

December 2023



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

CHURCH HERITAGE

News from the
Church Buildings Team

Ely Cathedral
Octagon



St Swithin, Old Weston



**Welcome to the newsletter from the Church Buildings Team,
giving a quick overview of key information and updates.**



All the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of writing.
If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the team directly.

GOOD NEWS

Victory at Last! - Parish Council funding for churches and churchyards

For several years now we have been fielding enquiries from churches whose parish councils, having previously offered donations to the church for things like churchyard maintenance, noticeboards and accessibility works, reported they had been told by their parish clerk that this is now illegal. The legislation cited in support of this advice was the Local Government Act 1894.

It is now our great pleasure to report that a small amendment has been made to the 1894 Act, as part of the recent Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. This removes any obstacle from a parish council wishing to make such a donation to the parish church. It does not, of course, mean they have to give money to the church - merely that they can.

The situation is different for churchyards which have been closed by Order in Council. In that situation the "local authority" (parish or district council, depending on which is the burial authority) can be obliged to take on the cost of maintaining the closed churchyard, and that has never been in question. If you believe your churchyard has been closed by Order in Council, but the parish or district council has declined to take over the responsibility for maintenance, please get in touch with either John or Geoffrey.

GOOD NEWS CONTINUED...

Two Churches Re-open after Major Works

St Nicolas, Hail Weston celebrated the completion of a new south porch with kitchen and toilet on November 29th. Whilst All Saints and St Andrew, Kingston is due to re-open on the 9th December following urgent fabric repairs. Both projects have been supported by a range of grant giving organisations including Thalia WB LCF, Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust and Garfield Weston. Project summaries will be completed asap and added to the website.

Congratulations to St James' Church, Little Paxton

A finalist in the National Churches Trust's Church Awards, the team at Little Paxton was Highly Commended in the Nayler Award for Excellence in Church Maintenance.

Ride and Stride Success

Thank you to everyone who took part in and supported Ride and Stride, on one of the hottest days of the year. Donations are still being received but it looks like it was a successful year for both Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. The County Historic Churches Trusts do vital work in supporting churches with grants for repairs and other works. Find out more in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

Buildings for Mission Project

In July 2022 the Church of England approved £11m of spending over the next three years on a project called "Buildings for Mission". This is a major change of direction for the Central Church, which had previously declined to offer any funding towards buildings. All dioceses in the Church of England will be benefitting from the funding. Most of the money is being spent in two areas:

- **Employment of support officers:** we have been awarded a grant from the fund to employ a new support officer to work alongside Holly, concentrating more on community and volunteer development. We are looking for applicants who aren't necessarily experts in church buildings, but who have demonstrable and enthusiastic experience of bringing people together in voluntary groups and doing amazing things - like looking after church buildings. The role is aligned to an apprenticeship which will see this officer learning about the heritage/conservation side of church buildings alongside other C of E support officers. If you know anyone who you think would be good at this, please do suggest they apply. [CCSA Job Advertisement](#)
- **Minor repairs and improvements grants** have been offered to all dioceses, to assist with funding small works up to £10k. It is important to emphasise the fact that the money is very limited. There are 40 dioceses, and the money being awarded to Ely is equivalent to about £50k per annum. We are not, therefore, opening a formal application process, which would be a waste of time for both applicants and the reviewing panel here, given the level of funding available currently. Our Support Officers will work with parishes and Diocesan colleagues to identify churches where these small grants will have a significant impact. We very much hope that the funding for minor repairs and improvements will be extended in the next triennium - most important in that will be showing that the funding was effectively targeted to the buildings and church communities that need it the most.



REMINDERS



Fire Regulations

Since the coming into force of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, churches have been responsible for identifying and managing fire safety risks in their buildings. Following the fire at Grenfell Tower, the Government has undertaken a thorough review of the rules and procedures and has recently introduced some additional requirements as part of the [Building Safety Act 2022](#).

