



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

Happy New Year, I hope that you have all managed to have a good break over the festive period. 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

### Quinquennial Inspection Fees 2025

Every year the DAC review the range of fees that should be charged by inspectors during the year. For 2025 the Inspection Fee Range is set at £810 - £1550 (+VAT if applicable). The range allows for the variation in the different building types that we have within the diocese. It obviously takes a lot longer to inspect a large Grade I listed building than a small modern building. Regardless of the type of building the report will take a similar time to write.

### Energy Footprint Tool for 2024

The EFT for 2024 is due to open on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January and we would really appreciate an early response to this so that we have the data in the first part of the year. With this in mind I would be grateful if you could remind treasurers, as they start collating the end of year figures and documents for church accounts, to put the energy bills to one side to complete the EFT.

### Contractor Database

I have updated our database of contractors and attach a pdf version to this email. The information that I have is only as good as the information that I receive from parishes and I would be grateful if you could share details of any contractors that you have used and would be happy to recommend them. You can send details directly to me or complete the simple form at the following link. <https://forms.gle/MATrtaJDSCeVLiZy6>

As a diocese we do not recommend any particular contractors but I am happy to pass on recommendations from other parishes.

### Church Building Training 2025

I am in the process of finalising the training programme for 2025 and below is an outline of the training that we plan to offer. I try to host sessions around the diocese so if your church would like to host a session, then please let me know.

Date	Event
Jan	Producing a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan
Feb	Undertaking Church Building Projects
March	Grant Workshop
April	Faculty Workshop – The new Online Faculty System
May	Achieving Net Zero in your Church Building / Heating Fair
June	Fire Risk Management and Health & Safety
June	Understanding your buildings
July	Faculty Workshop
July	New Churchwardens Training
September	Annual Maintenance Schedule
October	Faculty Workshop

## Online Faculty System Update

The Online Faculty System is currently being redesigned and the new system will hopefully remove some of the issues that people have found with the current system. The faculty process itself will not change but how it appears on the online system is likely to look different. The current system is due to go off-line on 26<sup>th</sup> March with the new system available from 1<sup>st</sup> April. I will be doing some training around this time and will confirm dates as soon as possible.

The current system for Durham Diocese currently has over 130 active faculties, however 80 of those have been issued and are waiting for parishes to confirm that the work has been completed. I would be grateful if you could check your parishes faculty records and update these by the end of February. We also have a large number that were started some years ago but have not proceeded beyond the initial stage. I will remove those started before 2024 from the system unless parishes confirm that they are still planning to proceed with the work.

## Church Grants – Free Webinar

How to 'Plan a successful church fundraising capital appeal', online free webinar, 29 January 10.30- 12.00

So how do you even start to plan for a major capital appeal? And what are the crucial things you need to do, know and understand before you even start to fundraise? Why is planning so important?

<https://www.churchgrants.co.uk/training>

## Church Tourism Resource

'Discover Churches: A Toolkit for Welcoming Visitors'

This is a resource designed to help volunteers extend a warm and meaningful welcome to visitors exploring church heritage, art, and community.

Launched at the Churches Visitor and Tourism Association Conference, this is a new, practical, church tourism providing churches, chapels and meeting houses with everything they need to know about opening their building safely and providing a positive experience for their visitors. <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/discover-churches-toolkit>

## Heating

As we are now in the winter period, we have already had a number of heating failures across the diocese. Obviously, a boiler can fail at any point but if you have a boiler over 20 years old the chance is much greater and it is also more likely that parts may not be available for them. Since 2022, in line for the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon pledge, any new boilers have required a faculty application and as part of that application you have to be able to justify the replacement of a gas boiler rather than moving to a lower carbon heating solution.

I would therefore encourage any churches with a boiler over 20 years old (or with known problems) to begin investigating the range of heating options that are available, so that you have a basic plan that can quickly be updated when the time comes. 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 myself or Bethan Still to visit to discuss the options with you then please get in touch.

## Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) Update

DCMS has confirmed that the future of the Scheme beyond March 2025 will be a matter for the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. DCMS explained that they are now in a period of business planning within DCMS which will determine what happens with the Scheme once the current funding arrangements expire at the end of March 2025. They hope to get an answer on the Scheme as soon as they can, as they know the sector needs clarity on future arrangements.

On 16 December, Adam Dance MP (Liberal Democrat) tabled an Early Day Motion calling for the renewal of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, highlighting its importance in maintaining historic places of worship across the UK. The motion was supported by 15 MPs. Written questions on the scheme were also raised this fortnight by the Lord Bishop of St Albans and Ed Morello MP.

So, if you have recently completed works or are contemplating projects you may wish to write to your MP explaining what the LPW Scheme means to your place of worship and perhaps invite him/her to your place of worship to see the benefits.

## Durham Diocese Churchwardens Forum

It has been really good to see this forum being used more regularly to share or request information or advice. The online Churchwardens Forum uses 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

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