

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens



On behalf of the archdeacons, I thank you for all you have done over the last year. The pandemic has created new and difficult challenges for us to navigate, be that the extra measures to keep people safe, planning services when rules and guidance were frequently changing, moving services online, reacting to significant drops in income, or to working with fewer volunteers. So often churchwardens have been at the heart of addressing these difficult issues. We are very grateful for all that you have done.

Thank you for the creativity, flexibility and ingenuity that you have shown. We were delighted to hear about

walk-through events in place of crib services or Christingles, with more people from the community attending. Some have introduced Forest Church. Our communities are aware of our churches' support through foodbanks and helping those with debt, not least through supporting Christians Against Poverty. A number of our churches have also provided language lessons to those from Hong Kong or practical help and accommodation for those from Afghanistan and Ukraine. Many people have benefitted from our churches being open for prayer and reflection, finding comfort in difficult times.

Every church has responded differently to the needs in their congregation and community; thank you for all you have done as churchwardens as you have reached out with Christ's love.

I would like to draw your attention to an excellent article by Andrea Russell, sharing her thoughts on the ministry of churchwardens (page 7). There is also a helpful article on financial resourcing (page 2) and a timely piece on building back stronger on the back page.

With gratitude and best wishes,

The Revd Canon David Tyler
Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester

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Training and resources for churchwardens

We are here to help you with training and resources. Our website has a page with specific guidance for churchwardens:
oxford.anglican.org/churchwardens

This features an introductory video from Bishop Steven as well as a video and presentation from the Archdeacon of Buckingham on the role and responsibilities of the churchwarden. The booklet *Being a churchwarden* offers a good insight into the role and is a useful tool for anyone considering becoming a churchwarden.

The section on training and resources includes short videos, PowerPoint presentations, relevant documents and links relating to the following themes, among other areas of interest:

- Working with the clergy
- DAC and faculties
- Vacancies and appointments
- Health and safety
- Generous giving
- The role and function of the PCC

There are also details of in-person and online training for churchwardens which is planned across the areas, and links to other resources and webpages which you may find of interest.

For even more useful resources, see the back page of this Visitation News.

Paying for historic buildings

Historic church buildings are a blessing, and a connection with the worshipping community of the past, but we all know that they can also be a financial burden. When things go wrong, or you're looking to make changes, there's nothing straightforward about caring for an ancient building. But this is part and parcel of the life of most Church of England parishes, especially in the rural Diocese of Oxford with our wonderful village churches across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Unfortunately, for many of us in both rural and urban parishes, the responsibility for funding our church building, alongside our activity as a living church, can fall onto the shoulders of a relatively small number of regular givers, who often end up digging into reserves whenever there is an emergency.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing to do (that's what reserves are for) but it's important that reserves are built up again after they have been used, especially if they have been dipped into over the pandemic. It's recommended that all churches have a minimum of three months operational costs in reserve; if you find yourself running out of reserves John Orridge, the diocesan Director of Finance, will be able to support you with a financial recovery plan.

So, if a building emergency appears and you don't have the reserves to pay for it, or any spending would totally use up your reserves, what can you do?

Capital fundraising

This is where we turn to capital fundraising – sourcing large donations for a specific, one-off project. Fundraising can feel like a daunting task but diocesan staff are here to help you think about where to start. The Generous Giving Adviser, Joshua Townson, is also available to talk to you about your fundraising plans and help you consider the steps you might need to take. If your project involves medium- to long-term financial planning, John Orridge will be happy to advise you.

We also have a number of resources available to support churches looking to fundraise. These include annual fundraising training sessions with consultants from Action Planning, who will take you through the basics of how to fundraise. Alongside our training events we have resources on our website. Take a look at our



capital fundraising page, which features case studies, links to major funders, and suggestions for further reading on how to fundraise. Additionally, our Generous Giving Adviser, Joshua Townson, can run a search on the FundsOnline funding database to look for potential funders for you to consider.

Legacy fundraising



One other aspect of building finance to consider, for its long-term benefits, is legacy fundraising. Legacies left to churches in wills can be for the general purposes of the church, or for a specific purpose. They can provide a much appreciated injection of cash which allows the PCC to undertake refurbishment work, renovation or perhaps some of the jobs that have sat on the back-burner since the last quinquennial.