For all churches, there will be a "responsible person", who is required to ensure that the provisions of this legislation are carried out. Who is the "responsible person" will vary, depending on the way a church is managed and used, and there may be more than one "responsible person". The responsible person cannot be appointed - they are identified by the legislation. In reality, it is likely that in most churches, the responsible person (or one of them at least) will be a member of the PCC. The responsible person can appoint a competent person to assist them, for example a fire safety professional. For most churches in the Diocese of Ely, this will not be necessary, and it will be within the capabilities of the PCC to do this.

The most important provision with which all churches need to comply is the undertaking, recording and implementing of a fire safety audit. The [Ecclesiastical website](#) has helpful guidance on this. The management of fire safety needs to take account of the layout of the building, who uses the building and how. All groups using a church should be familiar with the audit and its recommendations, and the document should remain a live tool, reviewed periodically, and amended following any incidents.

Make Sure You Know Your COSHH Essentials

A variety of harmful substances are found in our working environments – knowing how to control these safely is key to safety and protection from harm. If you work with hazardous substances, the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(COSHH\)](#) website can help you understand the actions you should take to stay healthy.

Bust the Myths on Portable Appliance Testing

Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use. There are many common myths about PAT - visit the [HSE website](#) for more information.

Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders at Work

Ladders and stepladders are not banned under health and safety law. They can be a sensible and practical option for low-risk, short-duration tasks, although they should not automatically be your first choice. Visit the [HSE website](#) for guidance on staying safe when using ladders at work.

Copyright: Be Careful

In its [14 September 2023 e-news](#), the Diocese of Oxford reported that one of its parishes had been approached by representatives of a picture agency for unlicensed use of a photograph; in this instance, the parish website was hosting a PDF copy of a PowerPoint given by an external speaker at a church event. Copyright holders are increasingly using bots to spot unlawful use of copyright material. The Oxford case is a timely reminder of the dangers of copying material from image libraries, Google or news sites, in case one becomes liable for an unintentional breach of copyright. Before you post anything on the Web, always check that it isn't copyright protected.



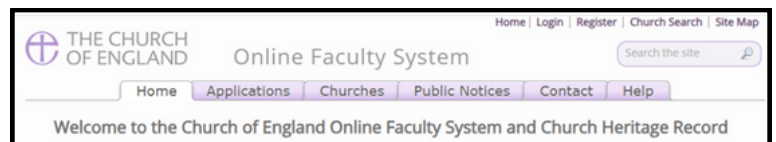
USING THE OFS (ONLINE FACULTY SYSTEM)

Don't Forget to Click Submit

Almost every type of work or change to a church, or a churchyard require Faculty permission before they can be undertaken. This is the **first in a series of articles** from John Morgan, aimed at helping you to understand and use the Church of England Online Faculty System.

The OFS was introduced in 2016 and is now used across the country for almost all applications for faculty permission (petitions). The system allows all of the details of a case including plans, specifications, photographs, emails etc., to be held securely alongside administrative information. It ensures that all parties connected with the case, including the petitioners, the Church Buildings Team, DAC members, the Archdeacons, statutory consultees, and the Registry, are able to see the same material as the case progresses through the system, enabling the case to be dealt with more quickly than the previous paper-based system.

[Click here to access the OFS](#)



Any authorised member of the parish can register as applicants on the system by clicking on the Register link at the top of the home page. This will take you to a form to complete and when that has been submitted, a member of the Church Buildings team will review and approve the registration.

Once you are registered you can submit applications. If you are a first-time user, or just need reminding of what to do next, there is an extensive library of help materials on the system. These can be accessed by clicking on the Help Tab, and include a [User Manual](#) and [FAQs](#). The Diocese of Lincoln has also produced a helpful video of [how to use the OFS](#).

There are two main categories of application you may need to make which are offered as a choice when you start a new application: List A/List B and Full Faculty. List A matters do not need approval, but it can be helpful to add them to the OFS as the details will then be held for future reference. List B matters can be approved by an Archdeacon subject to consultation. When you make a List A/List B application the system takes you through a checklist to identify the appropriate List A or List B category for the matter. If the matter is not covered by one of the categories listed, then a Full Faculty application will be required. If you need any help, for example to determine whether your matter requires a Faculty, please contact the Church Buildings team.

