



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

This month I have quite a few pieces of information to share with you and I would be grateful if you could take some time to look through this update as it has a few important bits of information that I have come across.

Energy Footprint Tool for 2024 – only 8 weeks left to enter data

Thank you for those of you who have completed the EFT over the last couple of months and so far, almost half of churches have entered their data. The EFT closes at the end of June but we would really appreciate an early response to this so that we can check the data well before the deadline. With this in mind I would be grateful if you could remind treasurers, as they finalise the end of year church accounts, to put the energy bills to one side to complete the EFT.

Warm Space Welcome

[ChurchWorks](#) is working with Historic England to research the role of heritage on the wellbeing of individuals and communities accessing [Warm Welcome Spaces](#) located in historic church buildings. This research will be used to create resources that will equip your church to articulate the value of your building for the local community, and to demonstrate the importance of investing in church heritage buildings to national and local government and funders.

If you are, or know of, a Warm Welcome Space, ChurchWorks would love for you to participate in this research. It is surveying visitors to a breadth of Warm Welcome Spaces - historic or modern - to explore the effects of different Warm Welcome spaces on the wellbeing of individuals. It should take 10 minutes to complete and this [briefing document](#) provides all the information you need to facilitate this survey in your space. ChurchWorks is also looking for Warm Welcome Spaces that we can visit and conduct 3 short interviews with visitors. If you would be interested in participating, please email [Esther Platt](#).

National Church Survey

The National Churches Trust is conducting a major new survey to give a voice to those whose dedicated service cares for churches and presents an opportunity to celebrate the heritage and role of church buildings. This landmark study will reveal the status of church buildings, how they are maintained, funded, and the support they provide for local communities. The survey will go live at the start of May 2025. So, you don't miss out, please [register your interest here](#) and, in May, you will receive an invitation to participate

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's law, received Royal Assent on Thursday 3 April. Now that the legislation has received Royal Assent, the Home Office expects the implementation phase will be at least 24 months. This will include establishing the regulator function within the Security Industry Authority (SIA), as well as ensuring there is time for businesses, premises and events to prepare for the legislation coming into force.

Over this period the Home Office will lead work with the SIA to help those responsible to understand the purpose of this legislation and how to meet their obligations. The Home Office continues to signpost people to both [Protect UK](#) and [Gov.UK](#) for further information and updates on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025. These sites will provide updates as to when the requirements of the Act will come into force. Premises and events do not need to spend money on consultants to be compliant with the legislative requirements. Please be aware that neither the Home

Office nor the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) endorse any third-party products or providers in respect of compliance with this legislation.

The Act applies to churches where there are more than 200 people present. All churches are treated as being in the standard tier for the Act, regardless of the number of people present.

Church Building Training 2025

Please find below the Church Building Training that has so far been planned for the year. If you would like to attend a session but the time or location do not work for you, please let me know and I can look at running an alternative session that would work for you. I try to host sessions around the diocese so if your church would like to host a session, then please let me know.

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Thurs 15 th May	2.00-4.00pm	Cuthbert House	Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building	https://bit.ly/4gYilCF
Wed 11 th June	10.00am-12.00pm	All Saints, Lobley Hill	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	https://bit.ly/4karBMd
Thurs 19 th June	1.30-3.30pm	St Peter's, Stockton	Understanding your buildings	https://bit.ly/4k5tutL
Thurs 3 rd July	7.00-9.00pm	Cuthbert House	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	https://bit.ly/4bvGKUF
Mon 7 th July	1.30pm	Cuthbert House	New Churchwardens Training	Contact Archdeacons PA to book
Tue 8 th July	6.30pm	Zoom		Contact Archdeacons PA to book
September	TBC	TBC	Annual Maintenance Schedule	TBC
Mon 13 th October	1.30-3.30pm	St Gabriel's, Sunderland	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	https://bit.ly/4hSowyN

Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) Meetings

The DAC meets 10 times during the year and as well as providing formal advice to the Chancellor on Faculty Applications, the DAC can also provide informal advice to parishes on any projects that they are considering. If you would like anything including on the DAC Agenda, please let me know two weeks before the meeting so that I can ensure that it can be included. Dates of the DAC meetings can be found on the website.

