



Diocese of Ely

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

What a year 2020 was! In the first months of 2020, we could not have imagined what lay ahead. We were planning and looking forward to Lent and Easter services, even the Annual Parochial Church Meeting!

For large numbers of you, the pandemic meant that those meetings as well as the meeting of parishioners to vote for Churchwardens did not take place until September or October 2020. Then we had the virtual Admission of Churchwardens. Nothing was as we had planned, and we have all had to reinvent what we do and how we do it.

This was a year when online services have had to replace 'in person' services and we have all had to learn new IT skills just to keep in touch. It has been very impressive to see how many of our clergy as well as members of the congregations adjusted to this 'new reality'. Nevertheless, we all long for the day when we can fully meet and sing in person again.

The theme for this edition of the *Archdeacons' Visitation News* is planning ahead. Learning from last year and asking what we want to do differently as we move out of lockdown, and what we want to return to. That may involve deciding what to leave behind – after all, we are planning for a new future, not just a return to the past.

We are therefore, as a Diocese, asking each Deanery to engage in a series of open and honest questions about the future. There is no hidden agenda, there is just a request to engage and plan together at a local level.

In due course we will be sending each Deanery the results of the REACH Ely Audit (thank you for filling that questionnaire in) and the data from the Annual October Returns and Annual Accounts. This will then enable the Deanery to take a realistic overview of what is happening in each parish. Our hope is that every PCC and Benefice Council will take part, get involved and work with others to form, if you like, a 'recovery plan'. This will then be shared with others from the Deanery.

So thank you for all that you have done and continue to do, especially for your help in contributing to the cost of Ministry for 2021. We know as PCC members you do not only contribute your time, but your finances as well – thank you. **As your archdeacons, we look forward to working with you again this year.**



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2021 Webinars to support Churchwardens

The Archdeacons are planning a series of webinars which will replace our traditional Churchwardens' Training Day. The webinars are aimed for all existing Churchwardens, those new to the role as well as those considering taking up the role.



The webinars are all free to attend. They will be held on Thursday evenings (7pm) in the early autumn and will last approximately 1.5 hours. They will be run on a rolling basis, with a new topic every week. You will need to register online to attend each webinar. Topics and how to register to attend the webinars will follow.

Please save the webinar dates in your calendars: Thursday 16th, 23rd, 30th September, 7th, 14th, 21st October and 4th November 2021.

What is a webinar you ask? A webinar is an online event that is hosted by an organisation and broadcast to an audience through their computers via the Internet. (A webinar is sometimes also referred to as a 'webcast', 'online event' or 'web seminar'.)

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Green church in the Diocese of Ely

By **Geoffrey Hunter, DAC Secretary and Head of the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department**

Autumn 2020 saw the formation of a new task group in the Diocese, The Diocesan Environmental Task Group. This group will support churches in their approach to environmental sustainability. The work of the group has been split into three main workstreams.

- 1. The environmental performance of buildings and assets, and environmental impact of building works.** Buildings account for a major part of our carbon emissions and improving their efficiency must be a priority if we are to achieve a 2030 Net Zero Carbon target. Even listed buildings can be greatly improved, but care is needed to avoid compromising their significance.
- 2. The ecological value of churchyards and cemeteries, school grounds and other land holdings.** Our churchyards can provide valuable havens for wildlife, see www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk. It is now more important than ever that we take action. Both the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk Wildlife Trusts offer free advice and visits to help churches create and protect wildlife habitats and offer an Award which leads to many positive scores in the EcoChurch's Land section; email diana.cook@wildlifebcn.org for details.
- 3. Promoting a sustainable gospel to our congregations, classrooms and wider communities.** In Promoting a Sustainable Gospel we hope to galvanise both churches and individuals to put climate and biodiversity at the top of the agenda. We all know this is important, but in this decade we need to make it a top priority.

