



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

CHURCH HERITAGE

News from the
Church Buildings Team



**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.

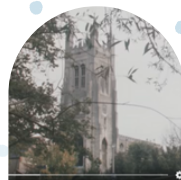


Church Buildings Support Officers - New Email

In our last edition, we cheerfully announced a new joint email address for Samuel Pedlar and Holly Robinson. Unfortunately, there have been some technical issues, principally that neither Holly nor Samuel can access it! To date, neither our IT Consultants or Microsoft have been able to fix it. So for the foreseeable future, please **do not** use **support.churchbuildings@elydiocese.org**



Jophiel the Illuminator
[The Swaffham Bulbeck Advent](#)
[Angel](#)



From the BBC Archive
[1977: The Pyrotechnic Vicar of](#)
[Cambridgeshire](#)

GOOD NEWS



Lottery Funding Success for Ickleton and Southoe Churches

The PCC of St Mary Magdalene, Ickleton have been awarded £244,684 to conserve the nationally significant medieval wall paintings and involve the whole community in celebrating them. The project is expected to result in the church being removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.

This exciting project has been years in the making. From exhibitions and lectures, to concerts, parties and personal celebrations, so many people across Ickleton, Duxford and Hinxton have contributed time, energy and donations.

The Looking Up and Out project will launch soon with community activities, followed by repair and conservation works next year. There will be lots of ways to get involved: [Ickleton Wall Paintings Project](#).

The Southoe and Midloe Community Hub is thrilled to announce the award of a £245,082 grant to support the transformation of **St Leonard's Church** into a fully accessible, flexible space for the whole community. Thanks to National Lottery players, this bold and exciting transformation is a large step further towards breathing new life into a much-loved historic building. Urgent repairs to the roof, brickwork, and windows will ensure the long-term protection of the structure, safeguarding it for future generations, and allowing the installation of solar panels. Inside, the complete refurbishment of the nave will see the removal of all pews and their platforms, allowing for a more flexible and inclusive space suited to a wide range of community events and activities. [Community Hub Project](#).



Update on the Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund launched a new grants scheme in January 2024. Applications were limited to start with as people processed the new criteria, but things have 'caught up'.

The grants are now frequently oversubscribed, thus it has become more competitive.

The Heritage Fund have produced resources to help Places of Worship. A leaflet will be sent to Diocesan Support Officers (that's Holly) soon. In the meantime, you can watch this video:

[How do we support historic Places of Worship?](#)

If you are considering applying to the Heritage Fund, please contact Holly first; she has a wealth of experience with, and key contacts at the Heritage Fund, as well as examples of successful projects.

As part of the [Church Buildings Support Network](#) there will be general grant sessions (online) on March 17th - hopefully the future of [LPWGS](#) will be known by then too! Specific sessions on applying to the Heritage Fund will be added to the programme asap.



A Towering Success for Cherry Hinton



Restoration work was recently carried out on [St Andrew's](#) tower.

"...an amazing abseiling team of experts from the West Country, worked in perfect sunshine for four weeks, finishing a week early. They needed dry weather to do their work of putting four new coats of limewash on the tower (after restoring bits and pieces) - and they got it. Now the limewash (also known as 'a sacrificial coat') begins its work of protecting the soft clunch stone beneath from the ravages of wet weather.

The other faces of the tower catch the sun and gleam even more brightly.

The tower is now much more visible between the trees as you approach from the High Street, or from Coldham's Lane. Apparently you can even see it shimmering from the third floor of the ARM offices off Fulbourn Rd!

Its restoration therefore is not only about conserving a precious piece of 800 year old heritage, but about sending out a strong visual sign of strength and resilience in the heavy weather of our times.

Do pray that everyone who now notices this tower, will be inspired to look up beyond it to the ultimate source of strength and stability.

Words from the hymn 'Be Thou my Vision' come to mind:

**'Be Thou my soul's shelter, be Thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.'**

"I highly recommend this company [Vitruvius](#), who saved us all the scaffolding costs!"

