



Diocese of Ely

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

Welcome to another edition of Archdeacons' Visitation News.

It will be a long time before we can fully assess the impact of the pandemic. What is clear however is that our churches have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in continuing to bear witness to their hope in God. Churchwardens have often been foremost in this and we wish to applaud you for your dedicated service. Thank you!

The New Testament says that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The manner in which we conduct ourselves, the way we care for the physical reality of people and places, is not just a sign of what we believe, but is itself part of the substance of our faith. The modern world tends to value thinking and cognition over such qualities as connection, community and dependence. The Bible does not see it this way: *'Whoever does not love does not know God'* (1 John 4:8).

The worldwide Anglican Communion has adopted the Five Marks of Mission to express what it means fully to live out the Christian life – *'The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.'* The Marks blend believing and doing on the understanding that both are essential elements of what it means to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. Some Christians are particularly gifted with words, others are best known for their actions, and that is how it should be. In a famous and very down-to-earth image, St Paul writes, *'You are the body of Christ and individually members of it'* (1 Corinthians 12:27) and elsewhere explains that no one part of the body is more important than another, each has a special function, which contributes to the life of the whole (Romans 12:4-5).

As Churchwardens, you bring gifts and welcome and encourage others to serve in their own way too. This is part of the beauty of each local church and a sign of hope and encouragement in our world. May God bless and strengthen you.



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Churchwardens' Training Day 2022

Calling out to all Churchwardens across the Diocese

We would like to invite you to attend this year's Churchwardens' Training Day which will, as ever, be of interest to all Churchwardens, whether you are newly elected or have been in post for some time.

If you know of someone within your parish who might be thinking about serving as a Churchwarden in the future, do encourage them to come along too, as the day is a good overview of what to expect when in office.



Date: Saturday 17 September

Time: 9.45am to 3.30pm

Venue: Prickwillow Village Hall,
40 Main Street, Prickwillow, CB7 4UN

Further details will be shared in due course and made available on the Diocesan website, but please also reserve your place by **Monday 5 September 2022 by email at archdeacons.events@elydiocese.org**

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Living Ely 2025

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

Every New Year we travel to the Peak District for a short holiday. We have been going back to the same area for 25 years. As we drove through the small Derbyshire town this year, we were shocked by how many empty shops there were in the High Street. I counted at least ten.

Covid has hit many businesses and it has certainly had an impact on the church. Many of us are asking deep questions. Can we carry on? Do I want to carry on after so many years of faithful service? Is there someone who would be willing to do more and let me step aside? Can we afford to pay the Insurance bills, let alone Ministry Share? What should we put effort into to restart? How can we cope with fewer clergy?

It is therefore appropriate that we as a Diocese ask these profound questions collectively too.

That is what lies behind **Living Ely 2025**. When Bishop Stephen joined us in 2012, he wrote to us all asking us to *Imagine the Future*. Our **Diocesan Strategy** picked-up on this and we committed to ourselves to be shaped by that Strategy. Six years and a pandemic later, we with so many others, are now asking – what does the future hold for us?

We are asking every Parish, coordinated by the Deanery, to consider a number of fundamental questions and address the following issues.

To identify sustainable worship patterns now and in the future

To consider afresh how we serve the whole parish and seek to support the wider community through:

- Becoming a Blended Church, including Fresh Expressions of church and the mix between in-person services and those held online.

- Are there new congregations that could be started to reach parts of the parish, or groups within the parish, not served by the existing congregation (minority Anglicans, children, young families, and young people)?
- What can be done to ensure we are engaging with local church schools and community schools?

Ministry

Identify new vocations for:

- Stipendiary ministry.
- Self-supporting ministry – lay and ordained.
- Lay ministry in all its forms including Focal Ministry and ALM (Authorised Lay Ministry).

Finance

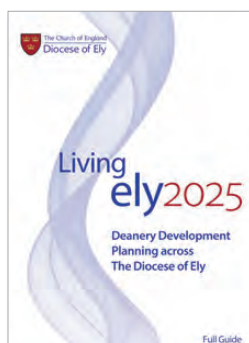
- Can we afford to meet the cost of ministry now and in the future? If there are doubts about that, what can we do now and are there implications for how we are structured?
- How can we reduce our dependency on the subsidy given by the Diocese to support ministry?

Buildings

- Identify style and designation of churches (e.g. Resource Church, Festival Church, etc.)
- If a Parish Church is struggling, or fragile, what can be done?
- What pattern of worship can be adopted that is sustainable on Sundays and how can the church be opened and used mid-week?
- Can other groups use the church building? If so, how?
- How can we meet the net-zero challenge?

Leadership and governance

- Moving away from single PCCs (Parochial Church Councils) and the administration that involves, what new models of Governance would be appropriate for us?



