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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

June 2021

Giving back to our schools

Teachers and headteachers have been doing admirable work to support pupils during the pandemic. They have not been alone in that dedication, however, they have been supported by a community of committed school governors. Since January, we have been appealing for more volunteers to become governors in our church schools and while some places have been filled, schools still have vacancies to fill.

Governors are crucial to the successful running of schools, offering a variety of skills and knowledge to support the overall operation of the school. While all governors share these common responsibilities, there are vacancies too for Foundation Governors who also promote the distinctiveness of the school as a church school and help with the development of positive relationships between the school and its local churches.

Ray Pilgrim is a School Governor at Christchurch Primary School in



Weston-super-Mare. He says, "It's great fun, hard work and gives me a great sense of achievement when I see all the positive outcomes."

School Organisation and Governance Adviser, Vicky Christopher says, "It's a great opportunity for people to put their skills and experience to good use and develop skills in other areas. Now more than ever our fabulous church schools need our support, and what better way to do that than by volunteering as a governor?"

Schools are looking for governors from all walks of life, could you have something to offer?

[Find out more and hear from more of our existing governors.](#) ■

News in brief

Twin your bin

Around 2 billion people worldwide don't have their rubbish collected which is why St Andrew's Church, Backwell has twinned their bins with Tearfund.

By twinning your bin for £45, you can help fund a community project that's preventing disease, protecting the environment, and creating jobs.

Jane Canning from St Andrew's said: "We're delighted to be involved with an initiative of such global reach and importance. My husband Martin and I worked in Tanzania for two years. When we arrived we expected terrible roads and poverty, but what shocked me was that nobody collected our rubbish. We had to burn it or bury it in the garden."

[Find out more about Bin Twinning](#) ■



Wild and beautiful Priddy

Join us for Wilder Churches

If you missed the popular Wilder Churches events run in partnership with the Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) in March, don't worry, you haven't missed out.

You can still watch the March session on line or register to join a session on 30 June.

[Visit the Somerset Wildlife Trust website](#) to find out more ■

Marking a year of chaplaincy

Just over a year ago, Ewen Huffman became Chaplain to Hinckley Point C, the first salaried Chaplain to the construction industry. Starting work at Europe's largest building site just as a global pandemic took hold was never going to be easy, but Ewen has continued

to work on site throughout the year and has quickly become a familiar and valued part of the team.

He's established a Christian group, runs regular prayer meetings and works alongside other health and mental health workers to provide support to anyone who needs it ■

A time to learn

By Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught,' wrote Winston Churchill. I think many of us would echo that.

A huge 'thank you' to our teachers and all who support our schools! There has been a tremendous effort across to ensure our children have been able to continue their education during the pandemic. Not only have the children been learning but teaching staff have had to learn new means of communication. Governors, church communities and individual volunteers have gone the extra mile too, to encourage our teachers through gifts and cards and prayer. The whole school team deserves our gratitude.

Learning online is a challenge. Those of us who are spending many hours in Zoom rooms online can vouch for that. It's tiring! At the end of this month we shall be celebrating the ordinations of our new priests. Last year they were ordained as deacons in September following three months as lay curates as a result of the pandemic restrictions.

What a year to be a deacon!

They've had a very different learning experience than normal, with not so much opportunity of the 'hands-on' experience. I'm looking forward to hearing their stories!

Our incoming deacons are being licensed as lay curates initially this June. For them, colleges and courses have taken place principally online and they've had experience of digital worship on top of regular lectures and seminars. How might that prepare them for our 'new normal' of blended worship, with live-streaming of services in person?

As the Church emerges into this 'new normal' we have the opportunity together to learn and discover new things, new gifts, new ways of being the people of God. It is the same good God, the same story of His love to share with others, but there's a new landscape.

"One learns from books and example only that certain things can be done. Actual learning requires that you do those things." (Frank Herbert)

Every blessing

+ Ruth Worsley

Bridging the diversity gap

Sharon Warmington, CEO of the National Black Governors Network (NBGN), on improving school governor and leadership diversity.



Sharon Warmington, CEO of the NBGN.

What brought about the NGBN?

After many years of being both a governor

and a clerk to governing bodies, I realised I was often the only person of colour in the room, and I felt very strongly that that needed to change.

You recently led a session for Somerset schools on Bridging the Diversity Gap, what did that cover?

I always try and promote an honest conversation, suspending political correctness and pussyfooting around the challenges. We talked about governance through the lens of race and identified practical steps to help them recruit and retain a more

diverse governing body, without it being a box ticking exercise.

What practical steps can schools take?

Skills audits and succession planning is one area to look at. If you review your governing body and realise that you could really do with supplementing your legal skills, where are you going to look for that person? Have you approached the Society of Black Lawyers? Have you approached your local university for a young person's voice?

What are your hopes for the future in schools?

There are no quick wins here. Change will take time. Every school needs good governance and I hope to continue to support schools in their bid to diversify their governing boards and also their leadership teams.

Find out more

Read more of this interview on the Bath and Wells website. Hear more from Sharon on the [The Governors' Podcast](#) or [visit the NBGN website](#).

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