



archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

The role of Churchwarden has existed for over 500 years and at its heart is to be the chief representative of the people of the parish in the leadership of their church. You are chosen by the whole community, and you carry the responsibility of making sure their needs are held before the church and that the needs of the church are communicated to the community. In good times and bad, you uphold this task with faith, courage and kindness. Thank you!

In 2023, all Anglican churches reported on the projects that they host, run or support that serve their local community. The feedback tells us, among other things, that 60% of churches either host, run or support a local foodbank; 37% host activities for older people and 65% run some other form of social community care. From this, we estimate that over 10% of the population of our Diocese receive some form of pastoral care from our churches.

We recognise the role that Churchwardens play to make this happen. This is no small task, with 95% of our church buildings having listed status. It is perhaps not ideal that we care for such a large estate of medieval buildings, as well as seeking to fulfil the Great Commission of Jesus (Matt 28.19f) and loving our neighbour as ourselves (Mk 12.31), yet generally you do this without complaint, Thank you!

In 2025, we are recommencing the Archdeacon's Church Visits programme (formerly 'visitations'). We want you to experience these as reassurance, where we and the Rural Deans will seek to assist and support you. Please use 2024 to prepare for these visits and assure yourselves that you have in place secure foundations for the fantastic work that our churches do, in the name of Jesus.

God bless you,



Richard Harlow

The Ven Richard Harlow
Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech
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Alex Hughes

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Churchwardens' Training Day 2024



We are pleased to invite you to attend this year's Churchwardens' Training Day.

We are working on a new format for the day. Several Diocesan staff

and colleagues will be sharing their knowledge and skills but also there will be more time for discussion and interaction between yourselves as well as possibly concluding with an open question forum. Further details to follow.

The training day will, as ever, be open to all Churchwardens, whether you are newly elected or have been in post for some time. Please do invite others within your parish who might be thinking about serving as a Churchwarden in the future, to come along too, as the day is a good overview of what to expect when in office.

Date: Saturday 28 September
Time: 9.45am to 3.30pm (tbc)
Venue: Etheldreda House,
206 Lancaster Way Business Park,
Witchford, Ely CB6 3NX

Email invitations will be circulated in due course and more information will be made available on the Diocesan website here:

 [www.elydiocese.org/
churchwardentraining-day.php](http://www.elydiocese.org/churchwardentraining-day.php)

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Building Better School Links with the Parish

Revd Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry

The benefits of a strong link between a school and its local parish church have been highlighted over many years. The Parish-School Covenant seeks to provide a framework within which such a relationship can be developed and grow. The



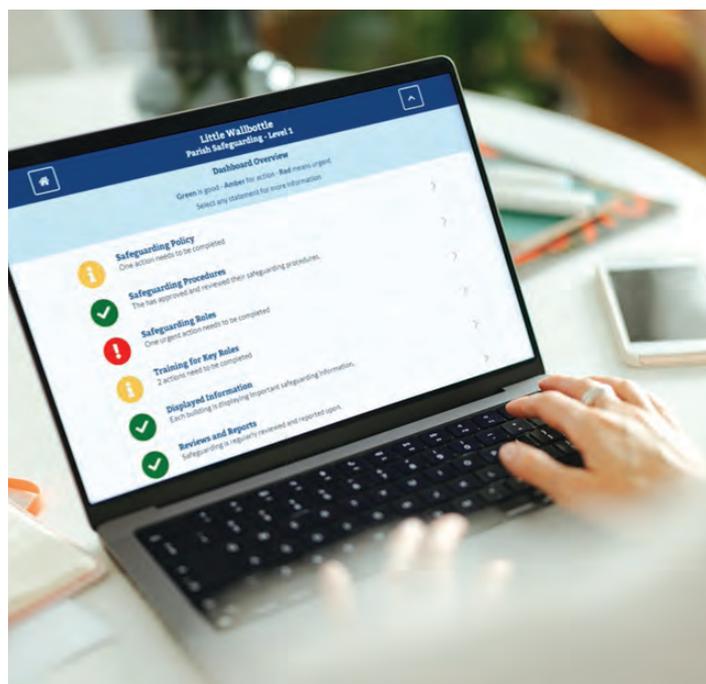
Covenant enables the parish and school to see the relationship as a mutually beneficial partnership and encourages both school and parish church to find creative ways of expressing it within the day-to-day life of the two organisations. At its most basic, the Parish-School Covenant enables a mutual conversation to take place where both the school and the parish can benefit from such a relationship.

Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry, commented that: *"Partnerships in ministry are important and it has been my experience that as the relationship between the school and the parish church grows and develops, we see new and exciting opportunities emerge which benefit the children, their families, the staff, the congregations and of course the wider community. The investment of time and energy is well worth it."*

We are investing in School Chaplains by providing training (in partnership with Ridley Hall) to people who wish to explore this ministry or who are already in a 'chaplainship type' role. Our first Authorised Chaplaincy Assistants 'graduated' at the beginning of February. We are about to launch the Licensed Chaplaincy Course as well as re-running the Authorised Chaplaincy Assistant Course again this year. For further information, please see the Diocesan website.

Development Officer for School Mission

The Revd Mandy Flaherty is our Development Officer for School Mission and is passionate about school chaplaincy and the development of a closer partnership between schools and parishes. She has a wide range of experience in both school and parish ministry. If you are interested in finding out how your parish can develop their relationship with the local school, please contact mandy.flaherty@elydiocese.org.



Parish Safeguarding Dashboards

Rebecca Boswell, Safeguarding Advisor

Good parish safeguarding can involve a significant amount of work. Parish Safeguarding Dashboards are making administration and governance simpler for parishes.

Safeguarding Dashboards were designed with the help of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and Incumbents in a wide range of parishes. Safeguarding Dashboards are currently being used by 7,000 churches in 37 participating dioceses throughout the Church of England. Almost 80% of parishes in the Diocese of Ely have joined their Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Safeguarding Dashboards platform is free. Simply ask Sarah King (sarah.king@elydiocese.org) to send you an invitation to your Parish Dashboard. If you have already signed up but haven't updated your Dashboard in a while, please remember to review it regularly.

Safeguarding Dashboards has been designed to display a clear and simple dashboard on a smartphone, tablet or computer. The home page allows the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent, Churchwardens and other authorised users to see the current status of compliance at a glance. **Green** lights bring reassurance that all is well; **amber** means that action is needed, and **red** means it's urgent.

The Dashboard also contains direct links to other useful resources. The aim is to provide Dashboard users with everything they need in one place. It will even produce an Action Plan for discussion and approval by the Parochial Church Council (which has been a requirement since 2017). Data from the Dashboards also helps the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to identify where parishes need the most support.

www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding



Enhance your church's fundraising efforts

Whether you're raising funds for new facilities, building repairs, youth worker recruitment, or daily running costs, the Ecclesiastical Fundraising Hub provides resources to aid your church's growth in fundraising. This practical hub is organised into user-friendly steps, each offering information, guidance and tools, regardless of your fundraising experience.

Explore a wealth of articles, blogs and supporting documents on various topics such as digital fundraising, capital projects, understanding the grants process and forming fundraising teams. Access a free searchable list of church funders providing grants, along with tailored fundraising support for small rural churches.

Also, to support time-constrained churches and volunteers, looking for quick information on the diverse fundraising landscape, the hub offers concise, insightful bitesize videos addressing key fundraising issues. Additionally, sign up for live, free webinars conducted in collaboration with Philanthropy Company across 2024. For additional help, call the fundraising helpline below.

📞 0345 601 9959

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising



An update from grant-making charity, Benefact Trust



BENEFACT TRUST

Every day, Benefact Trust, the charitable owner of Benefact Group, witnesses the crucial role churches and charities play in our communities. Since the Trust was established in 1972, it has awarded over £256m in funding to support these organisations to thrive and make a positive

impact in society. Benefact Trust's grants support a range of causes and there are many heart-warming stories to be found on the website.

🌐 www.benefacttrust.co.uk/news



Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good Awards programme is back again with grants of £1,000 and more to give to churches and charities. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, who are giving away over £1 million to churches and charities in the 2024 Movement for Good Awards.

£1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your church or favourite charity for the £1,000 draw.
- You can nominate as many charities as you like; it's one nomination per charity per person.

There are six £1,000 draws this year giving away between £50,000 and £120,000 in each. Once you've nominated, share your nomination, and get your friends and family to support too.

Did you know?

The Movement for Good Awards has gifted over £5.75 million to more than 2,500 charities since the initiative started in 2019.

Last year, A Rocha UK was awarded £5,000 in the Environment and Climate special draw. A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and is committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

Also, in 2023, £11,000 was awarded to 10 church-related charities through the £1,000 Movement for Good Awards; Kilkenny Christian Centre in ROI actually won twice! So please get nominating; next time it could be your church! You can find out more at:

🌐 www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical

Contains promotional material

Would you like to sign up for e-news?

The monthly e-news is full of useful information to support you in areas such as fundraising, church security and environmental impact. Signing up is easy and you can unsubscribe whenever you choose. Many of Ecclesiastical's customers have chosen to receive this and we hope you would like to join them.

 www.ecclesiastical.com/signup



Financial support for your 2025 sabbatical

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) have assisted over 1,400 clergy members in funding a variety of extended leave projects.

