

Dear Churchwarden (and those who look after your Church Buildings),

As this is the time of year when our APCM's have just taken place, it takes a little time for our contact database to be updated. We would be most grateful if you could get your Churchwarden declarations and certificate of elections as soon as you have had your APCMs to your relevant archdeacon's office. If you are no longer a Churchwarden please forward this to your successor.

Below is my monthly round up of information that might be of interest to you.

Energy Footprint Tool for 2023 Energy Usage

The energy footprint tool (EFT) is now open for you to enter your 2023 energy data. The EFT is accessed via the parish returns website and guidance documents are available on the website.

The process has been simplified this year and basically all you need is the utility bills for each of your church buildings, however it would be really useful if you could enter the KWh data as well as the cost as we have a wide range of energy tariffs depending on when you started your contract.

If you require any support in entering the data, please contact Bethan Still (Diocesan Environmental Officer) or myself. We would really like to have details from every parish by July so that we can identify where different support may be directed.

Diocesan Grants

We have been successful over the last 12 months in securing almost £250k of funding from the Church Commissioners, for church buildings across the diocese. This round of funding is available until the end of 2025 and consists of two different grants that are both administered by our Church Building Panel.

The **Minor Repairs and Improvement Grants** can be used for most repairs and improvements to a church building.

The **Quick Wins Grants** can be used to support relatively small projects that will reduce the carbon output of your church building or church hall.

The application forms are slightly different for both grants but should take no more than about 10 minutes to complete. The Church Building Panel considers applications on an on-going basis so a decision is usually made within a couple of weeks.

Further details and application forms can be found on the diocesan website [Church Buildings Resources - Diocese of Durham \(durhamdiocese.org\)](https://www.durhamdiocese.org/Church-Buildings-Resources) (scroll down to the Grants section) or by emailing martin.howard@durham.anglican.org

Churchyards

For those of you who are new to the role of churchwarden the management of churchyards can seem quite daunting. However, being proactive in the management of your churchyard will reduce many of the issues that may occur.

In very simple terms I would suggest that you do the following:

- Familiarise yourself with the Diocesan Churchyard Rules and add a copy to your church website.
- Establish a good relationship with the relevant contact at your local authority if they are responsible for the maintenance.
- If your churchyard is still open for burials, establish a rolling maintenance plan to avoid significant one-off costs.
- Establish a good relationship with the regular visitors to the churchyard and ensure that they are aware of what can be placed on a grave.

I have also put together a simple guide to churchyards that will be available shortly on the resources section of the Diocesan Church Buildings Website. [Church Buildings Resources - Diocese of Durham \(durhamdiocese.org\)](https://www.durhamdiocese.org/Church-Buildings-Resources)

Boilers and Heating Systems

Whilst it might seem strange to be talking about heating at a time of the year when we have probably just turned our heating systems off for the summer, but now is the time to think ahead. During the summer is the ideal time to get heating systems serviced and this should include the whole heating system every few years as well as the annual boiler servicing. Now is also a great time to start looking at alternative low carbon systems, so that you know what would be suitable for your building and a rough idea of the likely costs of such a system. That way if your heating does fail, you are in a position of being able to move ahead quickly with a replacement and maintain a warm building. If you would like me to visit your church to discuss which heating systems may be suitable, then please get in touch.

Church Building Support Officer

Chris, our church building support officer is now working with a number of churches across the diocese on a variety of projects. If you feel that you would benefit from some support, then please get in touch and I can explain the simple application process.

Churches Count on Nature: a week of celebrations of churchyards 8th – 16th June 2024

Join in the celebrations at UK churchyards, cemeteries, and other burial grounds. From historical talks to wildlife surveys, there's something for everyone.

Love Your Burial Ground Week, Churches Count on Nature, and National Cemeteries Week will all run during this week. Visit Caring for God's Acre's webpage if you would like to get involved by hosting an event, attending one, or simply recording wildlife in your local burial ground.

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/love-your-burial-ground-week-national-cemeteries-week-and-churches-count-on-nature/>

There are also a number of webinars that will take place as part of Churches Count on Nature from Monday 10th to Friday 14th of June between 12noon and 1pm.