You could share what the Church of England says about legacies with your church members:

'Once you have made provision for your loved ones, you have the opportunity to make a lasting gift to God, by leaving a legacy to his church. A gift in your will to your local church is one of the most valuable and lasting ways you can continue to support its mission and ministry within your community.

A gift can be an expression of your gratitude and thanksgiving towards God, and can help keep your local church alive, and help transform its future.'

Mission fundraising

Our buildings are not just heritage assets, though, they are living places of worship and mission. So, if you're thinking of new ways for your building to serve its community you might want to consider applying to the Diocese of Oxford Development Fund which supports local projects that are missionally creative and seek to build a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world.

oxford.anglican.org/giving-and-fundraising

Contact Joshua Townson, Generous Giving Adviser:

joshua.townson@oxford.anglican.org

Contact John Orridge, Director of Finance:

john.orridge@oxford.anglican.org



All Saint's Church, Boyne Hill, in Maidenhead looks its best after £275,000 was raised to re-lay and restore 18,000 floor tiles. This has opened up opportunities for using the church building in new ways for ministry and outreach.



Congratulations to our national winner!

Last year, we launched our 'Good News' competition – and now we're proud to announce the national winner.

We asked for stories about your church community – written in the style of a newspaper article, and accompanied by a photograph and a suitable headline. We were looking for uplifting tales – of battling to achieve something special for the parish, perhaps, or tireless volunteering, or dedication to your congregation or wider locality. And we were inundated with amazing entries.

Our judges worked hard to select five regional winners from the huge list, and we announced this at the end of last year, giving each regional winner £1,500 towards church funds as part of Ecclesiastical's aim to donate profits to transform lives and communities.

Now – with the help of the public, through a show of support for their online story – the overall winner, who will receive a further £6,000, has been chosen.

A big congratulations to the national winner

Penlee Cluster Churches, down in the far west of Cornwall – St John's and St Mary's in Penzance, St Peter's in Newlyn, and St Pol de Leon in the village of Paul.

Determined to bring their community together during those difficult months, they launched a fantastic 'Never Alone' initiative. This multi-faceted campaign saw church members team up with local businesses to take pub meals, Cornish pasties, and fish and chip suppers to elderly and vulnerable people. Read their story and those of the other regional winners at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchcomp



Meet your Church Insurance Consultants

Our Church Insurance Consultants are a friendly and approachable team of highly knowledgeable insurance experts who are right on your doorstep and ready to offer guidance and help with any insurance or risk-related issues you might have.

From a simple explanation of the basics of your policy, to guidance on how to combat thieves and vandals, guard against fire, and improve general health and safety, they are there for you, free of charge.



The team – (from top left) Chris, Rebecca, Heather, Lynne, Peter, Nicky, Kay and Derek – are all deeply passionate about customer service, and our country's amazing churches.

Amongst them are theologians, choristers, regular churchgoers, and people who have worked with Christian charities here and abroad, so they really understand your specific needs. And because they're based at regional locations all over the UK, they're also able to tailor their advice to your local requirements.

They have decades of combined industry experience – and standing behind them is Ecclesiastical's 135 years of unrivalled expertise and insight in dealing with everything life might throw at you.



Where possible, the Church Insurance Consultants love to meet customers and talk face-to-face, and are happy to host networking events where you can get to know people from other parishes and share experiences, ideas – and smiles.

If you are unable to meet them in person, they're still there, offering exactly the same services online or over the telephone.

To find out more about the team, and how they could help you and your church, please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/cic or email meetus@ecclesiastical.com (please include your contact details, the name of your church and parish, and policy number if possible), or call them on **0345 777 3322**.

Contains promotional material

Café raises funds – and spirits

When lockdowns led to a dramatic fall in revenue, one church came up with a way to raise funds and create a much needed local community space.



Christ Church in Lofthouse (near Leeds) was struggling for funding, and the village itself had been cut in half by the arrival of the M26 motorway many years ago, leaving its people without a proper place to meet. So the Reverend Mandy Rhodes and others put their heads together and decided to open the TLC Café in the basement of their church.

“Villagers still talk fondly about the old cricket club which was lost when the motorway came through,” said Mandy. “That was where people would meet up for parties and get-togethers. But since it went there hasn’t been anywhere suitable. Like most churches, we were hit really hard by the lockdowns – and we still are, with quite a few of our elderly parishioners now in the habit of joining services online. So we wondered if there was a way we could address both problems, and the café was born.”