The most common issue we encounter across all types of application is the failure to click **Submit** after completing forms on the system. The Submit button is at the bottom of the page of the Details tab for every application. When you have completed a form, you will be returned to the Details tab and you must click Submit to confirm the changes you have made to move the application on to the next stage. If you don't do this, your application may not be picked up by the Church Buildings team for processing.

More advice and tips in the next issue, but please contact us if you need help.



OPEN AND WELCOME CHURCHES



Heritage Open Days: an opportunity

Have you thought of taking advantage of Heritage Open Days to promote your church building to the local community? This scheme, initially aimed at opening up buildings which were closed despite belonging to public bodies, has been going every September since 1994. It now claims to be England's largest community-led festival of history and culture, involving more than 5,000 sites in 2023 and engaging hundreds of thousands of people. Plenty of information about the scheme and registering can be found on the [Heritage Open Days](#) website. Churches in the Cambridge area have the alternative of registering with [Open Cambridge](#) that administers the scheme for the city.

Creating an attractive event is not rocket science. All Saints Cottenham has done so for two years, though 2022 was dampened by the Queen's death. This year we brought out our wonderful 19th-century model of the church, put together a display of on church history on a couple of screens and borrowed the County Archives Service's excellent exhibition *The Cambridgeshire Parish Chest*. We had people on hand to take visitors round the church, a leaflet for those who preferred to go round by themselves, and a couple of short talks. The organist played from time to time which is just a wonderful atmosphere (and good music too). Additionally we had a display of images of the church taken for various purposes running on a loop projected on to a screen. But the trump card was undoubtedly our 100-foot church tower with its superb views. That necessarily was weather-dependent as there was no way we were letting people on a slippery lead roof (a risk assessment is of course essential). It's a photo-op no-one can afford to miss, but had it been wet there would have been the bells to look at, which for the uninitiated are just awe-inspiring.

And finally there were the refreshments. If you want to make money you need refreshments as Heritage Open Days are founded on the principle of free access. We made over £200 from almost 100 visitors. The event has national publicity on the HODs and Open Cambridge websites, and we promoted it on our own website, produced a basic poster to put up round the village and did a Facebook post. Much of this was last-minute, that I don't recommend. We know with more and earlier local publicity we could have had more visitors. There are always things you can do better next time, but don't let the wish for perfection put you off giving it a go next year.

Philip Saunders
[Friends of All Saints Cottenham](#)



Take a Virtual Church Tour
This month: All Saints, Shepreth
[Google Street View Tour](#)

MAINTENANCE MATTERS

Recommended Monthly Tasks From *SPAB's Faith in Maintenance Calendar*.



December

- Clear parapet and valley gutters of snow to prevent melt water rising above them and causing damp internally. Take care in icy conditions.
- Gulleys beneath rainwater pipes should be cleaned out regularly and drains should be rodded out if they overflow during wet weather. Remove silt and debris and ensure water discharges freely.
- Make sure that fire safety equipment has been serviced.

January

- Have the electrical systems checked by a qualified person at least once every five years.
- Smoke alarms should be regularly tested and cleaned. Remember to replace the batteries too!
- Clear parapet and valley gutters of snow (see above).

February

- Clear parapet and valley gutters of snow (see above).
- Make sure the tower, roofs and windows are bird-proof before nesting starts. Do not disturb bats.
- Check the condition of any ladders in the tower and ask the tower captain to ensure that the bells and bellframe are in good order.

Parish Buying Maintenance and Building Management Survey

Parish Buying's mission is to support worshipping communities by providing products and services tailored to their needs. The aim of this survey is to understand the amount of time and effort churches/ parishes etc put into the elements of facilities (plumbing, garden maintenance etc) and how Parish Buying may be able to support them better. [Facilities Management Survey](#).

RISK CALENDAR

Taken from *Ecclesiastical Insurance's Church Risk Calendar*.



December – Happy Christmas

Christmas is a wonderful time of year, but special events and services, extra visitors and festive decorations in your church can increase the risks of accidents and damage. A little extra planning can help keep everyone safe.

January – Water Pipes and Heating

An escape of water can cause extensive and lasting damage. Check that your water pipes are lagged, the stopcock is clearly labelled, and your heating system has been serviced by a registered engineer.

