

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

Below is my monthly round up of information that might be of interest to you. Apologies to anyone who has had to wait longer than usual to get a response to an email or phone call, but September has been a very busy month.

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS)

The Scheme is currently set to run only until the end of March 2025 and as you will know from media reports, the government is looking very carefully at its patterns of expenditure in the run up to the late October budget. It would be sensible to confirm to the government how important and valued this grant scheme is, and ask them to continue it. 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. You can also copy your own MP (find their email address <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/>).

Thank you for completing the Energy Footprint Tool for 2023

Thank you to everyone who has completed or encouraged others in your parish to the Energy Footprint Tool. We had over 94% of churches complete this tool for the last financial year and comparing it with the data from 2022 it shows a reduction in the amount of carbon that has been emitted by our churches. 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.

Training Opportunities 2024

Below are details of training sessions planned for the rest of the year.

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
Monday 14 th October	7.00pm	Zoom	NZC Action Plans -Quick Wins	https://bit.ly/3zeW8Wt
Monday 21 st October	2.00pm	Cuthbert House	NZC Action Plans -Quick Wins	https://bit.ly/4cWjIFb
Tuesday 12 th November	1.00pm	Zoom	Faculty Workshop	https://bit.ly/3TQGeZw
Thursday 14 th November	2.00pm	St Peter's Church, Stockton	Undertaking Church Building Projects	https://bit.ly/3Y51Ofr

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.

To help me plan the training programme for later this year and 2025, I would be grateful if you could complete this simple survey. <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.

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.

Movement for Good

You may be aware that Benefact Group (of which Ecclesiastical is part of) has an annual giving programme called 'Movement for Good'. For a charity to have a chance of receiving a donation through this scheme all that is needed is a

simple nomination through the Benefact Group website. More details on this can be found here; [Movement for Good - Nominate a charity for an award.](#)

However to make it even easier for visitors to nominate a church we have developed a tool for churches to create and display their own bespoke poster. This can be found here; <https://movementforgood.com/poster-generator.php>
The poster includes a handy QR code that goes straight to the nomination form and a church logo can also be added. There is also a short video people can watch which will walk them through the steps to generate a poster.

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>

Contractor / Grant Survey

Throughout the year many of you contact me requesting details of contractors who can carry out different types of work on your church buildings. As a diocese we do not recommend any particular contractors but I am happy to pass on recommendations from other parishes.

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>

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>

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

Martin Howard

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