Revd Dr Karin Voth Harman

Vestry Roof Repaired

Repairs were also completed over the summer to the Vestry roof of St Andrew's church, Sutton. Money was raised through local fundraising events and a grant of £2000 from the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust: [more information](#).

National Churches Trust Awards 2025

It was another strong group of nominations for the [NCT's annual awards](#).

Congratulations to the All Saints' Rampton Action Group (RAG) who made it through to the shortlisting for the Church and Community Volunteer Awards. The volunteers have the common aim of wishing to secure the long term future of All Saints' Church as a place of worship within Rampton and to celebrate and maintain the heritage of the building, which has medieval origins and is one of only few remaining functioning thatched churches in East Anglia. Collectively the RAG team have lifted All Saints' from a position a few years ago where the future was uncertain, to one where the future is now brighter.

[All Saints Rampton](#)



REMINDERS



Total of LPWGS grants offered so far this year

A new 'funding tracker' on the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) website shows the amount of funding that has already been allocated from the LPWGS and the amount of funding remaining until the end of March 2026. Currently just over £12.6m of the £23m budget remains. [LPWGS website](#).

Save the Date

Ride and Stride 2026 will take place on 11th September. More details for [Cambridgeshire](#) and [Norfolk](#). For other counties visit the [R&S information page](#).

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.

DAC Meeting Dates

Meeting Date	Papers Deadline	Target Feedback Date
29th Jan	15th Jan	12th Feb
26th March	12th March	3rd April
28th May	14th May	11th June
16th July	2nd July	31st July
17th September	3rd September	2nd October
19th November	5th November	4th December



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.

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 – Ladders

If using ladders or stepladders, check that they are right for the job, free from defects, used properly, in the correct position, and secured.

February - Tree Management

Trees form a natural part of the landscape and bring many benefits. However, they can present a number of hazards as they age, and careful management is needed.



All Saints, Elm

GRANTS

Current Deadlines

December

1st - Thalia WB Community Fund
16th - National Churches Trust Medium Grants
TBC - Jill and Norman Franklin Trust

January

5th - Church Care - Wall Paintings
22nd - Congregational & General Charitable Trust
26th - Church Care - Bells

February

1st - Cambridgeshire Community Foundation
1st - The Sharpe Trust
5th - Norfolk Churches Trust
11th - FCC Communities Foundation
23rd - Church Care - Stained Glass
26th - Mick George Community Fund
28th - National Lottery Heritage Fund
28th - War Memorials Trust
TBC - Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Early March

1st - The Joseph Rank Trust
1st - Thalia WB Community Fund
1st - Jack Patston Charitable Trust
3rd - National Churches Trust Large Grants



Grants without Deadlines

The Archer Trust
Benefacts Trust
Church Care - Conservation Reports
Garfield Weston
Geoffrey Watling (Norfolk only)
National Lottery Community Fund: Awards for All
National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund: Grants for Heritage (up to £250,000)
Paul Bassham Charitable Trust (Norfolk only)
Suez Community Fund
Tarmac Funding
Tesco Bags of Help
The Barron Bell Trust
The Beatrice Laing Trust
The Bernard Sunley Foundation
The Clothworkers' Foundation
The Co-op Local Community Fund
The John S Cohen Foundation
The Round Tower Churches Society
TASC Grants



Small Grants for Village Halls

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to help make modest improvements to rural community buildings in England, such as boiler replacements, insulation, toilet upgrades and new kitchens.

This is part of the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund which was first announced in 2022 in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. The [Small Grants Fund](#) reopened in early November 2025 for a short period of time to use up a small underspend. It will close when all the funding is allocated.

Awards can be made to cover 20% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum amount of £5,000. The balance of funding for the works proposed must be in place or at least confirmed within 6 weeks of making an application to the small grants fund.

Protective security grants

The Home Office grant scheme for protective security at places of worship is [open for applications](#) until 8 December 2025. Churches can apply to this scheme if they have experienced hate crime, or believe that they are at risk of hate crime, for example if similar nearby places have been targeted.

