



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

Not as much information to share this month but some important information relating to the online faculty system. I hope that after a busy Easter you will all be able to find time to relax a little.

NEW Faculty Management System

The Online Faculty System (OFS) is being replaced by a new Faculty Management System as part of a new Building Management Portal. The system is due to go live across all churches later in the year, however Durham Diocese has been chosen as part of a pilot of 4 dioceses to launch the system earlier.

The new system will go live for our diocese on **Monday 13th April 2026**. As a result, access to the current system will end on **Monday 6th April** and no access will be available whilst the data is transferred to the new system.

As the new system is a more secure system than the previous system, all users will need to re-register for access from Monday 13th April. Details of how to do this can be found on the diocesan website at [Faculty Guidance - Diocese of Durham](#) and a video is available at the following link <https://vimeo.com/1169685892/0bd8808daa>. I am running a training session on Monday 20th April on how to use the new system, if you would like to attend please book a place by clicking [here](#).

Requests for Archdeacons Permission – List B works

With the launch of the new Faculty Management System, we will be moving to processing all List B through the Online system as is currently done by most other dioceses. The system will be very straight forward and will allow all works to church buildings to be processed through the same system. As the system automates much of the process it will hopefully allow requests to be processed more quickly. It also allows the both myself and the Archdeacons to be move requests to a faculty application if it is outside of the scope of List B without you having to resubmit documents. Therefore, from Monday 13th April, all requests for List B permission should be submitted through the online system.

Church Building Training 2026

The Church Building Training Programme for 2026 is shown below

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Monday 20th April	6.00 – 7.30pm	Cuthbert House	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My0xMDI/t
Wednesday 13th May	10.00 – 11.30am	All Saints Church Lobley Hill	Undertaking Church Building Projects	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My0xMDc/t
Saturday 6th June	10.00am-4.15pm	Cuthbert House	Diocesan Heating Day	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My0xMDY/t
June	TBC	TBC	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	TBC
Tuesday 23rd June	6.30 – 8.30pm	Zoom	Health & Safety and Fire Risk Management - EIG	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My0xMDU/t
Thursday 9th July	6.00 – 8.00pm	Cuthbert House	Grant Workshop	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My05OQ/t
July	1.30pm	Cuthbert House	New Churchwardens Training	Please see information from Archdeacons nearer the time
July	6.30pm	Zoom		
September	TBC	TBC	Annual Maintenance Schedule	TBC
Tuesday 6th October	1.30-3.30pm	St Mary's Church Hall, Whorlton	Faculty & Grant Funding Workshop	https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My0xMTA/t

Places of Worship Renewal Fund

Following the closure of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, we are still waiting for full details on the new scheme and how churches will be able to apply for funding. I hope to have further details next month.

Below is what has been released by Historic England about the scheme:

- The new scheme will be called the Places of Worship Renewal Fund.
- The new Fund will be for urgent capital repairs and will be administered by Historic England, with a focus on areas of greatest need but with flexibility to support those places of worship that play a vital role in their local community.
- Only listed places of worship in England, in active use (minimum six services per year), are likely to be eligible.
- Projects that are predominantly focused on routine maintenance will not be eligible for support under this Fund.
- The Fund is currently being designed in consultation with the sector and will need to go through a Treasury approval process before it is launched. Further details of the Fund will be made available as soon as they are approved. We hope this will be in the Spring.
- The objectives of the Fund are to target support to where it is most needed and where it will have most impact. Considerable thought is being given to make the application process as streamlined as possible and to ensure arrangements are in place to support potential applicants.

Energy Footprint Tool (EFT)

The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is open for you to enter your 2025 energy data. Thank you for everyone who has already done this, we currently have had data entered for 43% of our church buildings.

If anyone has problems accessing the EFT on the Parish Returns Website, please let me know and I will do my best to help. I appreciate that in many parishes it is the Treasurer who enters this data and I would be grateful if you could remind them to do this whilst they are finalising the 2025 accounts for APCM meetings.

Diocesan Heating Day – Saturday 6th June

I am currently in the process of planning a Diocesan Heating Day which will take place on Saturday 6th June (10.00am – 4.15pm). The morning will provide information on the types of systems, how to manage a heating project and how to fund the project. During the day we will have a market place type event with a range of companies present who will be able to provide you with specific information on their products. During the afternoon we will have some workshop sessions focussing on different types of heating. **Please put the date in your diary and register [here](#).**

DAC Awards

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) appreciate all of the hard work that goes in to maintaining your buildings but also the significant extra time and effort that goes into delivering a significant building project. The DAC therefore would like to celebrate the many projects that have been undertaken by parishes over the last 10 years. I have already sent out a letter from our DAC Chair which explained more about the awards, along with an application form and example. We look forward to being able to celebrate the various projects that have been undertaken. An application form and further details can be found on our [resources page](#).

Churches Count on Nature / Love your Burial Ground

If your church has a burial ground you may be interested in taking part in Love your Burial Ground and Churches Count on Nature. Further details can be found at [About Love Your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature 2026 – Caring For God's Acre – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK](#)

Oil theft

Whilst I'm not aware of any thefts within the diocese, the risk of oil theft will rise with the rising cost of oil. If this is a potential issue for you, please consider measures to slow down potential theft, such as keeping churchyard boundary gates closed which serves as a deterrent and may prevent a crime. More general security advice is here: [Security and Crime Prevention | The Church of England](#).

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

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