Because we want to hear from as many people as we can, we have produced a series of resources. The first one is a **Full Guide to Living Ely 2025** which is worth reading, but we acknowledge it is long and not for everyone. Therefore we have also produced a second booklet – **a Summary for all PCC members and others who are interested**. We have also produced a **wallet-sized card for individuals**. All publications can be found and downloaded on the **Diocesan website**

here: www.elydiocese.org/about/strategy/living-ely2025/. At the heart of every publication is the same question – What is the Lord of the Church calling us to do now and into the future?

In the High Street, many businesses have struggled, some have gone entirely, others are just surviving. Our desire is that, as a church, we flourish. Living Ely 2025 invites us to have a renewed vision for the church as we learn to live with Covid. This is not based on our own skills or our own resources but on the God who called us into being and created the church to be a blessing to the world. Our confidence is in Him, not ourselves and He asks us to be creative, imaginative and open to what He is calling us to be.

Please join in this great conversation, let your voice be heard and together may we discover God's purposes for us and his people now and in the future.





Congratulations to our national winner!

Last year, we launched our 'Good News' competition – and now we're proud to announce the national winner.

We asked for stories about your church community – written in the style of a newspaper article, and accompanied by a photograph and a suitable headline. We were looking for uplifting tales – of battling to achieve something special for the parish, perhaps, or tireless volunteering, or dedication to your congregation or wider locality. And we were inundated with amazing entries.

Our judges worked hard to select five regional winners from the huge list, and we announced this at the end of last year, giving each regional winner £1,500 towards church funds as part of Ecclesiastical's aim to donate profits to transform lives and communities.

Now – with the help of the public, through a show of support for their online story – the overall winner, who will receive a further £6,000, has been chosen.

A big congratulations to the national winner

Penlee Cluster Churches, down in the far west of Cornwall – St John's and St Mary's in Penzance, St Peter's in Newlyn, and St Pol de Leon in the village of Paul.

Determined to bring their community together during those difficult months, they launched a fantastic 'Never Alone' initiative. This multi-faceted campaign saw church members team up with local businesses to take pub meals, Cornish pasties, and fish and chip suppers to elderly and vulnerable people. Read their story and those of the other regional winners at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchcomp



Meet your Church Insurance Consultants

Our Church Insurance Consultants are 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 135 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 experiences, ideas – and smiles.

If you are 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/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**.

Contains promotional material

Café raises funds – and spirits

When lockdowns led to a dramatic fall in revenue, one church came up with a way to raise funds and create a much needed local community space.



Christ Church in Lofthouse (near Leeds) was struggling for funding, and the village itself had been cut in half by the arrival of the M26 motorway many years ago, leaving its people without a proper place to meet. So the Reverend Mandy Rhodes and others put their heads together and decided to open the TLC Café in the basement of their church.

“Villagers still talk fondly about the old cricket club which was lost when the motorway came through,” said Mandy. “That was where people would meet up for parties and get-togethers. But since it went there hasn’t been anywhere suitable. Like most churches, we were hit really hard by the lockdowns – and we still are, with quite a few of our elderly parishioners now in the habit of joining services online. So we wondered if there was a way we could address both problems, and the café was born.”

They teamed up with CLO Coffee – a Leeds-based Christian coffee shop and roastery – to source a machine and barista training, and redecorated the basement hall, which is the former crypt. In November 2021, they opened the café – and it has gone from strength to strength.

“There’s a lovely, relaxed atmosphere,” said Mandy. “We’re seeing a real group of regulars building – people just like having somewhere to meet up again. After paying off our original outlay we’re now turning a profit, which means we can be more confident about paying our Parish Share. “We have local artists displaying their work here – our current exhibition is of art produced by a local head injury charity – and we take a small 5% cut of any sales, which helps. We have a charity shop and our food bank too. We’re running mother-and-baby drop-ins, and I’m looking at starting baby massage sessions. I’d say the future is bright!”

Especially in rural communities, church buildings are much more than just bricks and mortar. They offer vital spaces for quiet time, reflection and connection, as the TLC Café demonstrates.

From listening to customer feedback, we know that it’s not always easy to pay for the upkeep and care of rural churches, or for the ministry that happens in them.

We asked for your feedback on our printed toolkit – Fundraising in a Box – that was sent to all church customers in January 2021. You told us you liked the toolkit style, but guidance especially for rural parishes would be a helpful addition to our support. That’s why we’ve created a fundraising toolkit for rural churches, full of useful links and expert advice. **You can find it on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/rural-parishes**

More fundraising support

There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

Our Movement for Good Awards open for entry



Charitable giving is at the heart of what we do – and has been for over 135 years. For the past three years, Ecclesiastical Insurance has run the Movement for Good Awards programme, giving away £3 million to great causes.