The Diocesan Environmental Task Group is currently working on new Diocesan website pages to carry advice and links, as well as future events to assist churches in engaging with environmental matters. Enquiries about the work of the Group can be addressed to geoffrey.hunter@elydiocese.org



Maintenance matters

By **Holly Isted, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer**



It is the little things that make the difference, though it might not always feel like it. If your roof needs re-leading, or your tower is covered with scaffolding, clearing a gutter or replacing a slipped tile might seem a bit pointless, but it isn't. As grants for major repairs continue to be in short supply, the best we can do is to focus on

maintenance and stitch-in-time repairs (or in some cases temporary holding repairs).

There are resources and ideas to help.

- The National Churches Trust Foundation Grants focus on maintenance and small investigative works <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/foundationgrants>
- Small grants from £500 – £10,000 are available from various organisations – contact Sue or Holly in the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department.
- Maintenance days can be very popular at churches to help with work. They can help to raise the profile of a church and teach people about the value of maintenance.
- SPAB have a range of online resources. There are also SPAB volunteer regional groups who are often on the lookout for small heritage skills projects. <https://www.spab.org.uk/>

A range of organisations continue to make the case for increased support for church buildings, particularly through funding. In the meantime, do what you can and remember what you do really does make a difference – thank you.

How much!?

By **Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech**

Have you ever had the experience of the waiter giving you the bill and being taken aback at the size of it? You asked (but probably, not out loud) how much!?! Has there been a mistake? How come? Some parishes may ask the same about their Ministry Share – how come it's so high and what is it for? This brief article hopes to answer some of those questions.

Each Deanery is asked to contribute to the cost of ministry according to the number of clergy in the Deanery. As a Diocese, we see the cost of ministry composed of three 'building blocks'.

- **Direct costs.** What it costs to pay the clergy, house them, contribute to National Insurance, pensions etc. This is by far the biggest element.
- **Wider ministry.** That is the cost of running the Diocese and paying for people supporting church buildings, safeguarding, the archdeacons and the National Church Institutions.
- **Investing in the future.** This includes the work of selection and training of all ordinands, curates and some of the work of the National Church, including General Synod.

For the actual figures and for more information, please see the Diocesan website finance pages here: <https://www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/finance/diocesan-budget-and-accounts/> and look out for the webinars on finances, planned for later in the year.

Our Church Insurance Consultants are right behind you

Meet Ecclesiastical's Church Insurance Consultants – a friendly and approachable team of highly knowledgeable insurance experts who are right on your doorstep and ready to offer guidance and help with any insurance or risk-related issues you might have.



From a simple explanation of the basics of your policy, to guidance on how to combat thieves and vandals, guard against fire, and improve general health and safety, they are there for you, free of charge.

The team – (from top left) Chris, Rebecca, Heather, Lynne, Peter, Nicky, Kay and Derek – are all deeply passionate about customer service, and our country's amazing churches.

Amongst them are theologians, choristers, regular churchgoers, and people who have worked with Christian charities here and abroad, so they really understand your specific needs. And because they're based at regional locations all over the UK, they're also able to tailor their advice to your local requirements.

They have decades of combined industry experience – and standing behind them is Ecclesiastical's 134 years of unrivalled expertise and insight in dealing with everything life might throw at you.

Where possible, the Church Insurance Consultants love to meet customers and talk face-to-face, and are happy to host networking events where you can get to know people from other parishes and share experience, ideas – and smiles.

But if we find ourselves in a COVID-19 lockdown or you're simply unable to meet them in person, they're still there, offering exactly the same services online or over the telephone.

To find out more about the team, and how they could help you and your church, please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church/cic or email meetus@ecclesiastical.com (please include your contact details, the name of your church and parish, and policy number if possible), or call them on **0345 777 3322**.



Make your good news a headline story!

This year, Ecclesiastical's church competition shines a light on churches across the UK – their bright ideas and success stories, community heroes and ingenuity in the face of adversity.

It's easy to overlook the important things that keep church communities strong, especially at difficult times, which is why we're looking for your uplifting stories that support church activities and bring the community together.

