

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

At the Visitation services we will take the opportunity to thank you in person for your commitment to the local church and all you offer with your time, dedication, energy, skills, and also your prayers, in which you join with all God's people.

As another way of seeking to show our gratitude we collected a few quotes from people about churchwardens, which we share here. Please read this and know how deeply grateful so many are to you, both worshippers and those of the community who value the gift of the local church.

“ A churchwarden is the steady hand that keeps the church standing – both physically and spiritually, and are often the first point of contact for parishioners and visitors. ”

“ Our churchwardens do so much for the church! From maintenance management to grant applications to lay ministry. They give their time responsibly and reliably, and often relentlessly! They make efforts to know and engage with members of the congregation as well as ordained and lay ministers and are a vital part of the church and our ministry running smoothly. We are really grateful for them. ”

“ Churchwardens are the backbone of the church community. They pick up responsibilities that nobody else wants to do. They are the vicar's right-hand person. They are a Jack of all trades, whilst also leading from the front. ”

“ They're wonderful. Everything seems to be referred to them. They are amazing. ”

“ Churchwardens are the quiet guardians of tradition and change, balancing the past with the needs of the present. ”

“ They are the glue that holds the church together, making sure that the building and the people thrive. ”

“ To be a churchwarden is to serve with hands that fix, feet that run, ears that listen and a heart that cares. ”

“ My churchwardens are kind, thoughtful, inspiring, hard-working founts of wisdom, with great senses of humour. I'd be lost without them! ”

“ A churchwarden is a shepherd without a crook, a steward without a badge and a leader without seeking the spotlight. ”

“ Behind every well-run church is a churchwarden with a to-do list longer than the Sunday readings. ”



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Safeguarding – everyone's business



Excellent safeguarding practice and culture is vital. We are incredibly grateful for the work of all clergy, parish safeguarding officers (PSOs) and PCCs.

Please ensure that safeguarding posters with up-to-date information are displayed in your churches and on the front pages of

websites. Also continue to have safeguarding as a standing item on PCC agendas, and review training requirements and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearances. Some benefices are finding it helpful to share PSOs – this may be worth considering, especially for smaller parishes.

We commend the use of the Safeguarding Dashboard and Safeguarding Hubs. They are helpful for monitoring what is required and keeping track of progress made.

Safeguarding Hub

The Safeguarding Hub (safeguardinghubs.org.uk) enables all aspects of safer recruitment and training requirements to be recorded in one place. The Safeguarding Hub has been purchased by the diocese to make recording and storing this information simpler and more efficient for all parishes.

The Safeguarding Hub has a suite of tools to help a parish with safeguarding. The first three tools:

- keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training
- create role descriptions and person specifications
- track the safer recruitment of new volunteers.

For further details or if you cannot access your hub, please contact:

✉ safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org

Information on...

The following topics have come up in recent months, so we wanted to give you some helpful advice on them.

Three-yearly church inspections by archdeacons or deanery leaders

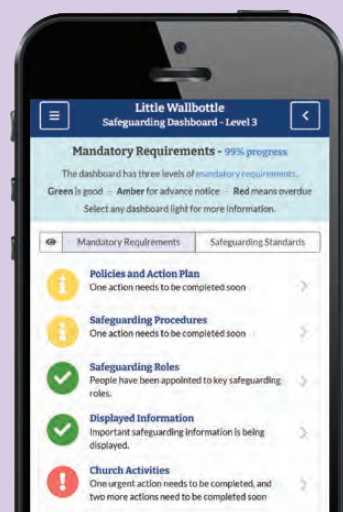
– These are important times during which we look together at the legal requirements for churches and PCCs and hear about what is going well or what concerns there may be. It's also really helpful to get to know people and places in greater depth and to offer support and advice where that would be helpful.

Quinquennial Inspections – There is a legal obligation for PCCs to organise a QI every five years, so please be aware of when your next one is due. Contact your archdeacon's office if advice on this would be helpful.

PAT testing – Some churches are collaborating to undertake the required annual Portable Appliance Testing of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe for use. One person does the required training and shares the equipment needed.

