by Sharon, she is often the first port of call for the Parish Treasurer. Sharon has a passion for the charity sector, has a charity finance background and will help you navigate the complexities of the treasurer role. She is keen to help all PCC members understand their role as charity trustees.

It's a treasurer's life

A finance role in any organisation is a mechanical and routine requirement, a service necessary to enable the aims and objectives of the organisations to thrive. Financial tasks are rarely exciting and don't typically come with a queue of volunteers willing to do them.

Parish Share, Restricted Funds, Unrestricted Funds, Designated Funds, Donations, Receipts, Payments, Free Reserves, Surplus, Deficit – these are all terms that a Parish Treasurer will need to become familiar with. The Anglican calendar revolves around an annual calendar of activities, the treasurer role requires an added layer of dates to manage which can often get in the way of some of the year's main events.

PCCs, as charities, rely on volunteers to carry out many, if not all, of the administrative and financial functions. The parishes in Chester Diocese are fortunate to have volunteer treasurers who are dedicated to their role. Some are long-standing and have amassed a wealth of experience while others are completely new to the role and have no finance background at all.

We recognise that no matter how experienced the treasurer may be, navigating the complexities of charity finance and ecclesiastical law can be a challenge and with this in mind our aim is to create an environment that is friendly, welcoming and one where questions are answered, and terminology explained helping make the challenges of the treasurer role as straightforward as possible.

When you need a little support

Our parishes do great work; they are independent and very capable, they serve their community well. It is quite rare that we need to get involved in parish life, but occasionally they appreciate some support. Parishes are rightly focused on their Christian mission and can occasionally overlook aspects of the legal and administrative framework that supports this.

Whether it is an experienced treasurer reviewing their role or a new officer finding their feet, we are always happy to talk through the challenge being faced and help identify options and solutions. Many problems can be resolved with a quick conversation or exchange of emails, sometimes a parish may benefit from a visit to Church House or vice versa. Now that we have entered the world of online meetings it is possible to join a PCC meeting to assist with a particular item.

The Finance Team, if necessary, can support a parish through change. From the conversations we have and through discussions with Archdeacons, we will try to identify how and where we can best apply our resources.

What we aim to provide

Having conversations and establishing relationships with our parishes has become key to the work of our team where we need to concentrate our support. As we continue to assist parishes, we are expanding an association of already knowledgeable trustees.

We acknowledge that we cannot serve every parish with a one-to-one service, but what we recognise is that if we can connect our parishes, we can create a network of support for our treasurers. A network will provide a gateway to training resources, a place where areas of concern and extensive knowledge can be shared and an environment where relationships between treasurers can be formed. As we identify gaps in general understanding, we aim to bring together groups of treasurers to discuss different topics. Over the coming year we hope to hold open discussions on items such as, but not limited to:

- **Finding a new treasurer – how can we prepare for the future**
- **Becoming a new treasurer – some basic trips to get you started**
- **Accounting packages vs spreadsheets**
- **Simplifying the tasks – and still getting the job done**
- **End of year accounts – what you need and what you don't!**

If you think we can help, please call us! **Tel: 01928 718834**



Congratulations to our national winner!

Last year, we launched our 'Good News' competition – and now we're proud to announce the national winner.

We asked for stories about your church community – written in the style of a newspaper article, and accompanied by a photograph and a suitable headline. We were looking for uplifting tales – of battling to achieve something special for the parish, perhaps, or tireless volunteering, or dedication to your congregation or wider locality. And we were inundated with amazing entries.

Our judges worked hard to select five regional winners from the huge list, and we announced this at the end of last year, giving each regional winner £1,500 towards church funds as part of Ecclesiastical's aim to donate profits to transform lives and communities.

Now – with the help of the public, through a show of support for their online story – the overall winner, who will receive a further £6,000, has been chosen.

A big congratulations to the national winner

Penlee Cluster Churches, down in the far west of Cornwall – St John's and St Mary's in Penzance, St Peter's in Newlyn, and St Pol de Leon in the village of Paul.

Determined to bring their community together during those difficult months, they launched a fantastic 'Never Alone' initiative. This multi-faceted campaign saw church members team up with local businesses to take pub meals, Cornish pasties, and fish and chip suppers to elderly and vulnerable people. Read their story and those of the other regional winners at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchcomp



Meet your Church Insurance Consultants

Our Church Insurance Consultants are a friendly and approachable team of highly knowledgeable insurance experts who are right on your doorstep and ready to offer guidance and help with any insurance or risk-related issues you might have.

