



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

As usual I have listed some useful information below, but if you would like any specific advice regarding your church buildings then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Update to Online Faculty System

The introduction of the New Online Faculty System has been delayed from the planned October implementation and is now likely to be in February or March but I will keep you updated. The appearance of the system will look different although the faculty process will remain the same. I have arranged one more session to go through the new system and explain how it will now work. The session is planned for 13th October and can be booked via the links on the training calendar below. I will also provide further support when the new system comes online. 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
Mon 13th October	1.30-3.30pm	St Gabriel's Church, Sunderland	Faculty Workshop – New Online System	https://bit.ly/4hSowyN
Mon 8th December	6.00-7.30pm	Cuthbert House, Durham	Grant Funding Workshop	https://bit.ly/48hiTZf

If you have any training sessions that you feel would be useful in your roles looking after your buildings then please let me know. I will be putting together next year's training programme later in the autumn.

Join the Great Switch this Season of Creation

Wondering how your church can cut its carbon emissions? You can join the Great Switch this Season of Creation by changing to a green fuel tariff. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/creationtide/great-switch-creation>

Martyn's Law

The government is using the [ProtectUK](#) website to share protective security advice and guidance. The website has a [Martyn's Law](#) section following the passing of the Act. For churches, all buildings that are within the scope of the Act (200 or more people present) are treated as standard tier, however many people are present. As well as the resources on ProtectUK free security training events are provided by SAFE (Security advice for everyone), and the current programme of events can be viewed [here](#).

Whilst it is worth looking at the information relating to this, it is unlikely that many churches will be required to implement any procedures as it only affects those buildings which regularly have more than 200 people attending. The regulator is the Security Industry Authority (SIA) who will provide resources and training if required. Please do not buy any equipment or pay for any guidance on this as it will be provided free.

Quick Wins and Minor Repairs & Improvement Grant Funds

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 a small amount in the Minor Repairs & Improvement Fund which can cover much of the same works but only to church buildings, however once this is allocated we will not be able to award further grants until further funding is received.

We hope that the new round of funding from the Church Commissioners will allow these grants to continue in 2026 and I will let you know when this has been confirmed later in the autumn.

Are you ready for the colder weather?

Sorry if I keep pestering you about heating but it is really important that you have a plan in place should your heating system fail this winter. Starting looking at different heating systems is much more stressful if you are trying to make decisions quickly. If your heating system is over 20 years old it may be difficult to obtain spare parts. If you would like me to visit your church to discuss the different types of heating system which might be suitable, then please let me know. If you have an oil boiler this is particularly important as you will not be able to replace an oil boiler after the end of this year.

Heritage Hero Award 2025

Nominations are open for the Ecclesiastical Heritage Heroes Awards 2025, celebrating the outstanding volunteers who are the backbone of our heritage sector. These awards are a great opportunity to demonstrate how communities can take ownership of the historic environment around them and make a real difference. As a Heritage Alliance member, through the Church of England membership, you are eligible to nominate your volunteers for these prestigious awards through two categories:

- **Heritage Heroes 2025 Award** - Celebrating exceptional volunteer contributions in 2025
- **Heritage Heroes Young Person Award** - To celebrate the contribution of an individual volunteer under the age of 30 who has gone above and beyond for a heritage organisation

Nominations close on 30 November. Guidance on eligibility is [here](#) and the nomination form [here](#).

Heating & Pipe Organs

The Building Conservation Directory has published a helpful article on heating and pipe organs, drawing on research by Tobit Curteis working with the organ adviser William McVicker. [The article](#) clarifies how pipe organs respond to heating and shows that good maintenance of the building contributes positively to its longevity and performance.

Contractor Recommendations

Have you had a really good contractor working on your Church Building? If so, then please send me their details so that I can share them with other parishes.

Many of you have asked me for details of suggested contractors over recent years, however I can only share the information that I have!

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](#)

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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