Air-source or ground-source heating systems – There is no annual safety certificate for these heating systems but Ecclesiastical recommend annual servicing and maintenance to avoid problems. They also advise retaining information about servicing and maintenance records.

Safeguarding Dashboard



Safeguarding Dashboards were developed by Clearly Simpler Limited for use within the Church of England. The purpose of these is to streamline safeguarding administration and governance in parishes.

Watch a short video or download a brochure to quickly discover the benefits for safeguarding officers and churches. Full information on how to use the system and contact details can be found at:

🌐 safeguardingdashboards.org.uk

You can log on to your dashboard here:

🌐 parishdashboards.org.uk

If you cannot access your dashboard, please contact:

✉ safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org



Photo: Canva

Support and resources for Churchwardens from Ecclesiastical

Ecclesiastical understands that volunteering for the role of Churchwarden and supporting your church can be a demanding job. Managing a treasured building and ensuring that it's a safe place for your congregation to worship, visit and enjoy can be daunting, but you don't have to do it alone.

Ecclesiastical church support managers

At no additional cost, Church Support Managers are there for their Ecclesiastical church customers. Providing tailored help and training to support church insurance needs, they can offer guidance on risk management, health and safety legislation and direct you to online resources. They can also deliver online and in-person group training sessions around topics including the basics of insurance, fire safety, fundraising, climate change and net zero, open churches and theft of metal.



Heather Ford



Joseph Davies

Heather Ford – Church Support Manager for the North.

Heather has roots in the Church, having previously worked for the Diocese of Manchester, and understands the demands of church life. Heather is passionate about supporting churches to understand how insurance can help, rather than hinder, to enable people to focus on their ministry and thrive.

Joseph Davies – Church Support Manager for the South.

Joseph is very much part of the Church family – his father was a parish priest, his mother a hospital chaplain, his wife was recently ordained as a curate, and he spent nine years as a verger at Salisbury and Ely Cathedrals.

“ Fundraising is crucial for sustaining church activities and initiatives. I am always delighted to offer guidance on effective fundraising strategies. We have an excellent online Fundraising Hub which has lots of information about how to get started and how to keep going on your fundraising journey. ”

✉ meetus@ecclesiastical.com
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/church-support-managers

Fundraising hub

Fundraising plays a key role in boosting finances for your church. Ecclesiastical's fundraising hub offers user-friendly support guides which take you from 'where to start' through to 'key factors for successful fundraising' and everything in between.

If you have an Ecclesiastical policy, you can also contact their fundraising helpline, to arrange a call back from their expert team.

📞 **0345 601 9959**
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising



Ecclesiastical's plain English guides

If you are looking for help in areas such as legal expenses, building work, or outreach, Ecclesiastical has a range of easy to understand Made Simple Guides to help, and their comprehensive document library is full of useful tools like risk assessment templates and Guidance Notes.

🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/#madesimple

Ecclesiastical church insurance team

Do you have questions about your Ecclesiastical policy?

📞 **0345 777 3322** – lines are open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays
 ✉ churchteam@ecclesiastical.com

Risk Advice Helpline

Are you looking for advice on how to minimise risks as you manage your church?

📞 **0345 600 7531** – lines are open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays
 ✉ risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

A claims team that really cares

Ecclesiastical's claims team are experts.

📞 **0345 603 8381** – 24-hour reporting service
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/claims/claim-online

Ecclesiastical would love to hear from you

Do you have a story for Ecclesiastical? Perhaps you overcame a fundraising problem or found a way to get your local community more involved with your church. Sharing 'a day in your life' could really help other Churchwardens and members of the PCC.