They teamed up with CLO Coffee – a Leeds-based Christian coffee shop and roastery – to source a machine and barista training, and redecorated the basement hall, which is the former crypt. In November 2021, they opened the café – and it has gone from strength to strength.

“There’s a lovely, relaxed atmosphere,” said Mandy. “We’re seeing a real group of regulars building – people just like having somewhere to meet up again. After paying off our original outlay we’re now turning a profit, which means we can be more confident about paying our Parish Share. “We have local artists displaying their work here – our current exhibition is of art produced by a local head injury charity – and we take a small 5% cut of any sales, which helps. We have a charity shop and our food bank too. We’re running mother-and-baby drop-ins, and I’m looking at starting baby massage sessions. I’d say the future is bright!”

Especially in rural communities, church buildings are much more than just bricks and mortar. They offer vital spaces for quiet time, reflection and connection, as the TLC Café demonstrates.

From listening to customer feedback, we know that it’s not always easy to pay for the upkeep and care of rural churches, or for the ministry that happens in them.

We asked for your feedback on our printed toolkit – Fundraising in a Box – that was sent to all church customers in January 2021. You told us you liked the toolkit style, but guidance especially for rural parishes would be a helpful addition to our support. That’s why we’ve created a fundraising toolkit for rural churches, full of useful links and expert advice. **You can find it on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/rural-parishes**

More fundraising support

There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

Our Movement for Good Awards open for entry



Charitable giving is at the heart of what we do – and has been for over 135 years. For the past three years, Ecclesiastical Insurance has run the Movement for Good Awards programme, giving away £3 million to great causes.

Did you know?

In 2021, we were delighted to award £25,000 to church-related charities. Please take a look at our winners’ map to see which charities and churches we have helped in your local area:

winnersmap.benefactgroup.com

The Awards are back and this year we have over £1 million to donate, but we cannot do it without you. This year, you’ll find information on the awards on our parent company’s website.

Visit: www.benefactgroup.com/movement-for-good to find out more.





Have you heard the e-news?

E-news is a monthly email full of tips and information and monthly risk reminders for all of our customers and anyone in your church community. To receive it is easy – **all you need to do is register on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/signup** and if at any time you decide you no longer want to receive it, you can click the 'unsubscribe' button at the bottom of the email. Feel free to pass on the sign-up link to anyone you think might like it.

'Made Simple' guides



We know that understanding the insurance responsibilities for your church can be complicated, that's why we've created our 'Made Simple' guides.

These guides take you through potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches, as well as activities and projects that PCCs are often involved in.

They cover topics such as administration, events, community outreach, people on church premises, church property, building works and legal expenses. **You can find them all on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/church**

Information at your fingertips

The Ecclesiastical website is largely an online library of guidance and support for you and your church community. You'll find information about church and home insurance, risk management, fundraising and grants and lots more. 'Church Matters' newsletter is also on the website, making it really easy to share with others.

Visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church

Ministry Bursary Awards

Financial support for 2023 sabbaticals

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community. Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) provide financial support to members of the clergy planning to take extended study leave. Applications are open now until the end of September.

Established in 1987 to celebrate Ecclesiastical's centenary year, the Awards have supported almost 1,400 clergy members from Anglican Christian faiths. The sabbatical breaks and projects have varied greatly over the years – from traditional and modern-day pilgrimages to study visits, spiritual retreats and pursuits of lifelong dreams and hobbies.

Like Rev'd James Radcliffe from Lincoln, who worked in sports-based ministry in South Africa, or Rev'd Rachel Dale, who studied dementia and also worked with vulnerable children. One of our most recent MBA recipients, Rev'd Canon Imogen Nay, spent her sabbatical in 2021 looking at rewilding and green churches.

Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards are open for applications until 30 September 2022. Judging of the applications will take place in November and awards will be made during December 2022.

If you would like to read more about James, Rachel or Imogen's experiences and find out more about the Awards including eligibility criteria and application details, **please visit our website: www.ecclesiastical.com/mba**



Financial services

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (EFAS) provides expert, independent financial advice including on pensions, investments, life assurance and mortgages for the clergy, church people and PCCs.