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a positive and long-lasting impact on your church and community. One of the 2023 recipients, the Rev'd. Heston Groenewald, vicar of All Hallows Church in Leeds, received a bursary to support his local interfaith ministry.

He visited India and Pakistan to experience and learn more about the diverse cultures and customs that make up the fabric of the local community. On his trip, Heston experienced the Holi festival in India and celebrated Easter with Christians and Muslims in Lahore.

“ The MBA grant enabled an amazing adventure around India and Pakistan and so has been a valuable, wonderful investment in my wellbeing and in my local interfaith ministry. ” **Rev'd. Heston Groenewald**

The application window for the 2025 MBA programme is now open and closes in September 2024. In 2025, we are particularly keen to see more sabbaticals which aim to support the drive for net zero carbon.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit:

 www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Invest in making a difference

Worries about social matters, our planet and the environment are factors most of us think about daily. To do more to help address these concerns, there is increasing interest from people looking to invest ethically in accordance with their principles.

What is ethical investing?

Richard Wood, Director of Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (pictured below), explains, "Put simply, ethical investments allow people to invest without sacrificing their environmental, social, moral or religious principles while at the same time aiming to make a profitable return."



Ethical investment funds can be screened using negative or positive criteria. For negatively screened funds, the fund manager will, for example, be screening investments to avoid a range of activities considered harmful – such as companies involved in manufacturing tobacco.

When using positive screening, fund managers actively identify companies that make a positive

social impact or who invest sustainably and/or responsibly. They will have, for example, good corporate governance and employment practices as well as being active in making a positive impact on the environment.

To find out more about ethical investing, contact Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services today.

 **0800 107 0190**
 getadvice@ecclesiastical.com
 www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice

Please note: The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invested. Your capital is at risk.

Looking for help to go green?

Give your parishioners a warm welcome!

We all want our church buildings to be welcoming spaces for both prayer and for wider community activities, but particularly in the chilly months, keeping buildings warm is a challenge and can be costly and harmful to the environment.

Wherever you are in your journey to reduce your church's carbon emissions, Ecclesiastical would like to help. For example, they would like to spread the word about some interesting innovations that they've come across recently.

Warming chandeliers

St Matthew's has been trialling innovative radiant heating chandeliers in their church in Bristol. These chandeliers use a very gentle wavelength of heat, like that of the winter sun, and they warm just the space needed, not the whole church. They have proved much cheaper to run than a central heating system and can help to lower your carbon footprint.



Through the Movement for Good awards, Ecclesiastical awarded a £35,000 grant to St Matthew's in 2023, which will allow them to make the trial installation permanent. If you would like to consider applying for a similar grant, further information can be found on page 3. Also, if you wish to install this type of heating, please let the Ecclesiastical Underwriters

know, so that they can advise on any potential insurance implications and ensure the system itself is covered.

Heated cushions

Another innovation, helping church communities take steps to reduce their carbon emissions by warming people not spaces, is a heated seat cushion! These are powered by lithium-ion batteries which are widely used as a power source in portable electrical products. However,



if you do choose this option, it is important to select seat cushions and fabrics that have an appropriate fire performance and to follow the guidance on charging the cushions. Cushions should comply with British Standards and have the CE mark. If you think that this is an option for you, you will find guidance about the cushions here:

www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-heated-cushions

Ecclesiastical has also developed a new Made Simple guide, which can support you on your journey to make your church buildings more environmentally friendly. It includes information about other alternative heating systems like heat pumps, information about LED lighting and much more.

www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple

If you have any tips that have helped your church in its environmental journey, why not drop Ecclesiastical an email and they can share your ideas in their monthly digital newsletter.

weboffice@ecclesiastical.com



Insurance made simple!

As church insurance experts, Ecclesiastical is well placed to help you navigate many of the complicated insurance responsibilities of your church. They have created a series of 'Made Simple' guides which highlight potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches.



The guides also offer help with activities and projects that PCCs often become involved in, which include:

- Climate change and your church
- Administering insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Church valuation
- Community outreach
- Digital technology
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises
- Unoccupied buildings

You can find lots more information at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple

Herschel Infrared



Funeral planning

As you know, funerals can be costly, but Ecclesiastical can help you make provisions to reduce the financial worry for your family when the time comes and ensure your wishes are provided for.¹

¹ Terms and conditions apply – see website for details.