February - Security

From theft to arson and vandalism, security is key. As every place of worship and its location is unique, a tailored assessment and response, reflecting the individual risks faced, should be undertaken.



St Andrew, Soham

GRANTS

Current Deadlines

December

- 1st - The Joseph Rank Trust
- 1st - Thalia WB Community Fund*
- 6th - FCC Communities Fund

January

- 11th - The Steel Charitable Trust
- 29th - Church Buildings Council (Wall Paintings)
- TBC - King Charles III Charitable Fund

February

- 1st - Cambridgeshire Community Foundation
- 1st - The Sharpe Trust
- 8th - Congregational & General Charitable Trust
- 13th - The Idlewild Trust (*date could be amended*)
- 21st - Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust
- 28th - FCC Communities Foundation
- 29th - War Memorials Trust
- 29th - National Churches Trust Small Grants
- TBC - Norfolk Churches Trust

Early March

- 1st - The Joseph Rank Trust
- 1st - Thalia WB Community Fund
- 5th - National Churches Trust Large Grants
- 6th - Mick George Community Fund
- TBC - The Leche Trust

UPDATES

A New Era for the Fund

The Prince of Wales Charitable Fund has a new name.

“With the gracious permission of our Founder,
His Majesty The King, we are delighted to
announce our new name,

King Charles III Charitable Fund.”

The Fund will continue to support capital projects for community-based heritage conservation and restoration projects aimed at preserving the fabric of historic buildings. Grants are up to £5000, for projects with a maximum total cost of £200,000. [Visit the website.](#)

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is currently closed to applications. A new application process is due to open in January 2024.



St Peter, Upwell

Grants without Deadlines

- Archer Trust
- Barron Bell Trust
- Beatrice Laing Trust
- Beaverbrook Foundation
- Benefact Trust
- Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation
- BIFFA Award - Community Buildings
- Church Buildings Council Conservation Reports
- Clothworker's Foundation
- Foyle Foundation Small Grants
- Garfield Weston
- Geoffrey Watling (Norfolk only)
- Jack Patston (Cambridgeshire only)
- Jill Franklin Trust
- John S Cohen Foundation
- LPWGS - VAT Reclaim
- Millward Charitable Trust
- National Lottery Community Fund: Awards for All
- National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities Fund
- Paul Bassham Charitable Trust (Norfolk only)
- Rank Foundation Pebble Grants
- Round Tower Churches Society
- Schroder Charity Trust
- Steel Charitable Trust
- Swire Charitable Trust - grants under £25,000
- TASC Grants
- Tesco Bags of Help



For advice on grants whether it is for repairs or new works, please contact Holly. If you would prefer to search for grants and receive more frequent updates on funding opportunities, you can register for free with the following websites:

- [Support Cambridgeshire](#)
- [Hunts Forum](#)
- [Grants Online](#)
- [My Funding Central](#)
- [Funds Online](#)





From left to right: Scarlet Elf Cup (Bruce Langridge); Church Times Green Church Awards; St Mary, Eynesbury; Wisbech St Mary.

ENVIRONMENT



New Spotter's Guide to Fungi

Caring for God's Acre have published a new [Spotter's Guide to Fungi](#), to help identify fungi in your burial ground. You can add your findings to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas using the [iNaturalist app](#).

The 2024 Church Times Green Church Awards

Organised jointly with the Church of England's environment programme, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and Eco Congregation Scotland, the awards are open to church groups of any denomination. There are seven award categories, each with a prize of £1000:

- **Green building award:** projects that have significantly reduced the carbon footprint of an existing building or strengthened its climate resilience, or a new building built to high environmental standards which can be shown to have been the better option than refurbishment.
- **Land and nature award:** projects creating space for wildlife and encourage biodiversity.
- **Congregation and community action:** projects where a church, school, or other group has taken a leading part in environmental action, benefiting the wider community as well as its own.
- **Green champion award:** nominations are invited for an individual who has made a significant difference through their environmental efforts.
- **Training and education award:** projects promoting understanding about some aspect of environmental action, or destruction, and its impact, either at home or on the international community.
- **Green health award:** Projects making an active connection between faith, nature and health. Projects may be run by a faith organisation in association with a local health practice or charity.
- **Action on a shoestring award:** projects where a church, school, or other group has achieved a great deal with a little.

