



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

I can't believe that this is the last of the monthly newsletters for 2025. I hope that you have all had a good year and that your Church Buildings have not given you too many sleepless nights. I hope that you have a wonderful Christmas and wish you all the best for the new year. As usual I have collated some useful information below.

Church Building Training 2026

I am starting to put together the Church Building Training Programme for 2026 and a draft is shown below. If you have any other suggestions that you feel would be useful in your roles looking after your buildings then please let me know.

Date	Time	Venue	Event
February	TBC	TBC	Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building
Monday 9 th March	6.30-8.00pm	Zoom	Church Insurance & Security -EIG
April	TBC	TBC	Faculty Workshop – New Online System
May	TBC	TBC	Undertaking Church Building Projects
Saturday 6 th June	10.00am-4.15pm	Cuthbert House	Diocesan Heating Day
June	TBC	Cuthbert House	Faculty Workshop – New Online System
Tuesday 23 rd June	6.30 – 8.30pm	Zoom	Health & Safety and Fire Risk Management - EIG
July	1.30pm	Cuthbert House	New Churchwardens Training
July	6.30pm	Zoom	
September	TBC	TBC	Annual Maintenance Schedule
October	TBC	TBC	Faculty Workshop – New Online System

I try to host sessions around the diocese so that everything is not based in Durham, so if you are willing to host a session then please let me know. This will allow me to confirm dates and times for the sessions.

Contractor & Supplier Contacts

You will find attached to this newsletter a copy of the list of contractors that have been shared with the diocese by parishes over recent years. Hopefully you will find it useful when looking for a particular contractor but as always if you need and advice, then please let me know.

Protective Security Grants for places of worship

The Home Office grant scheme for protective security at places of worship is open for applications until 8 December 2025. Churches can apply to this scheme if they have experienced hate crime, or believe that they are risk of hate crime, for example if similar nearby places have been targeted. There is clear eligibility guidance and an application form of the [website](#).

Are you ready for the colder weather?

Sorry to keep pestering you about heating but it is really important that you have a plan in place should your heating system fail this winter. Starting looking at different heating systems is much more stressful if you are trying to make decisions quickly. If your heating system is over 20 years old it may be difficult to obtain spare parts. If you would like me to visit to discuss the different types of heating system which might be suitable, then please let me know. If you have an oil boiler this is particularly important as you will now not be able to replace an oil boiler. The DAC are reviewing their heating guidance and this should be on the website in the new year if not before.

Hosting Telecoms Infrastructure in Churches – revision of advice

Parish Buying has revised the advice on the Church of England website over hosting telecoms infrastructure ([connectivity - legal considerations](#)). The revised page includes advice for churches and for advisers to churches which host mobile telecommunications infrastructure from one of the four operators (Vodafone, O2, EE and Three). The new Electronic Communications Code has changed the law and given operators greater rights than before. That is why the Church of England signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the operators to give churches better rights and to mitigate the effects of the new Code, including on income.

Churches which have existing agreements which are now coming to term are also affected. The Code affects the terms of any renewal agreement as well as affecting the right of the PCC to terminate. The MoU forms of agreement mitigate the effects of the new Code for these churches as well. In addition to details of the MoUs themselves, you will also find on the revised page a link to an [easy-to-read FAQ document](#).

Forensic Marking of External Metals - Ecclesiastical

I have received this information from Ecclesiastical insurance which will be of interest to many of you in light of a number of recent lead thefts.

- Cover is subject to external metal being protected and registered by SmartWater or an alternative forensic marking system that has been approved by us.
- It is a **policy condition** of Ecclesiastical for theft of metal cover that:
 - SmartWater (or an acceptable alternative forensic marking solution) is **applied to all external metals**
 - It is **registered with the supplier** – Ecclesiastical will meet the registration fee for SmartWater as part of our partnership with the company
 - Accompanying **signage is displayed** prominently to act as a deterrent to thieves

If this policy condition is not met, churches are not covered for theft or attempted theft of metal or the damage caused by metal theft.

It is important to note that there is no cover for theft or attempted theft of metal and the subsequent damage whilst scaffolding is erected at your premises unless agreed by us.

Relevant guidance from us can be found at the links below:

- [SmartWater for churches | Risk Management | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Theft of metal | Church guidance note | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Theft of metal checklist for churches | Church security guidance | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Church security | Church guidance | Ecclesiastical](#)

Martyn's Law Briefing Note

The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance has produced a comprehensive [Martyn's Law briefing note](#). It has been added to the [safety and security page](#) on the Church of England website.

Any place of worship that falls in the scope of Martyn's Law (usually over 200 present) will be in the standard tier, regardless of the number of people present. Standard tier premises are required to have public protection procedures in place. Procedures are about being prepared for how to respond to a situation. There is no requirement to spend any money for equipment. All training needed to comply will be provided free of charge on the [ProtectUK](#) website.

Internet connectivity in churches

Can you take five minutes to help us build a national picture of internet connectivity in churches?

The National Communications team is gathering data on how many churches don't yet have an internet connection. Not having an internet connection in church is a barrier to doing more with digital. The team has heard that some churches feel they could grow their ministry and engage more effectively with their communities if they were connected.

[Survey link for church leaders/members/volunteers](#)

Good Green Tariffs

The most recent Environment Bulletin includes an [animation about green tariffs](#) as part of resources to support the [Great Switch](#) campaign. If you would like to sign up for the CofE Environment Bulletin, do so [here](#).

Caring for God's Acre

Caring for God's Acre is a charity which focuses on providing support and resources to look after your churchyard. This year their [Autumn webinar series](#) has covered topics ranging from memorial recording in a Birmingham cemetery to a garden of remembrance in a post-medieval burial ground in Southwark, South London, taking in British fungi, an online wreath making workshop and a Jewish cemetery in Willesden, and culminating with Solstice stories, with a talk on understanding ancient yews as part of their AGM.

If you have missed any of these webinars and want to catch up with them, do email info@cfga.org.uk with the subject Webinar catch up.

Grant Funding Workshop

Just a quick reminder that we have a grant funding workshop on Monday 8th December, 6.00-7.30pm at Cuthbert House. If you would like to attend, please book a place by clicking on the link below or just email me.

<https://tickets.myknowchurch.co.uk/gb/NzY5My05MQ/t>

Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

It was been really good to see this forum being used more regularly earlier in the year, but it has been a bit quiet recently. If you have a question, the chances are someone else in the diocese knows the answer. If you would like to sign up and you can do so by clicking on the following link. [DDChurchwardenForum - Google Groups](#)

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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