From a simple explanation of the basics of your policy, to guidance on how to combat thieves and vandals, guard against fire, and improve general health and safety, they are there for you, free of charge.



The team – (from top left) Chris, Rebecca, Heather, Lynne, Peter, Nicky, Kay and Derek – are all deeply passionate about customer service, and our country's amazing churches.

Amongst them are theologians, choristers, regular churchgoers, and people who have worked with Christian charities here and abroad, so they really understand your specific needs. And because they're based at regional locations all over the UK, they're also able to tailor their advice to your local requirements.

They have decades of combined industry experience – and standing behind them is Ecclesiastical's 135 years of unrivalled expertise and insight in dealing with everything life might throw at you.



Where possible, the Church Insurance Consultants love to meet customers and talk face-to-face, and are happy to host networking events where you can get to know people from other parishes and share experiences, ideas – and smiles.

If you are unable to meet them in person, they're still there, offering exactly the same services online or over the telephone.

To find out more about the team, and how they could help you and your church, please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/cic or email meetus@ecclesiastical.com (please include your contact details, the name of your church and parish, and policy number if possible), or call them on **0345 777 3322**.

Contains promotional material

Café raises funds – and spirits

When lockdowns led to a dramatic fall in revenue, one church came up with a way to raise funds and create a much needed local community space.



Christ Church in Lofthouse (near Leeds) was struggling for funding, and the village itself had been cut in half by the arrival of the M26 motorway many years ago, leaving its people without a proper place to meet. So the Reverend Mandy Rhodes and others put their heads together and decided to open the TLC Café in the basement of their church.

“Villagers still talk fondly about the old cricket club which was lost when the motorway came through,” said Mandy. “That was where people would meet up for parties and get-togethers. But since it went there hasn’t been anywhere suitable. Like most churches, we were hit really hard by the lockdowns – and we still are, with quite a few of our elderly parishioners now in the habit of joining services online. So we wondered if there was a way we could address both problems, and the café was born.”

They teamed up with CLO Coffee – a Leeds-based Christian coffee shop and roastery – to source a machine and barista training, and redecorated the basement hall, which is the former crypt. In November 2021, they opened the café – and it has gone from strength to strength.

“There’s a lovely, relaxed atmosphere,” said Mandy. “We’re seeing a real group of regulars building – people just like having somewhere to meet up again. After paying off our original outlay we’re now turning a profit, which means we can be more confident about paying our Parish Share. “We have local artists displaying their work here – our current exhibition is of art produced by a local head injury charity – and we take a small 5% cut of any sales, which helps. We have a charity shop and our food bank too. We’re running mother-and-baby drop-ins, and I’m looking at starting baby massage sessions. I’d say the future is bright!”

Especially in rural communities, church buildings are much more than just bricks and mortar. They offer vital spaces for quiet time, reflection and connection, as the TLC Café demonstrates.

From listening to customer feedback, we know that it’s not always easy to pay for the upkeep and care of rural churches, or for the ministry that happens in them.

We asked for your feedback on our printed toolkit – Fundraising in a Box – that was sent to all church customers in January 2021. You told us you liked the toolkit style, but guidance especially for rural parishes would be a helpful addition to our support. That’s why we’ve created a fundraising toolkit for rural churches, full of useful links and expert advice. **You can find it on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/rural-parishes**

More fundraising support

There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

Our Movement for Good Awards open for entry



Charitable giving is at the heart of what we do – and has been for over 135 years. For the past three years, Ecclesiastical Insurance has run the Movement for Good Awards programme, giving away £3 million to great causes.

Did you know?

In 2021, we were delighted to award £25,000 to church-related charities. Please take a look at our winners’ map to see which charities and churches we have helped in your local area:

winnersmap.benefactgroup.com

The Awards are back and this year we have over £1 million to donate, but we cannot do it without you. This year, you’ll find information on the awards on our parent company’s website.

Visit: www.benefactgroup.com/movement-for-good to find out more.





Have you heard the e-news?

E-news is a monthly email full of tips and information and monthly risk reminders for all of our customers and anyone in your church community. To receive it is easy – **all you need to do is register on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/signup** and if at any time you decide you no longer want to receive it, you can click the 'unsubscribe' button at the bottom of the email. Feel free to pass on the sign-up link to anyone you think might like it.

'Made Simple' guides



We know that understanding the insurance responsibilities for your church can be complicated, that's why we've created our 'Made Simple' guides.

These guides take you through potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches, as well as activities and projects that PCCs are often involved in.