The deadline for entries is 30 June 2024. [Find out more on the diocesan website.](#)

Updates Guidance on Trees

If you are considering carrying out works to trees in your churchyard, or planting new trees please see the guidance on our website which as recently been updated. [Churchyard Trees](#)

NEW INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE



A Quick Guide to Looking after Church Buildings

We have produced a new, quick reference guide to help PCCs and other volunteers looking after church buildings. It is not a list of things that need to be dealt with immediately, nor is it a list of things for just one person to be responsible for. It provides an overview of the key areas, with links to take you to more detailed guidance when needed. A free paper version is available from Holly on request. [Quick Guide](#)

New Heritage Cleaning Guidance

The 5 year [Bats In Churches](#) project came to end on the 31st October. In the final few weeks, the team published some excellent resources to help clean historic church interiors. The focus isn't merely on how to clean up after bats, it includes general advice on cleaning the main materials and items found in churches. An [online booklet](#), which includes a kit list and cleaning plan, is supported by [a series of videos](#) featuring practical tips and demonstrations. All the videos will have subtitles, but they are still in the process of being added and reviewed. We do recommend that you use them when available (YouTube's auto-generated subtitles whilst comical in places, are generally unhelpful). There is also guidance on how to make your own [protective pew covers](#). If you have any questions about church cleaning, please contact Holly.

New Volunteer Platform for Cambridgeshire

Support Cambridgeshire are thrilled to unveil a game-changing resource for all your volunteer recruitment needs – [Volunteer Cams](#).

This comprehensive platform serves as a website, database, portal, and more, connecting organisations with eager volunteers and helping the public find meaningful ways to support their community. For practical and step by step guidance to help you manage volunteers and the process of volunteering, visit the [NCVO website](#).

Join the Learning Revolution! What do you know? What can you do?

We want to help you share your knowledge and skills with people across the Diocese of Ely. You don't need any technical know-how. We can help turn what's in your head, heart and hands into a learning resource for others. To explore the sorts of learning resources we're imagining, go to the Open Christian Learning site. If what you have to offer isn't shown there, don't worry about getting in touch; it shows the limits to our imagination, not the limits of what we could do together! To arrange a coffee and chat with Mark Rodel, Learning Development Officer, call him on 01353 652732 or email learning@elydiocese.org. Get in touch today and join the learning revolution!

St Lawrence, Diddington



TRAINING AND EVENTS

Maintenance Support

On Wednesday 20th September, 10 people joined architect Peter Slinger at Holy Trinity, Orton Longueville for a morning of maintenance. The session included a brief talk, tour of the church and plenty of time for questions and discussions. It was a useful morning enjoyed by all and thanks go to the volunteers at Holy Trinity for hosting the session and providing hot drinks and lovely cake. If you'd like to organise something similar or would just like someone to visit to give some general advice, please contact Holly. You will also find guidance, including [maintenance plans and videos](#) on our website.

SAVE THE DATE

[National Volunteers' Week](#): 1st - 7th June

[Love Your Burial Ground & Churches Count on Nature](#): 8th - 16th June

[Heritage Open Days](#): 6th - 15th September

[Ride and Stride](#): 14th September



CONTACT DETAILS

Please contact Holly if you:

- have any problems with the links contained in this newsletter
- would like to be added to/removed from the mailing list for the newsletter
- have information for the next edition; cut-off date 21st February.



All initial enquiries about works to your building or churchyard and queries about the faculty process or applying for consent should please be directed to the Church Buildings office via dac@elydiocese.org

Geoffrey Hunter - DAC Secretary and Head of the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department
Telephone 01353 652737 or email geoffrey.hunter@elydiocese.org

John Morgan - Assistant DAC Secretary
Telephone 01353 652705 or email john.morgan@elydiocese.org

Sam Reeder - DAC Administrator
Telephone 01353 652718 or email sam.reeder@elydiocese.org

Holly Robinson (née Isted) - Historic Church Buildings Support Officer
Telephone 07948 350211 or email holly.robinson@elydiocese.org

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