Did you know?

In 2021, we were delighted to award £25,000 to church-related charities. Please take a look at our winners’ map to see which charities and churches we have helped in your local area:

winnersmap.benefactgroup.com

The Awards are back and this year we have over £1 million to donate, but we cannot do it without you. This year, you’ll find information on the awards on our parent company’s website.

Visit: www.benefactgroup.com/movement-for-good to find out more.





Have you heard the e-news?

E-news is a monthly email full of tips and information and monthly risk reminders for all of our customers and anyone in your church community. To receive it is easy – **all you need to do is register on our 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 link to anyone you think might like it.

'Made Simple' guides



We know that understanding the insurance responsibilities for your church can be complicated, that's why we've created our 'Made Simple' guides.

These guides take you through potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches, as well as activities and projects that PCCs are often involved in.

They cover topics such as administration, events, community outreach, people on church premises, church property, building works and legal expenses. **You can find them all on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/church**

Information at your fingertips

The Ecclesiastical website is largely an online library of guidance and support for you and your church community. You'll find information about church and home insurance, risk management, fundraising and grants and lots more. 'Church Matters' newsletter is also on the website, making it really easy to share with others.

Visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church

Ministry Bursary Awards

Financial support for 2023 sabbaticals

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community. Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) provide financial support to members of the clergy planning to take extended study leave. Applications are open now until the end of September.

Established in 1987 to celebrate Ecclesiastical's centenary year, the Awards have supported almost 1,400 clergy members from Anglican Christian faiths. The sabbatical breaks and projects have varied greatly over the years – from traditional and modern-day pilgrimages to study visits, spiritual retreats and pursuits of lifelong dreams and hobbies.

Like Rev'd James Radcliffe from Lincoln, who worked in sports-based ministry in South Africa, or Rev'd Rachel Dale, who studied dementia and also worked with vulnerable children. One of our most recent MBA recipients, Rev'd Canon Imogen Nay, spent her sabbatical in 2021 looking at rewilding and green churches.

Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards are open for applications until 30 September 2022. Judging of the applications will take place in November and awards will be made during December 2022.

If you would like to read more about James, Rachel or Imogen's experiences and find out more about the Awards including eligibility criteria and application details, **please visit our website: www.ecclesiastical.com/mba**



Financial services

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

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

WINNERS of the **NatWest Mortgage Awards 2022, South West and Wales** for putting the customer and local community at the heart of everything we do.



Car insurance

Our Clergy Motor Insurance 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

☎ **0345 450 9396**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance**

¹ Subject to terms and conditions.



Award-winning home insurance that supports your church



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its profits to good causes, one of the ways in which we do this is through our Trust130 Home

Insurance offer. For every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offer to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Originally launched in 2017 to celebrate our 130th anniversary, we have since donated more than £460,000, helping to support over 2,500 churches. A donation of £130 may not sound much, but churches and congregations have used the donations in many creative ways to fund all sorts of things:

St Mary and Bartholomew Solihull are using their grant to introduce contactless donations to support the church and raise valuable funds for charitable causes.

*"This is important for both the church to enable us to continue to raise funds, for the parishioners to enable them to continue to donate in church without having to touch cash/the collection plate and finally to the local (and national) charities we support each year through our charitable giving which is only possible from the kind donations our parishioners make." **Duncan Watson**, Treasurer*

St Albans West Leigh, which is located in a growing community, with a new housing development opposite the church and a further development close by in the planning stages, are using the money to welcome the new residents.

*"We have decided to use the money to assist in funding welcome packs – which will be a booklet about our church and the locale along with some nice biscuits. The booklet and biscuits enable us to make personal contact with people as they move into our community, and to offer them a warm welcome." **The Rev'd Canon Karina Green**, Priest in Charge St Alban's West Leigh*

Most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining the most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers. April 2022 saw Ecclesiastical top the Fairer Finance league table for home insurance for a record 15th consecutive time, retaining our gold ribbon status.²

And don't forget, we offer a discount to members of the clergy.

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

¹ Terms may apply. ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance

REACH Ely Outcomes and Next Steps

By Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Church Buildings and Pastoral, Diocese of Ely

When the REACH Ely Project began in 2018, no-one could have predicted the world-changing impact of the Covid pandemic.

For a project that was designed to be about churches building links and sharing their buildings with their wider communities, legal restrictions on the use of church buildings in March 2020 was probably the worst set-back possible.

The REACH Ely Church Audit



REACH Ely Case Study

Prior to the pandemic, the Project had undertaken 40 case studies of a range of churches in the Diocese as a preliminary to the Audit of Church Buildings and Communities. Despite the number of church buildings that remained closed for much of 2021, 73% of churches managed to submit a response to the Audit for which we are very grateful. This information has given us important insights into the place our churches hold within their communities.