☎ **0800 055 6503**
✉ **info@epsfunerals.com**
🌐 **www.funeralplans.co.uk**

Car insurance

Ecclesiastical's Clergy Motor Insurance has been tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, unlimited windscreen cover and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹ To find out more about the benefits of this policy, get in touch with Ecclesiastical.

☎ **0345 450 9396**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance**
¹ Subject to terms and conditions



Month by month support



So you can better look after your church and parishioners, Ecclesiastical has again produced their easy-to-view calendar to help you plan maintenance activities throughout the year.

🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-calendar**

Insure your home with Ecclesiastical and they will donate £130 to a church of your choice

Trust130 is just one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical gives back to the community; for every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offers to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Since 2017, Ecclesiastical has donated over £500,000 to more than 2,500 churches in the UK.

A £130 donation really helped **St Peter's Church in Parwich**. Church Treasurer **Stuart Chambers** told Ecclesiastical:

// If you're short of numbers, it's a big job keeping everything ship-shape. I have a ride-on mower, but you can't get to the actual graves on that so inevitably they can look a bit unkempt, which is a real shame. //

With the £130 donation, St Peter's was able to keep its graveyard looking neat and tidy by paying for a man with a strimmer.

Award-winning home insurance

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining one of the most trusted home insurance providers with the happiest customers.²



Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in Spring 2024 for home insurance for a record 19th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status. Their buildings and contents cover is also a Which? Best Buy and it was voted the best home insurance in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2023.³



Get a home insurance quote

Ecclesiastical is a specialist insurer who understands the needs of those working in the church and for the church. Their policy helps to protect your home and takes into account the extra duties you carry out for the church.

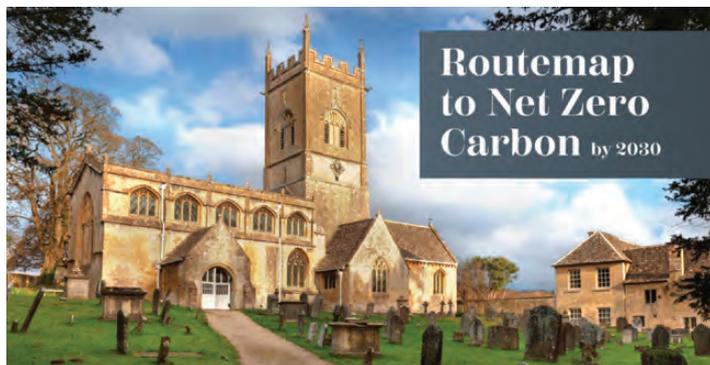
☎ **0345 777 3322** and quote **CHOPS24**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance**

¹ Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130-terms ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance ³ www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance

Protecting the Earth

Revd Canon Nigel Cooper, Diocesan Environment Officer

2023 was the global hottest year ever, and by the greatest margin. Hopefully this year will not be as hot, but the trend is dramatically worrying.



What is less clear is what the impact of rapidly rising temperatures will be on humans and nature – apart from the fact that it could be severe. General Synod in 2020 ambitiously called for our Church to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZC) emissions by 2030. I am proud that the Church has responded swiftly and is being much more serious about the climate crisis than other organisations I know.

Our own Diocesan Synod endorsed an Action Plan towards this target last October. The Ely Plan frames the work within the Five Marks of Mission. The NZC programme is not a marginal concern for a few environmentalists but is core to our whole missional task: proclamation, nurture, service, justice and creation. NZC is not primarily an extra task, but a creative way to re-envision the core task of the church, i.e. our mission.

What does this mean for you at parish level?

I am just going to highlight some key first steps that every parish can take to get things underway on decarbonising heating, reducing energy use, and travelling sustainably.

- 1. Complete the annual Energy Footprint Tool (EFT):** We need to monitor our progress. The national church already asks parishes to submit mission and financial statistics. For the past few years, alongside these, we are asked to submit our energy data on the EFT part of Parish Returns Online (churchofengland.org). Most of the data needed can be easily read off your energy bills. Please can you ensure that someone from your church provides the information asked by this Tool. See [Energy Footprint Tool | The Church of England](#) for more information.
- 2. Change to a renewable electricity tariff:** About the simplest way to decarbonise is to switch your electricity tariff to one that is genuinely renewable. Suppliers who are recognised by the C of E as meeting this criterion, and also a list of green gas suppliers, can be found by searching online for the [Church of England's Energy Footprint Tool](#) website page.
- 3. Study the 'Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon for Church Buildings':** This path begins with simple, but essential, things such as maintaining the building well. It moves on to actions like changing to LED lighting or considering under-pew electric

heaters. Installing PV on church roofs comes late on in the path. At an early stage of working through the 'Practical Path' contact the DAC for advice. Some actions will require a faculty, and applicants now have to demonstrate how they are engaging with NZC as part of the process: see [Net zero carbon church | The Church of England](#)

