

 Diocese of Peterborough

# archdeacons' visitation news

## The people we are

If you want to find more information about churchwardens, a visit to Google will prove helpful. In my own Google search, I found a site called *WiseGeek*. I'm not especially wise and I'm not a geek. However, the site was useful. Here is an extract:

*"Churchwardens are often charged with the responsibility of providing a good example of Christian living to the rest of the members of the congregation. To that end, a churchwarden is expected to live a life that is in harmony with the teachings of the Church."*

What? No mention of gutters and drains? No mention of the DAC? No mention of vacancies? What sort of a churchwarden is this?! Well, *WiseGeek* may not provide the classic definition of a churchwarden, but it reminds me of that beautiful passage from Colossians 3. In the family of the church we are to be clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. This is to be the hallmark of the Church. This is how we are to behave. As senior lay leaders, churchwardens are to set the example.

Please note: It is the command of the Apostle Paul, based on the teachings of Jesus.

It is his command. Not his polite suggestion. Not his mild-mannered, rather British request.

This is a command that we need to hear and obey.

As Jesus prayed for his disciples, his longing was that they would love one another. And they did. The picture that is painted at the end of Acts 2 is of a united and giving church. Later, the early Christians were martyred for their faith in Jesus and the onlookers were heard to say: "See how these Christians love one another." That should be the hallmark of the Church.

Listen to these challenging words from Colossians:

*"...whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus."*

Whatever we do (all the nuts and bolts of being a churchwarden) do it in the name of Jesus.

It is easy to forget that the way we act and speak as church leaders (and that very much includes churchwardens as well as clergy) influences the way people in our communities think about God. It's quite a responsibility.

That is the big-picture backdrop – the people we are.

**Now, read on to find more of the practicalities of being a churchwarden.**



**Richard Ormston**  
Archdeacon of Northampton

**Chel Cullen**  
PA to the Archdeacons

**Alison Booker**  
Archdeacon of Oakham

## Churchwarden Training – Save the Date:

You have asked and we have listened. You will have noticed from the Articles of Enquiry that we are organising the annual Churchwarden Training Day. **The date will be 9 November** and will take place at **Bouverie Court**.

More details and an invitation will be circulated shortly.

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# The Role of a Churchwarden ...in a few words

**The office of Churchwarden is one of the most ancient in this country.**

As both a bishop's officer and a respected member of the local congregation, the churchwarden shares with the bishop, archdeacon and incumbent in the care of the benefice. Following the election at the annual meeting of parishioners, churchwardens are legally admitted to office each year before the end of August, otherwise the office falls vacant again. Churchwardens are invited to attend one of the seven Admission Services to be admitted.

Churchwardens are ex officio members of the PCC. A churchwarden wishing to step down from office should inform the parish priest and must tender his or her resignation in writing to the bishop. A replacement churchwarden can be elected at a meeting of parishioners which has been advertised for at least two Sundays prior. Churchwardens hold office for one year at a time up to a maximum normally of six years.

## The law

Churchwardens are appointed according to the qualifications and procedures set out in the Churchwardens Measure 2001, as amended. A churchwarden's duties are set out in full in Canon Law and are summarised below:

### Churchwardens

- form a link between the bishop, archdeacon and the parish
- represent the laity and co-operate with the Incumbent (i.e. rector, vicar or priest in charge)
- encourage the parishioners in their faith and promote unity and peace among them
- are responsible for maintaining order and decency in the church and churchyard especially during worship
- are the legal owners of the church's property – i.e. the plate, ornaments and other moveable goods – and are responsible for keeping an inventory of it
- ensure that all the property is stored safely when not in use
- hold a set of keys for the church
- carry out a range of duties which may be specific to the customs of the local church.

## What does this mean in practice?

The role will differ from parish to parish but these are some of the typical tasks a churchwarden might be expected to fulfil:

### Prayer and worship

- care and prayer for the clergy
- taking responsibility for keeping order during services
- lead services of the word, or arrange cover, in the absence of the parish priest
- ensure that a sufficient supply of bread and wine is provided for services of Holy Communion.