- Monday 10th June - **Planting your Tree in the Communion Forest** with the Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich
- Tuesday 11th June - **Your Church - your Swifts** with Edward Mayer
- Wednesday 12th June - **Ancient Yew Trees** with Chris Knapman and Russell Ball
- Thursday 13th June - **Solitary Bees** with Brigit Strawbridge
- Friday 14th June - **Blueing the Church: Exploring the oceans through science and faith** with David Curry

[Visit this webpage](#) for more details and to book a place.

Call for Participants for Heritage Open Days 6th-15th September 2024

Participant registration is now open for the Heritage Open Days 2024 Festival – the 30th anniversary of England's largest celebration of history and culture. This year's festival will focus on the theme "Routes – Networks – Connections", and is calling for proposals for events that will share important local stories and traditions. Getting involved early will allow your events to be featured in advance promotions. <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/get-involved/how-to-get-involved.html>

Government grants to support the modernisation and improvement of rural community buildings England

ACRE are pleased to be managing a grant fund on behalf of Defra to support the modernisation and improvement of rural community buildings.

A £3 million fund was originally launched by government in May 2022 to mark Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and in the 2024 Spring Budget, this was uplifted by a further £5 million. In 2023, over £1 million was awarded to groups with ambitious projects, many of which were concerned with improving the energy efficiency of buildings.

As far as multi-use spaces within Churches are concerned applications are welcome where there is not a village hall or other similar meeting place in the village. Similarly, some Church halls will be eligible. Applications are looked at carefully by the award panel so church applications will be given fair consideration.

The advice is that the PCC/Trustees put in the application as groups managing the space within the Church cannot usually, understandably, demonstrate security of tenure i.e. they don't hold the freehold or have a lease.

<https://acre.org.uk/grants-for-village-halls/>

New Guidance published for Filming in Heritage Buildings

Ecclesiastical Insurance has published new guidance to support property managers of historic houses who are planning to host television or film productions. Ecclesiastical warns that whilst featuring in television or film can boost profile and visitor numbers, there are also a number of risks to be considered. <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/media-centre/filming-in-heritage-properties/>

SAFE webinars on safety awareness for places of worship

SAFE (Security Advice for Everyone) – a programme by Community Security Trust (CST) – have released a schedule of free safety awareness webinars from May until July, which are now open for registration. <https://www.faihaction.net/news/general/2024/05/09/safe-webinars-on-safety-awareness-for-places-of-worship/>

Training Opportunities 2024

Below is the list of training sessions that have currently been planned to support you as you look after your church buildings. However, I am always looking to extend the range of sessions that are on offer, so if you would like a session on a particular topic, please let me know and I will try arrange an event. I try to host sessions around the diocese so if your church would like to host a session, then please let me know.

You can book a place at any of the sessions by clicking on the booking link or if you prefer then just email me.

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Wednesday 3 rd July	1.30pm	Cuthbert House	New Churchwardens Training	Please contact your Archdeacon
Thursday 4 th July	7.00pm	Zoom		Please contact your Archdeacon
Monday 16 th September	2.00pm	St Peter's, Jarrow	Annual Maintenance Schedule	https://bit.ly/48st1v4
October	TBC	TBC	Faculty Workshop	TBC
November	TBC	TBC	Undertaking Church Building Projects	TBC

Voter Registration Champions

The Electoral Commission has warned that 8 million eligible voters may not vote at the next General Election because they don't register to vote in time; 4 million eligible voters may not vote because they do not have appropriate Photo ID; and 14 million eligible voters may not vote because they are not motivated to turn out to vote on election day. Could your church become a [Voter Registration Champion](#)? Might you be able to hold a voter registration Sunday before the 16th June? This free initiative is organised by Citizens UK to encourage more people in the UK to use their vote. To find out how your church might get involved, click [here](#).

Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

We have an online Churchwardens Forum using Google Groups to allow you to ask questions and share information with other Churchwardens. If you would like to sign up and you can do so by clicking on the following link.

[DDChurchwardenForum - Google Groups](#)

If you are already on the Churchwarden Forum, why not ask a question. The more it is used the more useful it becomes.

Following APCM's it does take a few months for all of our church contact details to be updated so if you are no longer the person who should be receiving this email, please forward it to the correct person.

Finally if you need any support regarding work on your buildings, please get in touch with me and I will do my best to find you the information that you require.

Kind regards

Martin

Martin Howard

Buildings for Mission Secretary,

Diocese of Durham

Phone: 07586090996