

Dear Churchwarden,

Below are some bits of information that you may find useful as you look after your church buildings that I have come across in the last couple of weeks.

Energy Contracts

It has been brought to my attention that a couple of companies are contacting churches about their energy contracts and using my name in the communication. It could be implied from the communication that I have recommended that they contact you. This is not the case and as a diocese we do not recommend any particular energy provider. If you want advice on energy contracts you may wish to contact parish buying or seek your own independent advice. As it is often treasurers who deal with utility providers, please make them aware of this.

New Church Building Support Officer Post

We have been successful in a bid to the Church of England for funding to allow us to employ an additional Church Building Support Officer to work with parishes on supporting planning of essential work to their buildings and applying for grants. If you know of anyone who you think may be interested in this post please forward them the following link. The deadline is 8th October.

[VACANCY: CHURCH BUILDING SUPPORT OFFICER - Diocese of Durham \(durhamdiocese.org\)](https://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancy-church-building-support-officer)

Are you ready for winter?

Does your organisation provide warm/safe spaces or emergency supplies in the winter for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis? If so, you may be eligible to apply for up to £75,000 worth of funding to help you. The **National Lottery** has launched the Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, which is accepting applications until 16 October at 12 noon. You can read more [here](#).

Lead Water Pipe Replacement

Northumbrian Water are currently running a programme of free lead pipe replacement which includes places of worship and community buildings. I have attached details of the programme. You need to apply directly to Northumbrian Water via email to leadfreeproject@nwl.co.uk or call 07543301638, but I would be grateful if you can let me know that you have applied. Obviously every building is different but it is likely that either Archdeacons permission or a Faculty will be required before the work can commence. Northumbrian Water are aware of this but their contractors may not understand the permissions required so please ensure that they follow the agreed processes.

Parish council funding for parish churches

The government has now introduced an amendment in the Lords to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, to clarify that parish councils can spend their funds on parish churches should they choose to do so.

RAAC

The Church of England has now issued its own guidance on RAAC in buildings and this can be found at [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete \(RAAC\) | The Church of England](#)

Applying for Grants

I have been given details of a short video that goes through some of the key points to consider when making grant applications. It has been produced by Benefact Trust but is very general in the advice that it offers. The video can be found at [How To Successfully Apply To Grant Funders - Advice From A Funder - YouTube](#)

Training Opportunities 2024

I am currently beginning to put together some training sessions to support the work of Churchwardens and hope to have full details available in November. Some of the sessions will be online and some will be delivered in conjunction with Ecclesiastical Insurance. If you haven't already

let me know what your training needs are this can be done by visiting [Churchwarden Training Needs \(google.com\)](#)

Faculty Workshops

I will continue to run faculty workshops throughout the year and have arranged two more during the Autumn.

Tuesday 10th October, 7pm at St Mary Magdalene Church, Hart, Hartlepool

Thursday 12th October, 2pm at St Peter's Church, Yarm Road, Stockton On Tees

They can be booked by clicking on the following link <https://durhamdiocese.eventbrite.com>

If you need any individual support with faculty applications, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Caring for God's Acre

Caring for God's acre has announced a new series of webinars over the Autumn. These cover a range of great topics to support congregations in caring for and sharing their churchyards. The webinar on 31 October will feature the [National Burial Grounds Survey](#), with Tim Viney from Atlantic Geomatics, our partner in delivering this survey.

Details of the webinars can be found at [Caring for God's Acre: Autumn webinars](#)

Church Heating

If you haven't done so already, now is the time of the year to be testing your heating and arranging servicing of boilers etc. If problems are found now then you still have some time to arrange for repairs before the heating is actually required.

Webinars

The Church of England have put together a series of webinars focussed on getting to Net Zero Carbon that are free to join. They can be booked and watched via [Webinars on getting to net zero carbon | The Church of England](#).

Suppliers and Contractors Database

I regularly get requests from parishes for details of contractors for various types of work on church buildings. We do not recommend any particular contractors but I am happy to pass on details of contractors that you have been happy with.

My database is only as good as the information that I receive and I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could send me details of all the contractors that you have used on your church building in recent years. I will circulate an updated directory in the next few months.

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](#)

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

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