

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

Below is my monthly round up of information that might be of interest to you. Hopefully we have just about got our database updated with new churchwarden appointments but if you are no longer in post then please forward to your successor.

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED - Energy Footprint Tool for 2023 Energy Usage

The energy footprint tool (EFT) for you to enter your 2023 energy data closes at the end of July. 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. I appreciate that you may not be the person who has access to the energy bills, but I would be grateful if you could pass this on to your treasurer or PCC Secretary.

At present only 52% of parishes have entered their data. Completion of the EFT is a requirement of any Net Zero Funding and I would hate parishes to refused funding because this information was not provided.

General Election

I am aware that some churches may be using their premises as polling stations during the forthcoming General Election and this may increase the numbers of visitors coming into the building who are not so familiar with it. It may be useful for you to review their fire safety and health and safety arrangements and to check if any valuables need to be locked away. Ecclesiastical who insure many of our church buildings have provided some useful documents which can be found at the links below;

[Self Assessment for Churches | Risk Management \(ecclesiastical.com\)](#)

[Church Slips & Trips | Risk Management | Ecclesiastical](#)

[Fire risk articles for churches | Risk Management | Ecclesiastical](#)

Diocesan Grants

Just a quick reminder that we have two diocesan grants currently available to support work on your church buildings.

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.

It is possible for churches to apply for both grants for eligible projects and therefore potentially receive up to 100% of the cost of the work.

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 \(durhamdiocese.org\)](#) (scroll down to the Grants section) or by emailing martin.howard@durham.anglican.org

The Disability Project Parish Grants Scheme

From September 2024 parishes in the diocese will be able to apply for grants to support changes to their buildings that allow all people to access the buildings and engage in services and activities. At present I know very little information about the scheme but some further information can be found at [Disability Project Parish Grants Scheme | The Church of England](#) and I will circulate details on how to apply as they become available.

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.

Charity Hero Awards

The Benefact Group Charity Hero Awards 2024 that have just been announced. This is the first year of these awards and Ecclesiastical is proudly supporting the 'Volunteer of the Year' award. Recognising those who have a significant impact on their communities, the awards will celebrate individuals and organisations through several categories. The closing date for entries is the 26th of July and further details can be found here ; [Charity Heroes Awards 2024 - Benefact Group](#).

Training Opportunities 2024

Below is the list of training sessions that are currently planned for the rest of the year, 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.

Bethan and I will be arranging some workshops to support parishes as they plan for Net Zero and details of these will be shared as soon as they are available.

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

New list of free resources

Church of England churches can get free resources, free training and even free software from the national church. For some topics, you can also sign up to national newsletters so that you can find out when new resources are added. Many of these are intended for support with parish administration, worship and fundraising, but helpful to know about to have [extra support tools on hand](#).

Treasure on church land

The Treasure (Designation) (Amendment) Order 2023 provides an exemption to the Treasure Act 1996 for objects subject to the faculty jurisdiction found on land which is itself subject to the faculty jurisdiction and held or controlled by an ecclesiastical corporation together with objects which are found in or under a cathedral church or within its precinct. We have now released guidance on how churches and cathedrals should treat these exempt objects should they be discovered. The guidance note includes an outline of what is defined as 'treasure' under the 1996 Act as amended in 2002 and 2023.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/treasure-church-land>

Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

It has been really good to see this forum being used more regularly to share or request information or advice. The online Churchwardens Forum uses 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.

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

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