If you have any projects that you are considering in the coming months, please do let me know so that we know when faculty applications are likely to come to the DAC. The DAC are also more than happy to offer initial informal advice on proposals that you may be considering. Engaging the DAC early in the process can avoid delays at a later stage.

Appointing a new Quinquennial Inspector

A number of our longstanding Quinquennial Inspectors have decided to retire or reduce their workload and as a result a number of parishes will be needing to appoint a new inspector this year. I have been in touch with all of the parishes that I am aware of, but many have not yet requested DAC advice on their proposed appointment.

In the appointment of a person to carry out a quinquennial inspection, churches are encouraged to interview prospective inspectors. It has been brought to my attention of an issue elsewhere in the country when a PCC has asked questions that are not relevant to the appointment of an inspector. I would therefore like to remind PCCs that it is not appropriate to include interview questions around [protected characteristics](#) as this could leave the PCC open to challenge under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Details on the appointment process and a list of inspectors currently working with parishes in the diocese can be found on the website [Church Buildings Resources - Diocese of Durham](#) and scroll down to "Quinquennial Inspections"

Online Faculty System Update

The Online Faculty System is currently being redesigned and the new system will hopefully remove some of the issues that people have found with the current system. The faculty process itself will not change but how it appears on the online system will look different. The transfer to the new system looks likely to occur early in the Autumn but final details are still to be confirmed. I will be doing some training over the summer and the dates can be found in the training calendar above.

The current system for Durham Diocese currently has over 130 active faculties, however 70 of those have been issued and are waiting for parishes to confirm that the work has been completed. I would be grateful if you could check your parishes faculty records and update these as soon as possible. We also have a large number that were started some years ago but have not proceeded beyond the initial stage which will be removed unless you have told me otherwise.

Updated guidance on writing Statements of Significance & Need

The Church Buildings Council has updated its guidance on statements of significance and needs following a year-and-a-half review process with stakeholders. The new guidance is parish-focused and provides a holistic approach to defining significance and needs within a church setting. As part of the new guidance, new templates for statements of significance and needs are provided and should be used for ongoing faculty applications. These will be available when the Building Management Portal is released later this year, and the current Online Faculty System will turn off access to the old format.

These statements are required where proposals involve making changes to a listed church or other listed building. The statement of significance should be produced as one document, setting out the significance of the church or other building in terms of its special architectural and historic interest (including any contribution made by its setting). It should include any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest that the church or other building has. The statement of needs should be treated as a separate document and should set out the justification for the proposals. The new guidance and templates provided are [available on the CofE Website](#) and also on the diocesan website.

Urgent - Check your Heating

As many of you will now be beginning to turn off your heating for the summer, it is the perfect time to get your boiler serviced and the heating system checked. This way, if issues are discovered you have plenty of time to look at options and if necessary apply for permission to replace your heating system before you need to use it again in the autumn. If your church boiler is over 20 years old, now is the time to start considering options for the future. A boiler can fail at any point but if you have a boiler over 20 years old the chance is much greater and it is also more likely that parts may not be available for them.

If you have an oil boiler these cannot be replaced after 2025, so looking at alternatives now will save time when you need to find an alternative. If you would like me to visit to discuss the options with you then please get in touch.

Christian Emergency Network

The Christian Emergency Network (CEN) was founded in the USA following the events of 9/11 but is now established in many countries around the world including the UK and can provide training to both individuals and churches who would like to be able to support any local emergencies that might occur. Some background on CEN can be found at <https://christianemergencynetwork.org/> and if you want to know more then please contact Peter Martin at peter@readyuk.org.

VE Day Celebrations

The following information has been provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance.

With the 80th Anniversary of VE Day approaching many churches are likely to be planning a celebration event, taking part in the Ring Out In Celebration or lighting a beacon. To help them organise a successful event we have lots of guidance to help them prepare. These resources can be downloaded from our website and can be found here:-

- [Responsibility For Church Organised Events | Church Insurance Made Simple | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Self-Assessment for Churches | Risk Management](#)
- [Bell ringing in Churches | Risk Management | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Beacons | Church guidance | Ecclesiastical](#)
- [Food safety for churches | Risk Management](#)

Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

It has been really good to see this forum being used more regularly to share or request information or advice. . 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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