They cover topics such as administration, events, community outreach, people on church premises, church property, building works and legal expenses. **You can find them all on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/church**

Information at your fingertips

The Ecclesiastical website is largely an online library of guidance and support for you and your church community. You'll find information about church and home insurance, risk management, fundraising and grants and lots more. 'Church Matters' newsletter is also on the website, making it really easy to share with others.

Visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church

Ministry Bursary Awards

Financial support for 2023 sabbaticals

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community. Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) provide financial support to members of the clergy planning to take extended study leave. Applications are open now until the end of September.

Established in 1987 to celebrate Ecclesiastical's centenary year, the Awards have supported almost 1,400 clergy members from Anglican Christian faiths. The sabbatical breaks and projects have varied greatly over the years – from traditional and modern-day pilgrimages to study visits, spiritual retreats and pursuits of lifelong dreams and hobbies.

Like Rev'd James Radcliffe from Lincoln, who worked in sports-based ministry in South Africa, or Rev'd Rachel Dale, who studied dementia and also worked with vulnerable children. One of our most recent MBA recipients, Rev'd Canon Imogen Nay, spent her sabbatical in 2021 looking at rewilding and green churches.

Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards are open for applications until 30 September 2022. Judging of the applications will take place in November and awards will be made during December 2022.

If you would like to read more about James, Rachel or Imogen's experiences and find out more about the Awards including eligibility criteria and application details, **please visit our website: www.ecclesiastical.com/mba**



Financial services

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (EFAS) provides expert, independent financial advice including on pensions, investments, life assurance and mortgages for the clergy, church people and PCCs.

☎ **0800 107 0190**
✉ **getadvice@ecclesiastical.com**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice**

WINNERS of the **NatWest Mortgage Awards 2022, South West and Wales** for putting the customer and local community at the heart of everything we do.



Car insurance

Our Clergy Motor Insurance is tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, no admin charges and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹

☎ **0345 450 9396**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance**

¹ Subject to terms and conditions.



Award-winning home insurance that supports your church



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its profits to good causes, one of the ways in which we do this is through our Trust130 Home

Insurance offer. For every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offer to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Originally launched in 2017 to celebrate our 130th anniversary, we have since donated more than £460,000, helping to support over 2,500 churches. A donation of £130 may not sound much, but churches and congregations have used the donations in many creative ways to fund all sorts of things:

St Mary and Bartholomew Solihull are using their grant to introduce contactless donations to support the church and raise valuable funds for charitable causes.

*"This is important for both the church to enable us to continue to raise funds, for the parishioners to enable them to continue to donate in church without having to touch cash/the collection plate and finally to the local (and national) charities we support each year through our charitable giving which is only possible from the kind donations our parishioners make." **Duncan Watson**, Treasurer*

St Albans West Leigh, which is located in a growing community, with a new housing development opposite the church and a further development close by in the planning stages, are using the money to welcome the new residents.

*"We have decided to use the money to assist in funding welcome packs – which will be a booklet about our church and the locale along with some nice biscuits. The booklet and biscuits enable us to make personal contact with people as they move into our community, and to offer them a warm welcome." **The Rev'd Canon Karina Green**, Priest in Charge St Alban's West Leigh*

Most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining the most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers. April 2022 saw Ecclesiastical top the Fairer Finance league table for home insurance for a record 15th consecutive time, retaining our gold ribbon status.²

And don't forget, we offer a discount to members of the clergy.

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

¹ Terms may apply. ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance

Resourcing Everyday Faith

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to live for him each day, not just on a Sunday. That means wherever we are: at home, in our workplaces, in our neighbourhoods. It's about the way we live, the way we treat others, the way we work for what is right, the way we share the love and compassion of Jesus, and the way we share the good news. Part of the reason we meet at church is so that we can be resourced to be sent out into the world to live for Jesus where we are during the week.

This year, the Everyday Faith Team in the diocese is arranging a number of local events where parishes can find out more about how local churches can resource congregations to live out their faith each day. There will be input from the team, practical ideas and encouraging stories. Details of how to book in are in the Events section of the Diocese of Chester website. **All the events start at 7.30pm, and the dates are:**

17 March	Great Budworth and Middlewich deaneries
26 April	Chester and Malpas deaneries
7 July	Birkenhead, Wallasey and Wirral North deaneries
18 July	Chadkirk, Stockport and Mottram deaneries
6 September	Bowdon and Knutsford deaneries
14 September	Nantwich and Congleton deaneries
6 October	Frodsham and Wirral South deaneries
17 October	Cheadle and Macclesfield deaneries

If your parish has missed one of the earlier events, you can always book in to a later one in a different area.