- 4. Enrol with Eco Church.** This is a brilliant resource for churches, helping them with all aspects of environmental engagement, not just buildings and NZC. Their website has lots of advice and ideas on worship, land, community engagement, lifestyle, campaigning and for children. The beauty is its framework. After you register, you then take a survey of where you are now and assess what you could do to improve your score and achieve a Bronze Award. And, then there are the Silver and the Gold Awards to aim for. If not already registered, do encourage your parish to register and begin aiming for Bronze.
- 5. Because the nature and climate crises are intimately linked, General Synod is expected to further challenge us:**
 - a. Create a simple churchyard management plan to protect its animals, plants and trees. [Caring For God's Acre](#) – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK provides guidance and examples that can inspire your congregation and local community.
 - b. Record the biodiversity of your churchyard through taking part in [Churches Count On Nature](#). This is a fun opportunity for local people to discover what is growing and living around your church and will help you devise your management plan.
 - c. You can receive support and encouragement through the local [Churchyard Award \(wildlifebcn.org\)](#). This award also has Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

This is a very exciting time for the church. We can be an inspiring witness to our communities, where many people are anxious and fatalistic. We can demonstrate and speak of our hope in God, who creates and restores us.

Please contact me for further information and encouragement

Revd Canon Nigel Cooper, Diocesan Environment Officer, at:

✉ nigel.cooper@elydiocese.org

🌐 www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/environment-and-sustainability



Get Your Church Noticed

Holly Robinson (née Isted), Historic Church Buildings Support Officer

Many people first encounter a church online. Whether they are looking for a place to worship at or to visit whilst on holiday, having a strong online presence is important. But you don't need to become a website designer or social media guru to do it; take advantage of what is already available.

A Church Near You and **Explore Churches** are two excellent national websites which every church should be featured on.

A Church Near You (www.achurchnearyou.com) is a great place for general information, including news, events and activities. Whilst Explore Churches (www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore) is aimed at tourists and other visitors.

Information is easy to upload and keep updated – if your church is already on these websites, please make sure the information and images are current (use good quality photographs). It is really useful if you add a link on A Church Near You to your webpage on Explore Churches and vice versa, that way everyone should be able to find the information they want in a way that appeals directly to their interests.

If you already have a church website, remember to add the basic information to these national sites and then include a link to your own parish site. Look out for other local and regional websites such as <https://explorewestnorfolk.co.uk> and the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust's Church Directory (<https://camhct.uk/churches>).

An open church



It is also important that when people visit your church, they find it open and welcoming. Contrary to popular belief, insurers generally recommend that churches are left unlocked during daylight hours. If you cannot do this, use a well-produced sign to display the detail of a key holder and replace/clean the sign when it starts to look untidy.

Wherever possible open your church

for national events such as Ride + Stride and Heritage Open Days, and local events.

For more tips, see **Open and Welcome Guidance** on our website.

Localised Support for Parishes



Revd Peter Leech, Interim Director of Mission and Ministry

The Mission and Ministry Department consists of a network of different teams and working groups. We seek to work collaboratively with local parishes to ensure that we are enabling the local church to **grow in their engagement with the local community** and **grow deeper in their discipleship**.

We recognise that there is no 'one-size' parish and so our support is not 'one-size-fits-all'. We seek to be flexible and responsive in terms of our support as we seek to embrace the national aspirations of being a church that is growing younger and more diverse as well as equipping a mixed-ecology of ministry pathways for a mixed-ecology of church. These are exciting and at the same time challenging times for the local church and we seek to help the local church build in confidence, capacity and creativity.

We offer a variety of short courses (soon to be offered through our *Open Christian Learning Portal*), flexible training pathways for authorised, licenced and ordained ministries as well as coaching/mentoring for parishes and those in leadership. We work closely with other departments within the Central Support Team of the Diocese to help provide support for parishes.

We also seek to help share good practice across the Diocese so that no longer are we all reinventing the wheel. If you have a got a 'good-news story' – something that you think has gone really well – why not contact Holli Bielby (our Development Officer: Communications) who would love to hear from you.

✉ holli.bielby@elydiocese.org

You can find out more about who's who in the Mission and Ministry team on the Diocesan website here – www.elydiocese.org/parish-support/mission-and-ministry.

Why not sign-up for the weekly ministry mailing to keep up to date? You can follow this link to do just that. To subscribe to the **Ministry Mailing Newsletter**, visit www.elydiocese.org/subscribe-to-the-ministry-newsletter.php.

For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **X:** @churchmatters

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