✉ meetus@ecclesiastical.com

Contains promotional material

Month-by-month support

To help you plan maintenance and manage your church and its grounds, Ecclesiastical has created a calendar to keep you organised and on track – you can download your copy using this link:

 ecclesiastical.com/risk-calendar



Get monthly tips straight to your inbox




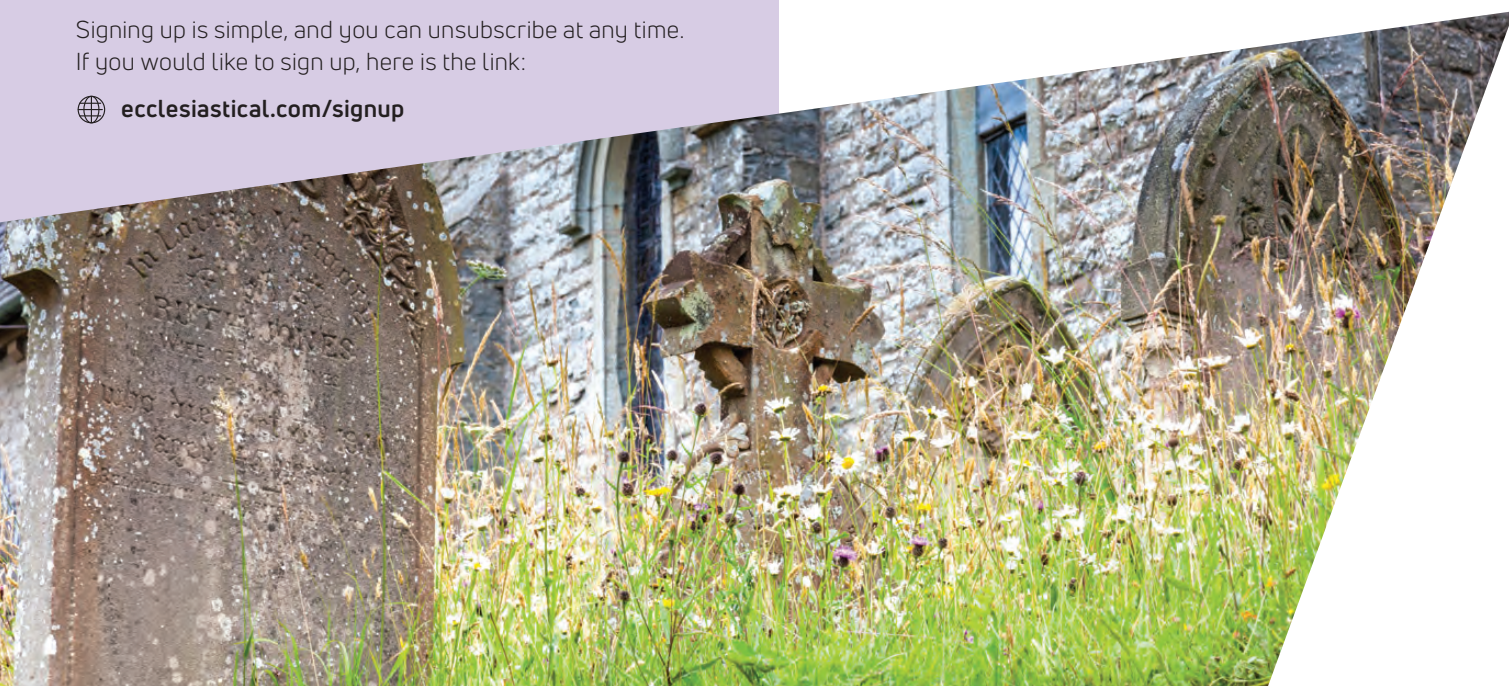
Join the community of church leaders who receive Ecclesiastical's monthly e-newsletter. It's packed with valuable advice about church security, event planning, fundraising and more.

Many of Ecclesiastical's customers already benefit from this e-newsletter, and we hope you'll join them.

Feel free to share the sign-up link with others in your church community who might be interested.

Signing up is simple, and you can unsubscribe at any time. If you would like to sign up, here is the link:

 ecclesiastical.com/signup



Why should net zero be a focus for churches?

A Q&A with the Church of England



BENEFACT TRUST



Julian Atkins

In 2024, our Group's charitable owner, Benefact Trust, pledged £1.5m towards the Church of England's ambitious goal of reaching net zero by 2030. Benefact Trust's funding is focused on equipping and inspiring churches across the UK to start their journey to net zero and reduce their impact on the environment.