### Administration and governance

- become a member of the PCC and its standing committee
- may be responsible for taking offerings and recording the amounts received in the absence of a Treasurer

- discharging the office of Treasurer if the PCC fails to appoint one
- ensure that the service register and other registers are properly completed
- act as Trustee of any parochial charities that may exist
- complete the Articles of Enquiry sent to you by the archdeacon
- report to the bishop any matter of importance
- take on a significant role during a vacancy in collaboration with the Rural Dean
- undertake DBS checks as necessary and attend safeguarding training.

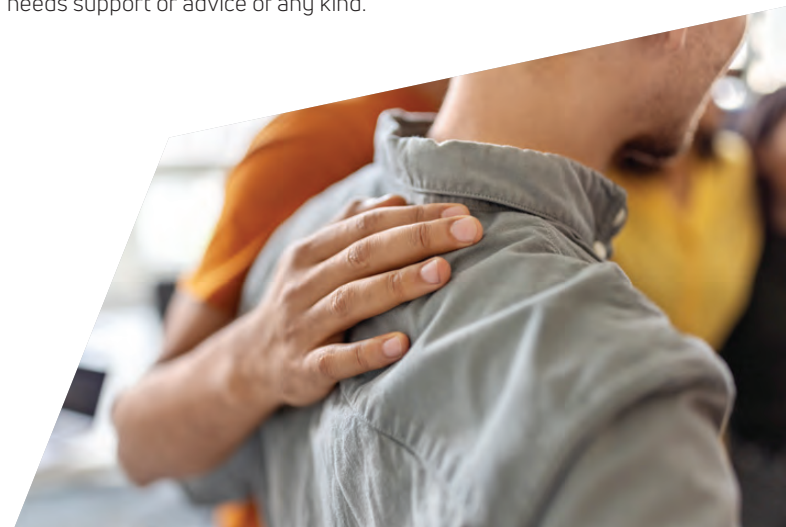
### Buildings and maintenance

- arrange to inspect the fabric of the church every year and make a report about the state of the building to the PCC and to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
- pay attention to the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment
- ensure the PCC commissions a Quinquennial (five yearly) Inspection Report (QIR) of the church and act upon its recommendations
- ensure the electrical installation is checked every five years ideally to coincide with the QIR
- ensure the fire extinguishers are inspected annually
- ensure all portable electrical appliances are tested every year (PAT test)
- have the lightning conductor tested every three years
- make sure the church obtains a faculty or archdeacon's (List B) permission whenever necessary
- where appropriate, check stability of headstones annually, in accordance with the Diocesan Chancellor's instructions on the diocesan registry website
- keep the church Inventory and Log Book up to date.



At the end of a churchwarden's period of office, keys should be handed over to his/her successor with the Inventory. The handover should also include a description of the role and responsibilities within that particular parish.

The key to a successful period of office as churchwarden is regular meetings and communication with the Incumbent and other members of the leadership team to discuss and plan together for the life of the parish. The archdeacon's office is the 'first port of call' outside of the parish for a churchwarden who needs support or advice of any kind.



## What is the Parish Giving Scheme?

The Diocese of Peterborough was one of the first dioceses in the country to develop a giving scheme. Many churches found it a real blessing. Times change and technology moves on. Now, the diocese is partnering with the Parish Giving Scheme.



The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is an established service for managing one-off and Direct Debit giving, designed to support churches to fund their

mission and ministry. It reduces the burden of work on church volunteers and provides a simple and secure service to givers.

The service is freely available to all parishes, their churches and donors, within dioceses that have chosen to participate. The Diocese of Peterborough is a participating diocese. Uptake across the country is growing every year, with the majority of dioceses in the Church of England – and many of their parishes – now members of PGS and experiencing the benefits.