Unconscious Bias Training

There has been a growing understanding that the diocese hasn't taken racism in churches seriously enough and the debate that arose from the killing of George Floyd has brought into sharper focus the need to ensure we all work positively to be welcoming and open to all.

Last year, Chester Cathedral hosted the ground-breaking 'Images of Christ' exhibition and part of the legacy of that exhibition has been to establish a team of volunteers who will visit PCCs to lead training evenings exploring unconscious bias. We all have unconscious bias but being more aware of what it is and how it affects those we meet might just help our welcome and our mission. This isn't just about race, it could also be unconscious bias towards those with disabilities, different genders, ages, social background etc but it's especially about racism.

At some point in the next three years, your PCC will be contacted by a trainer to arrange a convenient time for them to come and lead an evening. It's intended to be interactive, supportive and engaging. We hope your PCC will really enjoy taking part and will be encouraged to be a warmer and more welcoming place as a result.



Eco Church

How can you respond as a local church fellowship to the challenges of climate change, diminishing biodiversity and environmental degradation? It can feel overwhelming.

One of the most innovative initiatives in recent years has been the Eco Church awards given by Eco Church – An A Rocha UK Project.

Visit: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>



The idea is simple. Register and work through a series of challenges to help focus the response of your congregation to the environmental crisis. If you do well, you might just achieve a Bronze Award from A Rocha. Achieve even greater targets and you might just get Silver or even Gold Awards.

Chester Diocese is encouraging churches to really try and help the Church of England achieve the challenging Net Zero 2030 target on carbon emissions. No one underestimates how difficult that will be, but every journey starts with a small step. So why not start your eco journey and register your church for the Eco Church programme and begin working towards making a real contribution to the stewardship of this glorious world that God has given us.

Director of Development to begin in June



The Diocese of Chester has appointed Harriet Roberts as its Director of Development. Harriet will take up her post in June.

The new role, funded by the National Church, has been created to help build a new vision and strategic direction for the diocese.

Harriet's passion for people and places comes from a 22-year BBC career in storytelling and partnerships. She made and presented programmes for local radio and regional television. As a project manager and event producer, she would bring stakeholders together at a grassroots level around a national event, programme brand, or learning campaign.

More recently, Harriet has become respected in place-making. She has worked with different towns, cities, and counties to create place narratives, communication strategies, and collaborative projects with multiple stakeholders.

Harriet and her family will be moving to Cheshire from Ribbles Valley, Lancashire where she is a Methodist local preacher and mission enabler.

Her husband, Ben Thomson works at Media City, Salford where he is Head of Storytelling for BBC Children in Need, and their daughter, Lizzy will be starting at Priestley College, Warrington in September.

Harriet said: "I am fascinated by the opportunity for Christians to learn from the lockdown and build a simpler, bolder, humbler church. This role is an exciting new challenge which aligns my faith journey with my professional experience."

The Bishop of Chester, Mark Tanner, has welcomed the announcement saying: "I am delighted that Harriet will be joining us at this important time to help us discern fresh vision and strategic direction for the diocese. She brings with her experience in helping people and organisations to identify and tell their story and will play a vital role in helping us tell ours. Please pray for Harriet, her husband Ben and their daughter Lizzy as they prepare to move to the diocese and join us in the exciting work we have before us."



Changes in the Archdeacon's Office

In November 2021, we were delighted to welcome Laura Howard to the Archdeacon's office.

Laura is the new PA to Mike Gilbertson, Archdeacon of Chester and is based at Church House and can be contacted on **01928 718834 ext 234** or email laura.howard@chester.anglican.org

After nine years of Pat Pugh looking after both Archdeacons, she needed to reduce her hours and has reverted to being PA to Ian Bishop, Archdeacon of Macclesfield. Pat is now based in Congleton and can be contacted on **01260 272875** or email pat.pugh@chester.anglican.org

Both PAs are part time and work Monday – Thursday 8am – 1pm.

If you wish to arrange an appointment to speak with the Archdeacons or invite them to lead services at your church, or just need sign posting to other departments, Laura and Pat will be delighted to help.

For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

Whilst Ecclesiastical has used reasonable endeavours to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication, please note: (a) the information is not intended to constitute a definitive or complete statement of the law on any subject, (b) the information may over the course of time become incorrect or out of date; and (c) neither Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc. nor its subsidiaries or parent company can accept any responsibility or liability for action taken or losses suffered as a result of reliance placed on the information provided in this newsletter.

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