Tell us about your moments of inspiration, your clever solutions to problems old and new, and the people who've solved them – we want to hear your good news stories that can make front page headlines.

Find out more about the competition and how your church can enter at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchcomp [#churchgoodnews](https://twitter.com/churchgoodnews)

Information at your fingertips

Have you visited the Ecclesiastical website recently? It's had a bit of a facelift and looks really good. It is also full of advice and information about a wide range of risk management topics and includes Made Simple Guides about building works, people on premises and property. You will also find information about church, home, commercial and legal insurance and how to make a claim. You can also read an online copy of Ecclesiastical's bi-annual newsletter, Church Matters!

Explore the website at www.ecclesiastical.com/church



Contains promotional material

How online fundraising can boost your church

With summer around the corner, you may be starting to think about future events and how to raise those ever-important funds. Many churches have been looking at running events online, and it might be the best way forward at the moment. Ecclesiastical has put together some great ideas and top tips to get you started or increase your online success.

To get started, have fun and think creatively. What do you do face-to-face and how could that translate to online? Quizzes are great fun and easy to put together. You could have a quiz master read out the questions over a Zoom call, share your screen to display visual questions, or circulate quiz sheets via email and social media. How about streaming an online choir concert, or run craft or baking classes via Teams and sell virtual tickets to your Internet audience? Another idea is to offer the opportunity to request a favourite hymn in return for a donation.

More and more churches are using the Internet to reach not just their congregation and the wider community, but potential supporters literally everywhere. Online community groups and social media outlets like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are a great way to publicise your activity to a new, wider audience – and particularly younger people who are otherwise hard to reach.

Ask them to sponsor a personal challenge and invite them to come up with their own challenges to benefit your church. Fundraising sites like **JustGiving.com** are quick to set up and can easily be widely promoted online. The Internet is also ideal for keeping everyone up to date, which is essential to keep those donations coming in. If you haven't dabbled yet, maybe have a look at what another church or community organisation has done.

If you find the Internet a bit daunting, once you strip away the jargon it's often much simpler than it appears. For instance, 'streaming' might sound difficult and mysterious, but user-friendly services such as Microsoft Teams are easy to download and can be used by lots of people joining in on their PCs, smartphones, or tablets.

Supporters can buy virtual 'tickets' – or make donations – via dedicated online fundraising platforms like **TapSimple.org** or **Eventbrite.co.uk**, which offer a one-stop process from hosting your event to processing payments and contributions. Many of them will handle Gift Aid for you too.

If your church has a specific project to pay for – a new sound system, why not try to 'crowdfund' via a website? These harness the power of a crowd of funders rather than individual donors. They take a matter of minutes to set up, using sites like **Crowdfunder.co.uk**, and provide a permanent home for your story, where you can post updates and images of your project for your supporters.

If this still feels too technical, ask around – someone in your congregation or local area who regularly uses a computer or a smartphone for work or leisure may already use these tools and can help you get started. Youngsters might jump at the chance to get involved, if only to show their parents and grandparents how it's done!



Fundraising in a Box

Earlier this year, Ecclesiastical sent out a 'Fundraising in a Box' kit to its church customers containing four booklets giving guidance and support to make the fundraising journey easier. For more information and guidance, including some really helpful webinars, please visit the Ecclesiastical fundraising hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising (if you are an Ecclesiastical customer and require further copies of the box, please contact us via the website).

Have you heard the e-news?

E-news is a monthly email full of tips and information for all Ecclesiastical church customers and anyone in your church community. To receive it is easy – all you need to do is register on their website at www.ecclesiastical.com/signup and if at any time you decide you no longer want to receive it, you can click the 'unsubscribe' button at the bottom of the email. Feel free to pass on the sign-up website to anyone you think might like it.



Three cheers for roof alarms and SmartWater®!

Churches with these systems have found it's had a positive impact on reducing the risk of metal theft.