Benefact Trust sat down with Julian Atkins, Net Zero Programme Director for the Church of England, to talk through some of the most commonly asked questions about the Church's net zero goal.

Whilst many of us want to play an active role in tackling climate change, the prospect can seem overwhelming due to the scale of the issue, the urgency to take

action and the abundance of complicated information. In Benefact Trust's short Q&A with Julian, he emphasises how important it is to keep things simple and start small.

Julian discusses what net zero actually means, why the Church has a responsibility to reduce its impact on the climate and low-cost ways to get started. Watch 'Net Zero and the Church' on Benefact Trust's YouTube channel:

 youtube.com/@benefacttrust

Here you'll find a host of helpful videos, including a full podcast with Julian Atkins.

Ecclesiastical supports sabbaticals

Ecclesiastical aims to support Anglican clergy by offering financial assistance for life-affirming sabbaticals through their **Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs)**.

Established in 1987, these awards have distributed over £1.4 million, benefiting more than 1,500 clergy members. An MBA can rejuvenate and enhance the ministerial development of clergy, offering them opportunities to engage in extended study, travel, or other enriching activities that can have a lasting impact on their personal growth and to the ministering of their congregations.



St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Kolkata, West Bengal, India

The **Revd Adam Dickens** is a recent recipient of such an MBA and he told Ecclesiastical:

“ I was very grateful for the MBA grant as it facilitated my sabbatical visit to Kolkata and wider West Bengal where I spent a month engaging with projects run by the Cathedral Relief Service of Kolkata Cathedral, as well as visiting various establishments that came under the ambit of the Diocese of Calcutta; these included churches, schools, colleges, a TB clinic, an AIDs hospice and a residential home.

“ It was an extremely rich time as I was offered a window into the joy and despair of life for people living in the city (as well as some of the rural areas in the state of West Bengal) and the creative ways in which church communities were responding. It provided interaction with a very different culture to the one I'm used to inhabiting, with all the challenges and growth that comes with it. ”

The application window for the 2026 MBA programme opens in spring 2025 and closes in September 2025. In 2026, we are particularly keen to see more sabbaticals which aim to support the drive for carbon net zero.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit:

 ecclesiastical.com/mba



Give yourself a financial health check

In today's world, with the high cost of living and rising taxation, it's more important than ever to ensure your finances are in top shape.

Expert advice for clergy



Ben Dabbs




Ben Dabbs, an independent financial adviser with Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Service (EFAS), emphasises the importance of financial planning for clergy. “With little time available for clergy in their busy lives to focus on themselves, it's important for them to seek expert advice to manage their finances effectively and ensure their personal well-being and that of their

dependants is planned and catered for,” he explains. “Too often, clergy members will delay financial planning until the twilight of their ministry, which can lead to unnecessary hardship.”

Plan ahead with confidence

To help you review your financial arrangements, such as life assurance, pension savings, investments, mortgage options¹ and retirement planning, it's worthwhile seeking expert advice from an independent financial adviser who understands your circumstances and can put in place a plan to help give you peace of mind for the future.

If you would like to arrange a financial health check or receive a brochure providing information about the advice and services available, please contact EFAS at:

 **0800 107 0190**
 **getadvice@ecclesiastical.com**
 **ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice**

¹Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage. The value of your investments including pension investments can fluctuate, and you may not get back the amount you invested. Your capital is at risk.



Join the Movement for Good



Ecclesiastical is part of the Benefact Group and we do financial services differently – we give all available profits to charity and good causes. It's thanks to our customers that we can make this happen.

The Movement for Good Awards is our annual giving programme and anyone can get involved. The Awards give you the opportunity to nominate the charitable causes that matter most to you.

We're proud to have supported churches, Scouts groups, food banks, hospices, heritage charities and more, all nominated by their supporters.