☎ **0800 107 0190**
✉ **getadvice@ecclesiastical.com**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice**

WINNERS of the **NatWest Mortgage Awards 2022, South West and Wales** for putting the customer and local community at the heart of everything we do.



Car insurance

Our Clergy Motor Insurance is tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, no admin charges and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹

☎ **0345 450 9396**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance**

¹ Subject to terms and conditions.



Award-winning home insurance that supports your church



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its profits to good causes, one of the ways in which we do this is through our Trust130 Home

Insurance offer. For every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offer to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Originally launched in 2017 to celebrate our 130th anniversary, we have since donated more than £460,000, helping to support over 2,500 churches. A donation of £130 may not sound much, but churches and congregations have used the donations in many creative ways to fund all sorts of things:

St Mary and Bartholomew Solihull are using their grant to introduce contactless donations to support the church and raise valuable funds for charitable causes.

*"This is important for both the church to enable us to continue to raise funds, for the parishioners to enable them to continue to donate in church without having to touch cash/the collection plate and finally to the local (and national) charities we support each year through our charitable giving which is only possible from the kind donations our parishioners make." **Duncan Watson**, Treasurer*

St Albans West Leigh, which is located in a growing community, with a new housing development opposite the church and a further development close by in the planning stages, are using the money to welcome the new residents.

*"We have decided to use the money to assist in funding welcome packs – which will be a booklet about our church and the locale along with some nice biscuits. The booklet and biscuits enable us to make personal contact with people as they move into our community, and to offer them a warm welcome." **The Rev'd Canon Karina Green**, Priest in Charge St Alban's West Leigh*

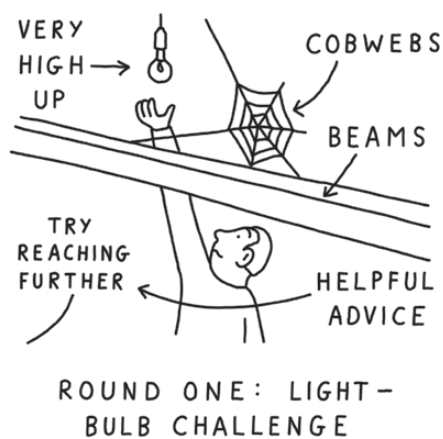
Most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining the most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers. April 2022 saw Ecclesiastical top the Fairer Finance league table for home insurance for a record 15th consecutive time, retaining our gold ribbon status.²

And don't forget, we offer a discount to members of the clergy.

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

¹ Terms may apply. ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance



The vocation of being a churchwarden

A few years ago I was asked to give a short presentation about churchwardens as part of a day workshop the Ecclesiastical Law Society was holding. I was delighted to do so. As a reader and as a curate I had known excellent churchwardens and had learnt a great deal from them (perhaps a little too much about boilers... but can you ever know too much about boilers?). As I read and explored and delved, I realised that this role is key to our life together. As the role becomes more challenging, and it becomes more difficult to encourage folk to take it on, I wondered whether we needed to remind ourselves that this is a vocation. Just as some are called to ordained ministry, or licensed lay ministry, for example, some are called to the role of churchwarden. Since that original presentation I have spoken to various groups of churchwardens and although for a few folk this simply echoes how they have always felt about the role, for many others considering their role as churchwarden in this way has come as a surprise and as an encouragement. It doesn't stop the role being challenging, but it can mean that it is seen differently.

But what makes me think this is a vocation? And what difference does that make?

Let's start with the Canons...

I am hoping that those words have not made you groan! The Canons give us an insight into who we are as a Church, as Christians who are part of the Church of England.

Canon E1 sets out exactly what we are looking for when we appoint churchwardens and, maybe surprisingly, taking care of the building is not the first on the list.

"The churchwardens when admitted are officers of the bishop. They shall discharge such duties as are by law and custom assigned to them; they shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent; they shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners

in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace among them. They shall also maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service."

Foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent

The churchwarden is a representative, acting as a bridge, an advocate, between clergy and laity. This is so important that they are a bishop's officer, not the incumbent's. There is something here about shared power and mutual care and respect, about teamwork. They are to represent the laity, so this is not about their own voice but about their ability to listen and sift; to discern what is helpful to pass on and what isn't; they are to be wise, self-aware and self-reflective.

They shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion

It is clear that this is a key role in the promoting of discipleship: churchwardens are to live and minister in such a way that encourages and facilitates their own discipleship and that of others. They could well be small group leaders, lead baptism preparation classes and so on, or, more likely and arguably more importantly, be people who are identifying and building up those who can become lay leaders.

To promote unity and peace among them

A churchwarden is a diplomat, able to be a calm presence, someone who can listen and speak and can de-escalate a situation. They live this out in the way they are in a PCC meeting or when overseeing sidespeople, for example. They are folk who are able to work in a team and can give appropriate pastoral care when needed.

They shall also maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service

Only now do we come to buildings, in the context of worship. Churchwardens set the tone of hospitality, a welcoming environment and, of course, they keep an eye on the heating!

Even a brief reading of this Canon shows that this is a key role because of the importance of the laity working with the clergy as the whole people of God. It is most definitely a vocation. This isn't about doing more, it is about knowing that who you are is as important as what you do – and for that we thank you!

Above, extracts from 'Churchwarden of the Year' cartoon courtesy of Dave Walker/Church Times. Used with permission. **See the complete cartoon at oxford.anglican.org/churchwardens**

Build back stronger



We are all tired now; some of us more weary and stretched than we have ever felt in our lives. As the outward demands continue, it can be hard to find the inner resources to rebuild parish life and grow stronger. But recover we must, and there are good resources to draw on.

Emerging from Coronavirus is based on the Anglican Five

Marks of Mission. It invites parish leadership teams to reflect on 'what has been lost through the pandemic which we need to grieve, what has been reduced that we need to let go of or to build up again, and what has emerged that we need to respond to?'

oxford.anglican.org/emerging-from-coronavirus

For parishes/benefices looking to go deeper, the Parish Planning Tool is designed to help PCCs and local leadership teams explore God's call for your church and to move forward in new and transformed ways. The pack is available free of charge and our Parish Development Advisers are on hand to provide help and support. oxford.anglican.org/parish-planning-tool

Pathways magazine is available for parishes to distribute free of charge. *Pathways* equips committed Christians on their walk with God, and supports enquirers as they learn more about the faith. Make sure there are copies available in your church.

oxford.anglican.org/pathways

Are you getting the information you need?

We have a huge range of resources available for wardens and church leadership teams, including a dedicated section of the website, Church House Quarterly emails and our weekly eNews. Do get in touch if there's more we can do, any content we can improve or information missing from the website. **Please speak to your archdeacon, or contact the Communications team at communications@oxford.anglican.org**

For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

Whilst Ecclesiastical has used reasonable endeavours to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication, please note: (a) the information is not intended to constitute a definitive or complete statement of the law on any subject, (b) the information may over the course of time become incorrect or out of date; and (c) neither Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc, nor its subsidiaries or parent company can accept any responsibility or liability for action taken or losses suffered as a result of reliance placed on the information provided in this newsletter.

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Development Fund grants available



Did you know that every parish/benefice in the diocese can bid for a grant from the diocesan Development Fund? The Fund is open to all but is particularly helpful for those parishes with limited financial resources to invest in missional activity.

It's easy to apply, and Church House staff are on hand to support you. oxford.anglican.org/development-fund

Discipleship and small group resources

Did you know that the diocese has a range of free and low-cost resources for small groups and people exploring their faith?

- *Exploring the Beatitudes* is a three-session course to explore how we can be more contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.
- *Abundant Life* looks at one of the most powerful stories in the Gospels, the raising of Lazarus. Daily reflections suitable for small group discussion and prayer.
- *Alive in Christ*, a short course based on Paul's letter to the Colossians, explores what it means to live as a Christian disciple, and what it means to be the Church.
- *Principles of Deep Water Fishing* reflects on the principles of Christian mission in Luke and Acts and explores what it means to be a Christ-like Church today.
- *Living is Christ, Dying is Gain* assists small groups to navigate the effects of the pandemic and return to Christ as the centre and the pattern of their faith.
- Our Contemplative Toolkit practices require little planning or preparation, but can have a beneficial effect on wellbeing and good mental health.

You can find links to each of these resources and much more at oxford.anglican.org/discipleship-resources