SmartWater® recently helped Police convict four criminals responsible for stealing metal from 35 churches located in Midlands, East Anglia and the South-West¹. And a roof alarm helped St Bartholomew's in Lancashire to scare off attackers not once, but three times in the same month.

St Bartholomew's has a 'monitored roof alarm' which sends out an audible warning on site, and alerts the alarm-receiving centre of movement on the church roof. The centre contacted the church's key-holder, and neighbours called the Police. As a result, offenders were arrested on site with tools in hand.

Lead and copper roofing are materials that characterise our beautiful churches – but thieves love it too, and churches are often a target. As COVID-19 restrictions ease, Ecclesiastical anticipate organised crime will return to target less well-protected areas of lead. The good news is there's positive actions you can take to protect your church.

A roof alarm is one, particularly if your church has significant amounts of metal. Ask Ecclesiastical for a list of approved installers. An approved forensic security marking solution such as SmartWater® is another. This is a clever liquid like DNA that you apply to external metal. It's unique to your church so items can be traced back to you. You must register it with the supplier and display signage, which acts as a deterrent. Using a forensic solution is a condition of your theft of metal cover. If you choose SmartWater®, Ecclesiastical will register it for you, saving you £120.

Thieves are likely to use a vehicle to carry their heavy stolen metal away. Restrict vehicle access with locked gates, fences and bollards.

Consider installing security lighting and cut back trees that might conceal criminals as they work.

There is more advice on the website: www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmetaltheft and also St Bartholomew's full story: www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/metal.pdf

¹ BBC News, 6 January 2021.

Risk helpline

The Ecclesiastical Risk Advice Line is available 9am-5pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).

Call: 0345 600 7531

Email: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

Taking a sabbatical in 2022

Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards provide financial support for members of the clergy taking extended study leave, and they are now accepting applications for sabbaticals taking place in 2022. You can find out more about the awards, check the eligibility criteria and apply on the website.

Find out more: www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Rebuilding stronger from COVID-19

Churches and Christian charities throughout the UK and Ireland have received more than £3.8 million in funding to support their communities to rebuild stronger in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Allchurches Trust's Hope Beyond programme has supported more than 500 projects aimed at tackling loneliness, boosting mental health and building digital resilience. While the programme has now closed, Allchurches – the charitable owner of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group – is currently considering the next phase of its COVID-19 response.

St Luke's Healthcare for the clergy has received £20,000 Hope Beyond funding to offer counselling and therapy to support clergy and their families suffering as a result of COVID-19, giving them increased resilience and skills as they help the most vulnerable.



Shine – the community organisation working with St Stephen's Church in West Bowling, Bradford – will use its £5,500 Hope Beyond grant to transform a basement room into a counselling space, which leads onto a tranquil garden ideal for wellbeing groups.

To find out more about funding, and advice and resources for churches, head to www.allchurches.co.uk

Financial services

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (EFAS) provides expert, independent financial advice including for pension, investments, life assurance and mortgages to the clergy, church people and PCCs.

Call: 0800 107 0190

Email: getadvice@ecclesiastical.com

www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice



Funeral planning

Ecclesiastical can help you make financial provision for your funeral, reducing the worry for your family and ensuring your wishes are provided for.

Call: 0800 055 6503

Email: info@epsfunerals.com

www.funeralplans.co.uk



Car insurance

The Clergy Motor Insurance provided by Ecclesiastical is tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, no admin charges and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹

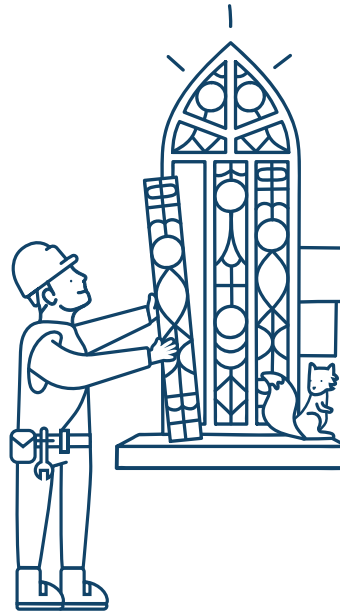
Call: 0345 450 9396

www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance

¹Subject to terms and conditions.