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

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





ENVIRONMENT AND NZC

Net Zero Carbon Churches

Churches face many issues when working towards Net Zero Carbon, but these mainly fall into three categories:

- deciding which is the right decarbonised heating system for the building
- working out how to pay for it
- identifying what else to do as a church to help the climate and biodiversity crises

For me, another category also looms:

- how to track whether churches are succeeding to reduce their energy consumption and carbon emissions

On 23rd October, I joined my NZCO colleagues from Chelmsford, Norwich, St Albans and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to host a zoom session titled '*Church Heating – Your Questions Answered*'. If you missed the session, you can [catch up here](#), where you can download the slides or watch the session. We will be providing more support sessions, so do look out for these.

You can find online [church heating case studies here](#), with a wide variety of churches, both rural and urban, with different NZC heating solutions - [Oakington: St Andrew's story](#) has recently been added. You could also visit churches in the diocese that already have NZC heating solutions to gain direct experience from those using them, please do [contact me to find out more](#).

The process of changing a heating system can take several years though, so it's worth starting sooner than later, particularly if your boiler is nearing end of life.

We are entering a new triennium of [funding for the NZC Programme](#), which means new grants will be coming on stream in 2026. Look out for announcements and check our website but in the meantime I would recommend you have a look at the [Cornerstone grants database](#).

[The Practical Path to Net Zero](#) for churches helps you identify other actions to reduce carbon emissions. Engaging with the [Eco Church](#) award scheme helps identify wider opportunities for environmental projects in and around your church. The [annual Energy Footprint Tool \(EFT\) return](#) also helps you to see what your current carbon emissions are compared with previous years. 90% of churches in the diocese submitted their energy data this year, and each year the data is getting better. But each year, it's also important to enter the data for all buildings owned by the church (including halls and houses). Next year's EFT will open in January, so gather your energy bills and do let me know if you need support.

And finally...**we are looking for churches with electric heating solutions installed which have been successful. Please contact me to advise if you do.** Many thanks!

Sacha Watson - Net Zero Carbon Officer - [Contact Details](#)



CHURCH SECURITY

A Few Key Steps from  ecclesiastical

Proudly part of the BENEFACT GROUP 



The subject of Church Security especially in relation to Open Church and forensic marking was raised at DAC Conference. I thought it would be helpful to provide some further information on our approach, as an insurer, on this. Open Church can provide a positive step for churches to unlock their visitor potential. In addition, it can also have a positive effect on security. By implementing a few key steps, the right balance between security and welcome can be created:

- Ensure residents know that the church is operating an open-door policy so that they can observe activity
- Encourage local people to pop into the church while passing by
- Where possible draw up a rota of volunteer stewards to be present in church - but don't forget to consider their personal safety if, for example, they might be alone in a church at any time
- Utilise groups using the church or where church tasks are being undertaken as opportunities to open the building
- Create a secure storage area where all valuables can be locked

To reinforce, it is also a policy condition for theft of metal cover that SmartWater (or an acceptable alternative forensic marking solution) is:

- applied to all external metals
- registered with the supplier – Ecclesiastical will meet the registration fee for SmartWater as part of our partnership with the company
- accompanying signage is displayed prominently to act as a deterrent to thieves

If this policy condition is not met, churches are not covered for theft or attempted theft of metal or the damage caused by metal theft.

It is important to note that there is no cover for theft or attempted theft of metal and the subsequent damage whilst scaffolding is erected at your premises unless agreed by us.

More information on Church Security and Open Church can be found on our [website resources](#).

Joseph Davies

Church Support, Ecclesiastical

NEW INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE



Martyn's Law Briefing Note

The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance has produced a comprehensive [Martyn's Law briefing note](#). It has been added to the [safety and security page](#) on the Church of England website.

Any place of worship that falls in the scope of Martyn's Law (usually over 200 present) will be in the standard tier, regardless of the number of people present. Standard tier premises are required to have public protection procedures in place. Procedures are about being prepared for how to respond to a situation.