How to nominate a charity or church to win £1,000

1. Visit movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical
2. Nominate before 15 December 2025. Your nomination will be included in all the remaining £1,000 draws in 2025, so the earlier you nominate, the more chances you have. It's one nomination per charity, per person, so you can get as many as you like in the mix.
3. Further down the page, there are resources you can personalise and share with your colleagues and congregation to encourage more nominations.
4. Keep scrolling to sign up for notifications, including special £5,000 draws and larger awards through partnership funding.

You'll also find more information about the Awards, including the terms and conditions at:

 movementforgood.com/tc

Best of luck!

Trust Ecclesiastical to insure your home and give back to your church!

As a church official, your home could serve as both a living space and a place for your ministry. You might host prayer meetings and counselling sessions from your home, or even help parishioners plan weddings and funerals. You will be supporting your parishioners throughout the years, and Ecclesiastical Insurance is there to support you, with their tailored home insurance policies.

A home insurance policy from Ecclesiastical Insurance can be adapted to suit the needs of the clergy in your work on behalf of the Church, or the general needs of your congregation and community.

Ecclesiastical Home Insurance

Ecclesiastical Home Insurance provides up to £750,000 for buildings and £75,000 for contents as standard. This cover includes protection for your home, personal belongings and even contents away from home up to £3,500. Additionally, 24-hour home emergency assistance and legal expenses are included, helping to ensure you are covered in unexpected situations.

But there is more!

When you take out a new home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical, they will donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of your choice¹ – this programme has already contributed over £500,000, to churches across the country.



You can trust Ecclesiastical. They regularly win coveted awards for their home insurance products. In November last year, they retained their top spot in the Fairer Finance Home Insurance league table for a record twentieth time and remain the UK's most trusted home insurance provider!² Importantly, in today's online world, they also have an 'Excellent' score on Trustpilot too.³



When you talk to the friendly experts at Ecclesiastical's UK-based Head Office, they will work with you to make sure that your home and its contents are well-protected against a variety of risks. By choosing Ecclesiastical, you're not just insuring your home; you could also be helping your church. Call us today!

 **0345 777 3322** and quote **CHOPS25**
 **ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance**

¹Terms and conditions apply. Visit ecclesiastical.com/trust130-terms. ²Fairer Finance Home Insurance customer experience rating, spring and autumn 2015 – 2024. ³Trustpilot reviews – 419 between 1 February 2023 – 14 April 2025. Correct at time of going to print.



All Saints, Goosey

'A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!'

All Saints, Goosey was the setting for filming part of the story of Richard III for the launch of *A voice for King Richard III* at the Theatre Royal in York last year.

The proposal for filming at the church came from Yvonne Morley-Chisholm, a vocal coach at the Royal Shakespeare Company, who spent ten years researching how Richard III would have sounded. Her belief is that his voice would have been very different from some of the existing portrayals of him and, in her view, he was more likely to have had a Yorkshire accent.

There is a rumoured link between St Denys, Stanford-in-the-Vale and Richard III and Anne Neville. It is thought that the porch at St Denys could be where Richard and Anne were married as Anne lived in the manor house which backs onto the church.

Goosey Church (in the same benefice as St Denys) was viewed as a perfect location for a day's filming inside and outside. The actor who played Richard III spent countless hours with Yvonne coaching him to get his voice as close as possible to a king who reigned over 500 years ago.

The churchwarden at Goosey contacted the Dorchester area office for advice prior to filming. We were then able to put in place an appropriate process for this kind of proposal. No filming can take place in a Church of England church or churchyard without being authorised by faculty. This ensures that our sacred places are protected and used appropriately.

As churches in our diocese are particularly sought-after as film locations for non-church-related or commercial ventures, the Chancellor has granted blanket permission for filming with conditions to ensure that our sacred spaces are protected and that good opportunities can still be taken up within that protection.