Protect your home and support your church with Trust130



Ecclesiastical has donated more than £430,000 to churches around the UK as part of their Trust130 campaign and it's been particularly helpful during the pandemic. Even the smallest amounts can make a big difference.

St Mark's and All Saints churches in West Parley, in the Diocese of Salisbury, are like many other churches – Treasurer Derek Warner is looking at a shortfall of between £15,000 and £18,000 for the year. Ecclesiastical's recent Trust130 donation of £650 went into general funds, and was a welcome addition.

'It's been extremely tough,' said Mr Warner. 'We have had no congregations, so obviously that means no collections. But even more importantly, we have lost all of our income from church hall lettings. We have survived by eating into our capital, and I'm looking at ways of cutting our budgets for 2021.'

'Donations such as the Trust130 money from Ecclesiastical Insurance are absolutely vital – they are really interested in helping churches and their communities and we're very grateful to them.'

Trust130 continues into 2021 to help and support churches

Ecclesiastical is really pleased to be extending the offer to run throughout 2021. Supporting your church is easy. Simply take out a home insurance policy¹ with Ecclesiastical and they will donate £130 to the church of your choice. And, of course, the more people who take out home insurance policies, the more funds that are raised. So even if you've got a really ambitious goal – like raising funds for a new church roof – there's nothing to stop you.

Want to know more?

It really is wonderful to hear how this programme is helping customers and the things that matter to them. You can hear more about what some customers are saying in a brand-new film clip on Ecclesiastical's website – simply go to the website to watch:

www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

If you would like a home insurance quote or more information, simply call 0800 7830 130 and quote AVNEWS21.

¹Subject to terms and conditions – please visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Trust130.
Limitless donations.
Endless possibilities.



Growing Faith among children, young people and their families

By **Debbie Hill, Development Officer for Children & Families**

Mirroring national trends, the Diocese of Ely has seen a decline in Sunday church attendance from families, something we are working hard to address.

The Church of England has a national vision, 'Growing Faith', set by the House of Bishops, requiring a commitment to achieve significant culture change within the Church so that every aspect of mission and ministry is seen through the lens of what it means for ministry with children, young people and households. The intention is that children, young people and households are included and valued in every aspect of church life and that lifelong faith formation is the norm for the whole of life.



"Church Schools and their role in the life of the Church"

By **Alex Hughes, Archdeacon of Cambridge**

It is a great privilege for me to take a lead in the support of Church Schools as chair of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). Our oldest schools date from the seventeenth century and we are still opening new ones today. Altogether, the DBE oversees 85 schools, of which 35 are members of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT). That's 2,500 staff and 15,000 children in a Church of England school in our Diocese on a daily basis, plus their families. It's an amazing gift and opportunity.

As I talk to people in our churches it strikes me how often their journey of faith began through experience of a Church School. Of course, you don't have to be Christian to join one of our Church Schools – we don't run Faith Schools in that sense. Our schools are open to everyone: they are inclusive, yet they have a distinctive DNA. We say they are 'deeply Christian, serving the common good'. For many young people growing up today, whether they are ready to embrace Christian faith or not (for the time being), a Church School may be the only place they ever encounter the Christian tradition.

Children, young people and their families are to be found in three main arenas: households, schools and churches and it is where these arenas intersect that faith development can best be explored to facilitate growth for all in those communities. Many churches and schools work closely together to develop their relationships but how much effort is put into supporting faith development at home? Might the absence of families on Sundays be related to a previous lack of teaching?