Those who filled in the Audit will understand the breadth

of the information we captured, which was intended to give a holistic picture of the state and situation of each church. Now the information has been fully compiled, we are ready to put some of its findings to good use. We now have a much clearer view of the activities taking place in church buildings and how other factors can affect this.

For example, a common view is that a church without a kitchen or WC cannot play an effective role as a community venue. In fact, an appreciable number of churches in the Diocese are hosting successful events without these facilities. This is not to say that those churches would not be able to do more if these facilities were provided, but it should be an encouragement to churches that they can still be an active venue where people can meet and public events held even without 'facilities'.

For the first time, we also have a clear picture of the competition churches face as venues for cultural and community activities. It is an oft-repeated maxim that many rural churches are the only remaining public venue in their community – we now know this is simply not true, with only 8% being the last public meeting space in their community.

Responses to the Audit showed that since the pandemic started, there has been a big reduction in church opening times. Church buildings being open has been shown to reduce insurance risks, it is also a requirement for many grant funders. We plan to work with church insurers to find ways to help churches re-open their buildings to at least pre-pandemic levels, preferably more.



For the first time we have an overview of popularity of 'church friends' groups around the Diocese, with a quarter of churches benefitting from such a group. In light of this, it is no surprise that a further quarter of the churches responding to the Audit told us they were actively considering setting-up a friends group.

Related to friends groups is the relatively recent concept of the 'Festival Church' – churches where a group of community volunteers essentially take over the management of the building from the PCC (Parochial Church Council). 11% of churches responding to the Audit said they were either already operating in this way, or were actively considering it.

Our Case Studies identified a few churches published a 'village handbook' for the benefit of any new residents. These churches also had high levels of volunteering from members of the local community who don't attend church services. The Audit revealed that this is quite a popular publication for churches around the Diocese, and is certainly something we would encourage all churches to consider.

The village handbook experience demonstrates the benefits of engagement – churches making friends and being a part of the community. This soft form of engagement means that when a church undertakes a more formal consultation, people feel more connected and are more likely to respond.

We are now moving into a final phase of the Project. The research associate for the REACH Ely, Dr Timur Alexandrov, will continue to work with us on producing a series of guidance documents, templates, videos and events during 2022. These will see the findings worked up into positive outputs – tools that churches can use to make a real difference.



Churches, Churchyards and the Environment

By **Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Church Buildings and Pastoral, Diocese of Ely**

2022 looks to be a year when the Church of England will make its first significant steps towards its 2030 Net Zero Carbon target, set by General Synod in the spring of 2020.



Ecochurch

Every Diocese in the country has now joined the Ecodiocese initiative which, in turn, encourages those dioceses to promote the Ecochurch initiative for parishes. Ecochurch is an awards-based process which assists each member church to monitor progress towards its environmental objectives. A simple questionnaire starts the process – this may reveal that your church already qualifies for one of the 'awards' – bronze, silver or gold.

More information on Ecochurch can be found here:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

We are seeing a lot of grassroots enthusiasm among churches in this Diocese for the whole environmental agenda, from high-profile and hi-tech installations of solar panels and heat pumps, to the behind-the-scenes 'easy wins' which any church can achieve right now by simply changing their energy tariff and changing their lightbulbs.

Inextricably linked to the climate crisis is the biodiversity crisis, and we have seen many churches enquiring about the Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Awards (Note: similar initiatives are run in other counties for those churches outside of Cambridgeshire).

Diocesan Environmental Task Group

In November 2021, the **Diocesan Environmental Task Group** hosted a training event at Comberton Church on the subject of churchyards and biodiversity. This was the first live training event to be put on by the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department since the start of the pandemic. Numbers had to be limited to 75 to aid social distancing, but many more people applied to attend.

We welcomed the Diocesan Chancellor, Anthony Leonard QC, as keynote speaker, explaining new rules around the management of churchyards and grave spaces. Staff from the Diocesan Registry also attended to give a very authoritative explanation of the role and duties of local authorities in the management of closed churchyards – a very 'frequently asked question' for this office!

Members of the Diocesan Environmental Task Group gave short presentations on trees, churchyard wildlife management and the use of churchyards for hosting new green technologies in churchyards. We also learned about the breadth of missional opportunities presented by churchyards.

All the speakers' presentations from this event are available on the Diocesan website, for those who could not attend:

www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/news-and-announcements/news/diocese-of-ely-churchyards-training-day-9557.php

The Diocesan Environmental Task Group is planning further events for 2022, intended to further this diocese's progress towards Net Zero 2030.



For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters



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