

Dear Churchwarden,

This update once again gives you some bits of information that I have come across which I hope you may find useful as you look after your church buildings

Church Hall Survey

I unfortunately hold very little information about church halls in the diocese which makes it very difficult to direct support and relevant information. If you have a Church Hall, I would be very grateful if you could complete a simple online survey. The survey can be found by clicking on the following link <https://forms.gle/giS3GrwD41zpR63s8>

Training Opportunities 2024

Below is the list of training sessions that have currently been planned to support you as you look after your church buildings. You can book a place at any of the sessions by clicking on the booking link.

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Tuesday 13 th February	2.00pm	Holy Spirit, Crawcrook	Faculty Workshop	https://bit.ly/3tmBTTS
Thursday 15 th February	7.00pm	Holy Trinity, Wingate		https://bit.ly/488Ef8g
Tuesday 5 th March	7.00pm	All Saints, Lobley Hill	Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building	https://bit.ly/47MRM57
Thursday 29 th February	12.00pm	Zoom	Producing a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan	https://bit.ly/3Nxil68
Thursday 29 th February	7.00pm	Cuthbert House		https://bit.ly/41COr6s
Tuesday 12 th March	7.00pm	Holy Trinity, Darlington	Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building	https://bit.ly/46OGJHa
Thursday 21 st March	6.30pm	Zoom	Fire Risk Management and Health & Safety	https://bit.ly/3TFf1to
Tuesday 16 th April	7.00pm	All Saints, Preston on Tees	Understanding your buildings	https://bit.ly/3S0m8vD
Wednesday 15 th May	12.00pm	Zoom	Faculty Workshop	https://bit.ly/3GSAbNq
Mid May	TBC	TBC	Churchyard Management	TBC
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

Church Building Support Officer

Our new Church Building Support Officer starts later this month and further details of the support he will be able to offer to churches and how churches can access this support, will be available next month.

Energy Footprint Tool for 2023 Energy Usage

The energy footprint tool (EFT) is currently being updated and will not be available to enter data until February. Completion of the energy footprint tool will however be very important as much of the funding, that is being released to support the drive to becoming Net Zero, will only be provided to churches with a completed EFT and therefore a baseline from which to measure the impact.

To complete the tool you will need to have a full year of utility bills, service attendance data, and some basic details about the building. I can provide you with the approximate area of your church building if required.

It is important that you include all buildings that you are responsible for the energy use as a PCC, as these all contribute towards your carbon output.

If you require any support in entering the data, please contact Bethan Still (Diocesan Environmental Officer) or myself.

Top 20% Carbon Emitting Churches

In Durham Diocese the top 20% of carbon emitting churches produce over half of the carbon that we produce as a diocese. As part of the Net Zero Carbon Routemap all of these churches are required to now begin producing an action plan. If your church falls in the Top 20% you will have recent received a letter explaining this and inviting you to one of our workshops being held on Thursday 29th February. Other churches will be asked to begin producing an action plan next year but you don't have to wait until then and you are most welcome to join us at the end of February. You can sign up via the links in the training box above.

Infrared Heating Systems

We have quite a few churches who are currently looking at infrared heating systems and I wondered if it might be useful to have a meeting (online or in person) to discuss experiences so far and ask any questions. If you would be interested in attending a meeting please let me know indicating if you prefer online or in person and the preferred time of the day for a meeting.

Church Heating Systems

Over the last couple of months we have had a number of churches experiencing problems with their heating systems. In some cases this has been due to boiler issues but in some it is problems with the other parts of the heating system. We have our boilers serviced on a regular basis but how often do we get the rest of the heating system checked. A build up of sludge in our systems can prevent the effective flow of water around our systems and can block valves. This means that the heat that we are producing is not getting to all parts of the building and can not only put strain on the boilers and pumps but also result in much higher gas / oil usage. Whilst, it may not be necessary to have the whole system checked every year, it is something that needs to be carried out on a regular basis, perhaps every 4 or 5 years, particularly if the pipe system is old.

Oil Boilers

As part of the routemap to Net Zero Carbon the Church of England has stated that no new oil fired boilers should be installed from 2026 onwards. If you have an oil fired boiler, now is a good time to start exploring alternative options for heating your church so that you have a plan in place when the boiler eventually does need to be replaced.

Churchyard Information

Caring for God's Acre is a useful resource for those churches who have a churchyard and provides a range of information to help you care for this space. Some parishes have designated parts of their churchyards to be managed as a meadow to help increase the biodiversity of the area. You can download a free sign that can be displayed to explain why the grass is not being cut. [Free Meadow Management Sign – Caring For God's Acre – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK \(caringforgodsacre.org.uk\)](https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

Church of England: Updated grants directory

Are you looking for grants to help fund a local environmental project? Their extensive online directory has been updated and lists organisations which may be able to help you. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/fundraising-for-net-zero-carbon#finding-suitable-funders-to-apply-to>

Church Grants: online training on fundraising

The Church Grants Team - <https://www.churchgrants.co.uk/> - are hosting a free Q&A on Friday 2nd Feb @ 3pm and then every other Friday until the end of April. No need to pre-register just use this link <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84653281486>

They are also running two webinars on Major Donor Fundraising for Church Appeals

This looks at why is major donor fundraising so important to churches how to identify them and how to approach them. Taking place on 19th and 20th February, you can book here <https://www.churchgrants.co.uk/training>

Tackling Metal Theft

The APPG report on metal theft is [now published](#). The report looks at metal theft across heritage and other national infrastructure. Heritage is a significant element of the report that recognises the impact on churches.

Cultural infrastructure maintenance assessment

This item is relevant for churches that have high numbers of tourist visitors. The DCMS has commissioned Purcell and Harlow Consulting to undertake research into the condition of publicly-accessible heritage based attractions.

Although all church buildings are publicly accessible, the research is for those that attract visitors on account of their heritage. The intention of the research is for the DCMS to better understand that state of cultural infrastructure, why the need exists and assess the impact of investment in cultural heritage. Please [participate](#) if you feel your church falls into this category.

Church of England EPCs and leased space in a church or church hall

The Church Buildings Council has issued a guidance note on EPCs (Energy Performance Certificates) and leased space in churches and church halls. This detailed note includes links to relevant legislation and guidance in this particularly complex area. This is a matter where a church is best advised to seek specific legal advice to supplement the principles set out in the note. <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/energy-performance-certificates>

A Future for Your Church: Exploring Sustainable Futures

Thursday 18th April 2024, 10am to 11:30am by Zoom and FREE

Heritage Trust Network and Historic Churches Scotland are joining forces to host the next event in this series for any group contemplating the future of their church building. At this event, Deborah Kent of Fife Historic Buildings Trust will present on a recent study that looked at future uses and financial models for three churches in Fife. Everyone is welcome. <https://a-future-for-your-church.eventbrite.co.uk>

Electrical fires in churches nationally hit a six year high

Ecclesiastical Insurance is calling on churches to carry out important safety checks following a surge in electrical fires. The specialist insurer issued the warning after claims for electrical fires hit a six-year high in 2022. The number of incidents fell during 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, but have since risen to levels not seen since 2017. As churches diversify and adapt their buildings for wider community use, the range of electrical equipment used on premises has increased and evolved in recent years. <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/media-centre/electrical-fires-in-churches/>

Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

We have an online Churchwardens Forum using 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

Buildings for Mission Secretary,
Diocese of Durham
Phone: 07586090996