### PGS makes it possible for givers to:

- Give one-off amounts by credit/debit cards and Apple/Google pay wallets
- Give monthly, quarterly or annually by Direct Debit
- Sign up to inflation-linked giving annually
- Enhance your gift to your church by having Gift Aid at 25% added to your giving
- Give securely and donate anonymously, if you prefer

There are 149 parishes in the Diocese of Peterborough that have not yet signed up to PGS. That means 199 have already taken that step.

Your church may already have linked to PGS, but if not, why not get in touch with the Generous Giving Team? Pete Squires and Paul Adams will be glad to talk you through the details. At the end of the day, PGS is simply another way to make giving easier and more effective at a time when churches are coming under increasing financial pressure.

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## Growing Faith Adventure



Growing Faith seeks to bring together the three spheres of church, school, and household – in how we think and in what we do. It is not another project but rather a new way of thinking about how we engage with children, young people and families. It requires a culture change in the whole church and diocese, where we seek to look at everything we

do, and every decision we make, through the lens of what it means for children, young people and families.

By looking through the lens of Growing Faith, we want to grow our relationship with schools. We are here to serve schools in their work caring for and educating children. Our work should be more than 'doing assemblies', although that is an important part of school life, we want our relationship with schools to be deeper than that.

Blessing your school with our presence will come in many forms, your church will have its own unique style of engagement, different people will bring different perspectives.

There are many ways in which the church can help schools in their work. Perhaps through helping create a 'happiness after school club' to encourage ways to promote wellbeing; listening to children as they read; supporting a gardening club to teach children where food comes from and how to care for the environment we live in; an assembly club to share assemblies in school and in church on Sunday; supporting vulnerable families in need of help; volunteering to be on the board of governors; being an active member of friends of the school committees.

Be a known and trusted member of your school to help faith grow.

Visit the Church of England Faith at Home web page for more information:

🌐 [www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/faith-home](http://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/faith-home)

**Pete White**

Director of Children and Youth

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## Being Church in the Open Air?

For years, we have linked the word 'church' to an old building with a spire and a creaking roof. But for John Wesley, church was often to be found in the open air. It is thought that John Wesley rode far enough on horseback to circle the earth 10 times. That's 250,000 miles! He was convinced that it was important for him personally to spread the gospel through relationships and continue to grow closer to God in those relationships.

So, 230 (plus) years after his death, have you thought about some kind of outdoor church?

### Outdoor Church Network

Thinking of starting outdoor worship but don't know where to start? Why not start with joining the Outdoor Church Network?

Already leading worship outdoors, but would like inspiration and to be surrounded by like-minded individuals? Sounds like the Outdoor Church Network is for you!

Whether you're exploring Muddy Church for the first time or you've been leading Forest Church for many years, you're welcome to join our Outdoor Church Network.

You'll be the first to hear about training events and opportunities to meet up with other people that feel passionately about the church engaging with creation care and outdoor worship. Plus, you'll receive our mailing with loads of fresh resources and brilliant outdoor church ideas.

If this sounds like the sort of group you feel called to be a part of, do email Chad Chadwick on:

✉ [chad.chadwick@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:chad.chadwick@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

### Muddy Church

Muddy Church is a great way of developing relationships with God, while engaging and learning from creation and nature. It is an all-age way of building connections within our communities.

If you would like some inspiration and resources, do have a browse of the Muddy Church website:

🌐 [www.muddychurch.co.uk](http://www.muddychurch.co.uk)



## Outdoor Church Training

### Intrigued by Wild Worship?

- Want to explore using Muddy Church or Forest Church ideas in your services?
- Keen to make the most of your churchyard or local green spaces?
- Or do you just love encouraging people to be outside with God?

These new, practical training sessions provide teaching, resources and everything you need to get started.

Email us for more information:

✉ [chad.chadwick@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:chad.chadwick@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)



### For more information

**Call:** 0345 777 3322 **Email:** [churches@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:churches@ecclesiastical.com)

**Facebook:** Ecclesiastical **X:** @churchmatters

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