



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

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. If you are no longer the churchwarden following your APCM please forward to the relevant person as it takes a few weeks to update our database.

### Energy Footprint Tool for 2024 – only 4 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.

### Update to Online Faculty System

The Online Faculty System is being updated this year and as a result the appearance of the system will look different although the faculty process will remain the same. I have arranged a number of sessions to go through the new system and explain how it will now work. The sessions currently planned are on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 3<sup>rd</sup> July & 13<sup>th</sup> October and can be booked via the links on the training calendar below.

The transfer to the new system is planned for early October but final details are still to confirmed, at that point the old system will close and any faculties in progress will be transferred. We have a large number of faculties that were started some years ago but have not proceeded beyond the initial stage. Therefore any started before 2024 will be removed unless you have told me otherwise.

### Church Building Training 2025

Please find below the Church Building Training that has so far been planned for the year.

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> June	10.00am-12.00pm	All Saints, Lobley Hill	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	<a href="https://bit.ly/4karBMd">https://bit.ly/4karBMd</a>
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup> June	1.30-3.30pm	St Peter's, Stockton	Understanding your buildings	<a href="https://bit.ly/4k5tutL">https://bit.ly/4k5tutL</a>
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	7.00-9.00pm	Cuthbert House	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	<a href="https://bit.ly/4bvGKUf">https://bit.ly/4bvGKUf</a>
Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> July	1.30pm	Cuthbert House	New Churchwardens Training	Contact Archdeacons PA to book
Tue 8 <sup>th</sup> July	6.30pm	Zoom		Contact Archdeacons PA to book
September	TBC	TBC	Annual Maintenance Schedule	TBC
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> October	1.30-3.30pm	St Gabriel's, Sunderland	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	<a href="https://bit.ly/4hSowyN">https://bit.ly/4hSowyN</a>

If anyone would like to host the Annual Maintenance Session in September, please let me know.

## Understanding your Church Buildings

When we understand our church buildings better we are able to identify possible problem areas and therefore pre-empt maintenance and repair work. Some of you will know the history of your buildings well but some of you will need to piece together the history of your building from what is visible. I would encourage you to join us for the “Understanding Your Church Buildings” Session on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 1.30pm. If you are interested but the time is not convenient, please let me know and I will try and arrange another session.

## Urgent - Check your Heating

Now that you will probably have turned 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. If your church boiler is over 20 years old, now is the time to start considering options for the future. 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.

If you need to replace your heating system before next autumn you will require a faculty to be in place. As faculties will take around 2-3 months to be issued please make sure that any faculty requests are with me by no later than Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July so that they can be discussed by the DAC at their July meeting.

## 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.

## Quick Wins Grant Fund

The Church Building Panel have now allocated all of the Quick Wins Funding currently available and therefore no more grant applications are being accepted. We still have in excess of £40k in the Minor Repairs & Improvement Fund which can cover much of the same works but only to church buildings. We hope that a new round of funding from the Church Commissioners will be available from 2026 and I will let you know when this has been confirmed in the autumn.

## National Church Survey

This [landmark survey](#) will bring together churches, chapels, and meeting houses from every Christian denomination in the UK. The evidence you submit will enable us to identify the common issues that you face as a church by nation and location, as well as by denomination. It will help policymakers, dioceses, and funders to be able to better target their support, so that we can see churches thriving for generations to come.

## 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.

## **National Churches Trust: Free online training sessions**

These one-hour sessions, aimed at church volunteers and staff, cover a range of topics including fundraising, applying to the NLH, digital-giving, managing your project, and the importance of maintenance. They run from March until November.

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/training/current-sessions>

## **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**

Buildings for Mission Secretary,

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