



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

Since I have been in post, I have visited about two thirds of our churches. If I haven't yet visited your church I would love to come and see it and discuss any issues that you may have with the building, so do please get in touch.

Below is my monthly round up of information that might be of interest to you.

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

The 30 October 2024 Budget contained no mention of the future of the Scheme. However, Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism, has confirmed that the future of the scheme beyond March 2025 will be a matter for the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

If you, or anyone you know, has used the grant scheme, and thinks it worth retaining, you may want to send an email in its support? –

**Below is some guidance that I have received from the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance on how to send an email in support of the continuance of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme beyond March 2025**

1. In your subject line, put 'Attn: the Secretary of State (LPWGS)', or something similar. Make sure you say at the beginning why you are writing - to ask for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme to be extended beyond March 2025.
2. If you have concrete experience of the Scheme, then in **just one or two paragraphs** explain what your project is/was for, and why the VAT refund is/was important. If the building is used for community activities, or is important to local people in other ways, say something about this. Do say if your work was funded by gifts and donations. Also mention if it involves action in response to climate change, or other environmental benefits. Also consider being explicit that you are grateful that government provides the Scheme!
3. Send your email to The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport 1st Floor, 100 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ at [enquiries@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@dcms.gov.uk). You can also copy your own MP (find their email address <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/>).

### Project Planning

Many of you will be planning a project in 2025 or beyond. Some will be big such as a reordering or a new roof and some will be much smaller, however regardless of the size of the project it is important to plan the project effectively. I am running a session on 14<sup>th</sup> November that is aimed at giving you the information to start, develop and complete a project effectively. As well as some input from myself, there will also be time to discuss specific projects that you are thinking of starting at your church, so I would encourage you to come along if you can. I will also be running a Faculty Workshop on 12<sup>th</sup> November which will also be useful for anyone planning a project.

You can book a place at any of the sessions by clicking on the booking link or if you prefer then just email me.

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Booking Link
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	1.00pm	Zoom	Faculty Workshop	<a href="https://bit.ly/3TQGeZw">https://bit.ly/3TQGeZw</a>
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> November	2.00pm	St Peter's Church, Stockton	Undertaking Church Building Projects	<a href="https://bit.ly/3Y51Ofr">https://bit.ly/3Y51Ofr</a>

If you would like to attend but the time doesn't work for you, please let me know and I can arrange another session for you to attend.

### Church Building Training 2025

To help me plan the training programme for 2025, I would be grateful if you could complete this simple survey indicating the types of training that you think would be useful. <https://forms.gle/8NSdcXfkS68r631Y9> I try to host sessions around the diocese so if your church would like to host a session, then please let me know.

## Heating

As we head into 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.

## Contractor Database

In December I will be updating our database of contractors ready to send out a pdf version to you all in the new year. 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.

## Grant Database

We try to keep a simple grants database updated so that parishes know which grant providers to approach for particular projects that they are requiring funding for. As with the list of contractors, we only know if churches obtain grants from certain providers if you tell us.

If you have received any grants in the last few years, it would be really useful to know which grant providers you have used as they may be able to offer other churches a grant for their building projects. Again, please send these to me or you can complete a simple form at the following link. <https://forms.gle/2Lo5NEgrVKjHAUWU9>

## Energy Footprint Tool for 2024

The EFT for 2024 will open early in the new year 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. I will confirm the date the EFT will open as soon as this is confirmed.

## The Disability Project Parish Grants Scheme

Parishes in the diocese can now apply for grants to support changes to their buildings that allow all people to access the buildings and engage in services and activities. There will be some smaller grants of £5000 and larger grants of up to £50,000. Further information can be found at [Disability Project Parish Grants Scheme | The Church of England](#) and if you click on the link you will find application details. Any completed applications should be sent to me. I will be meeting with the project lead monthly so you should expect an initial response within a month of application.

## 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>

## CCTV Guidance

If you have a CCTV system in your church buildings or livestream services, please note that the Information Commissioner's Office has updated its video surveillance guidance. As a result of this there is a new policy template for CCTV used for surveillance. There is a dedicated page on the ChurchCare website on [CCTV](#). This helpfully includes links to the Information Commissioner's Office guidance relevant to live streaming, and helps readers understand the significant differences between their regulatory frameworks.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/cctv>

## Hall survey

Earlier in the year I asked parishes to provide details of any church halls that they have. The information is very useful in directing relevant information to parishes and also helping us to identify where any Net Zero Initiatives and Funding could be useful. If you did not get chance to fill this in earlier in the year, I would be grateful if you could give me as much information as possible via the simple form that can be found at the following link.

<https://forms.gle/JBbQQoCbWFiKwR1P7>

## 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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