Mission and Ministry is working more closely with Education to promote Growing Faith not just at a local but also a national level. For example, through diocesan-supported work, St Peter's Huntingdon and Ely College have provided Collective Worship material for the National Faith at Home website. Children from The Vine in Cambourne, St Augustine's in Peterborough and St Bede's in Cambridge are representing the Diocese in the national Younger Leadership Groups convened by the Archbishop of York. Representation has been from community and church schools so that children and young people are represented from across the region in a range of school contexts.

Debbie Hill has been working to raise awareness in clergy training. For example, Ridley Hall now includes Growing Faith as part of its formational programme for Ordinand training. The vision at local level has further been embedded through IME2 training which includes Licensed Lay Ministers, as well as training for Children's Authorised Lay Ministers and the Changing Market Towns Team.

Ultimately, the challenging question Growing Faith is asking of worshipping communities is whether what we **do** is helping us **become** the whole people of God.

Though we often lament the absence of children in Sunday services, in fact thousands of them experience a daily act of Collective Worship at school; and schools have shown brilliant creativity and imagination in engaging young people. Our schools also follow a national teaching programme called 'Understanding Christianity,' which was devised by the Church of England to provide children with a high degree of religious literacy.

In these ways, among many others, Church Schools are at the centre of our mission and deserve our enthusiastic support. I therefore encourage all Churchwardens to promote positive links between the Parish Church and nearby schools – not forgetting that we have a care for all schools, not just those with a Church of England label. It would be good to hear them prayed for at public worship more often, and we are always glad to welcome new governors and others who have a heart for a ministry in schools.





Living Ely2025

By Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech

In 2015 we launched the Diocesan Strategy, **People Fully Alive: Ely 2025**. Now into our sixth year, it's an opportunity to take stock as well as to ensure we do what we set out to do in 2015.

A great deal has been achieved, especially in *ministry*. We started with the biblical encouragement to pray for workers for the harvest field – Luke 10.

It seems that over the last few years the Lord has heard our prayer and that a great number of people have come into ministry, but maybe not in the ways or places we expected. We have seen the growth in all sorts of ministry including stipendiary and non-stipendiary, Local Ordained Contextual Ministry, Lay and Authorised ministry and new training pathways have opened up. In the Market Towns, 'operational managers' have been appointed. The list could go on, but the point is made – there has been growth in the number of people offering for ministry and for that we can be very thankful. Our God is a generous God and has infinite resources.

Other significant milestones along the way include publication of Sunday Resources, The Way of Life, the work in Market Towns, investment in the number of curates training, responding to the needs of new housing developments. The REACH Ely project and Audit that comes to fruition later in 2021. These and more all feature in the Diocesan Annual Report.

However, we are aware just how much more there is to do. The pandemic has posed challenges we had never anticipated and, in all honesty, has set back some of our work while at the same time opening new possibilities. Who anticipated the growth of online services as a way of reaching folk who wouldn't consider coming into the church building, or even the housebound unable to join in Sunday morning worship?

In many multi-parish benefices, there is a greater sense of being together on Sundays in worship and people have got to know one another.

We have learnt in a new way what it means to care for the most vulnerable and marginalised in our communities, often through foodbanks and the like, as well as simply being aware of our neighbours in a new and dynamic way.

The question then becomes, how can we take forward what has been good about Church life through this last year and what do we want to leave behind? We all know much has changed on the High Street and in other parts of the economy because of COVID-19 and the Church is not exempt from the cold pandemic winds that have blown across the country.

We need to take stock and ask the fundamental question as God's Church: *Lord, what do we have to do to keep up with you as you reshape us? How can we be your confident people, grow healthy churches, serve the community, invest in key areas and be the people you long for us to be – a People Fully Alive?*

These and many more questions will be addressed in what we have called Living Ely 2025 – Development and Planning. This is not 'top-down' planning, rather we want to start at the frontline - the parishes and deaneries.

We are asking you, through the Deanery, to have an open and honest conversation about the future and what realistically we can do to build on all that has happened in the last six years and to plan for the fruition of our vision so that we can be a People Fully Alive – to the Glory of God.



For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters



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