There is no requirement to spend any money for equipment. All training needed to comply will be provided free of charge on the [ProtectUK](#) website.

From the National Churches Trust...



The House of Good: Local

Your church is a brilliant place. Churches across the country are hugely valuable to people, as places for worship, for people to discover stories, and for access to vital support.

Back in 2020, the National Churches Trust measured that UK-wide support for the first time with The House of Good report. The updated The House of Good figure, published in 2021, showed that churches contribute £55 billion of value in social good every year.

Earlier this year, the National Churches Trust launched **The House of Good: Local**, a free tool just for you. This online tool helps churches, chapels and meeting houses to calculate the social value that they are providing for local people.

Hundreds of churches have already benefitted from using the tool to demonstrate their impact. It has helped with everything from grant applications to boosting volunteer morale.

[Why not use The House of Good: Local to calculate the social value of your church today?](#)

The website features instructions and guidance, and staff contacts to provide additional support.

Giving Every Church a Voice Survey

The Survey was live between May 2025 and mid-July and open to all denominations across the UK. Over 3,600 places of worship took part. The results - which could be compared to those of the previous survey undertaken in 2010 - were launched at the V&A Great Expectations Event on 21st October, a key finding was that one in 20 churches say they will definitely or probably not be used as a place of worship by 2030. Rural churches are most at risk, with about 900 in danger of closing in the next five years. The summary report is available here: [Our Research](#).

Historic England new research 'Who Cares? Saving Historic Churches by telling the right story'

Also launched on 21st October at the V&A, this research reveals the importance of how we speak about church buildings and how we explain who looks after them i.e. who is responsible for looking for them. Full results will be published on the [HE website shortly](#).

In November, Historic England published the 2025 HARR (Heritage at Risk Register). 5 churches from this Diocese were added to register between summer 2024 and summer 2025. [Find out more - HARR](#)

Hosting telecoms Infrastructure in churches – revision of advice

Parish Buying has revised the advice on the Church of England website over hosting telecoms infrastructure ([connectivity - legal considerations](#)). The revised page includes advice for churches and for advisers to churches which host mobile telecommunications infrastructure from one of the four operators (Vodafone, O2, EE and Three). The new Electronic Communications Code has changed the law and given operators greater rights than before. That is why the Church of England signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the operators to give churches better rights and to mitigate the effects of the new Code, including on income.

Churches which have existing agreements which are now coming to term are also affected. The Code affects the terms of any renewal agreement as well as affecting the right of the PCC to terminate. The MoU forms of agreement mitigate the effects of the new Code for these churches as well. In addition to details of the MoUs themselves, you will also find on the revised page a link to an [easy-to-read FAQ document](#).



TRAINING AND EVENTS



- **CBSN - Last zoom session of the year**

Rescheduled Session – Clocks, Bells, Organs: 3rd December, 7:30pm

Wall Paintings, Artefacts and Windows: 10th December, 7:30pm

For more details and the 2026 programme, which will be published soon, visit [Church Buildings Support Network](#).

- **A Church Full of Art:** celebrating local creativity and an Open Gardens event in Fen Drayton. [Details coming soon.](#)

- **National Volunteers' Week:** 1st - 7th June

- **Love Your Burial Ground & Churches Count on Nature:** 6th - 14th June

- **Ride and Stride:** 11th September

- **Heritage Open Days:** 11th - 20th 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 16th 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

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Holly Robinson - Historic Church Buildings Support Officer

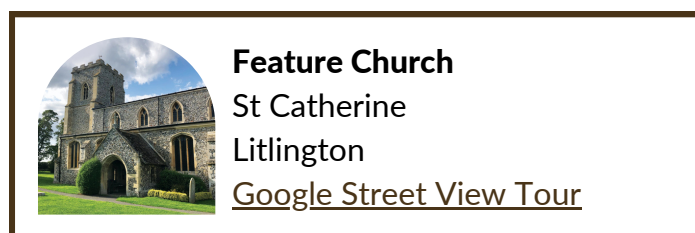
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Ely Cathedral © James Billings

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