Those conditions are that:

a) the proposed script and its context within the plot is approved by the archdeacon (in addition to the incumbent) as there is a duty to 'take care that words, music and pictures are such as befit the House of God, are consonant with sound doctrine and make for the edifying of the people' in Canon F16 – this is the principle relating to plays, concerts and exhibitions, but it is of general application in this context;

b) the filming company enters into the Diocesan Registry's standard form of filming agreement. This records the terms that have been agreed with the incumbent/priest-in-charge as well as setting out the framework within which the church and churchyard can be used, given the consecrated and ecclesiastical nature of the building/land and the fact that the PCC, as a statutory charity, has certain responsibilities in relation to the use and maintenance of the building/land. Negotiation with the filming company will include the dates on which filming is proposed, the fees payable (which should be more than a donation to the church), those parts of the building/land to be used and, importantly, how they are to be used and represented.

Those filming need to understand and respect the nature of the church and churchyard. Any proposed temporary alterations (such as coverings of any features, introduction of any furnishings, removal of any item in the church or any works that may affect graves) cannot go ahead without consultation with the DAC and confirmation from the Diocesan Registry that the Chancellor has given separate approval. The PCC's insurers must also be consulted to ensure cover during filming.

If the archdeacon does not approve the script or the filming company insists on their own form of agreement or substantial variation to the Diocesan Registry's agreement, a full faculty application will be required, and further fees will be incurred.

In order to facilitate this process where Richard III was concerned, we sent the churchwarden all the important information to be considered. We then received the proposed script to check it was appropriate.

It was great to hear that filming went well and, whilst Richard III might not have found his horse, we have the opportunity of hearing how he might have sounded!

If you are approached with any filming requests (by professionals or amateurs) please get in touch with your archdeacon or Helen Lambourne at the Diocesan Registry, who will be happy to advise on the process.



Solar panels – on church buildings?



There is a common misconception that listed church buildings can't have solar panels installed. In fact, several listed churches in our diocese are installing or have installed solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. These include St Mary's, Woodstock (planned for 2025), St Peter and St Paul, Wingrave, Dorchester Abbey, St Peter and St Paul's, Deddington, and All

Saints, Wing. National examples include York Minster and King's College, Cambridge – on a larger scale than most!

For listed buildings and conservation areas, planning constraints often mean that panels on the church roof have to be hidden from street view. This is often achieved using tower roofs for small arrays, less steeply angled south-aisle roofs, inside slopes of double roofs, or perhaps a less visually sensitive church-hall roof. Faculty permission is always required (but List B for unlisted churches not in a conservation area), and the Church of England website Renewable Energy page has a guide to solar PV.

Here are some rules of thumb to help churches consider whether to install solar panels:

1. Since feed-in tariffs have reduced and surplus electricity can no longer be sold back to the grid at generous rates, to be financially worthwhile, most of the energy generated should be used by the church. A ballpark figure is over 75%, for which a church needs a regular, daily demand for electricity, ideally during daylight hours.
2. Solar arrays should be sized to match the church's regular energy demand. Export of renewable energy into the grid would seem beneficial, but this could be achieved from any roof in the network and therefore would have a lower visual impact on an industrial building. Also, 'back-feeding' the grid currently results in additional stresses on the distribution network, making it best to maximise on-site use.

3. A battery storage system can be installed to store the generation from sunny parts of the day for use at night. However, ideally a battery would also be discharged daily, through a regular power demand in the evening or overnight, so that it can be recharged from generation on the following day. If a church uses floodlights daily, a small solar array and battery could power them. Battery-ready solar systems can be chosen while waiting for batteries to become more affordable. If batteries are being considered, early consultation with the church's insurers is even more important.
4. Another important consideration is the structural soundness of the roof, with any repairs done in advance. The roof must be able to take the weight and wind load of the panels. The fixing method also needs to suit the roof material.

If a church is keen to invest in renewable energy generation but doesn't have a regular use for the power or can't physically fit solar panels, helping a local church school install panels instead may be worth considering.

Installing solar panels on a church may not always be easy, but is far from impossible. Where solar panels are installed, they can be a demonstration to our communities of our care for God's creation. They also fulfil the fifth mark of mission: 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth'.

Alison Riggs, Environment Action Delivery Co-ordinator and
Matt Fulford, Inspired Efficiency



For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical



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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