

March 2025



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

CHURCH HERITAGE

News from the
Church Buildings Team

St Mary, West Walton



St John the Baptist, Keyston



**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.

It's been a very busy start to the year with some important announcements:

- go straight to the [Grants section](#) for details on the changes to the LPWGS (VAT scheme) and the extended Churchcare grants
- see [Environment and NZC](#) for tips on how to complete the Energy Footprint Tool this year
- details and dates for the Church Buildings Network are under [Building Volunteers](#)
- new guidance on appointing an architect is under [Information and Guidance](#)

...or just read it all at your leisure.

New to this edition:

[DAC meeting and deadline dates.](#)

Please let us know any suggestions for content or improvements.



Take a Virtual Church Tour
St Wendreda
March
[Google Street View Tour](#)

GOOD NEWS

Barton Woodblock Floor Project

Thanks to volunteer support which involved cleaning hundreds of wood blocks, the floor at the west end of St Peter's church has been refurbished. Damp, rising through the old concrete subfloor, had caused rot in some 15% of the softwood blocks and much of the oak edging boards. Some 1300 old wood blocks were lifted, with most being re-used. 200 new blocks of slow-grown Douglas Fir were sourced, a third of which were undersigned by purchasing donors. The work was overseen by the church architect with key elements being completed by professionals, but the huge contribution of volunteers saved a lot of expense. As the volunteer project lead stated "it shows the value of focussed volunteers, if appropriate and where available. There is added satisfaction in parishioners working together for their community".

For more details about this and other projects see [Church Buildings Project Summaries](#) on the Diocese's website.



Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust Annual Conference



Belief, Liturgy and Structure
How doctrine and practice shaped churches and their
furnishings from the Anglo-Saxons to Charles III

Saturday 5th April 2025 Wolfson College

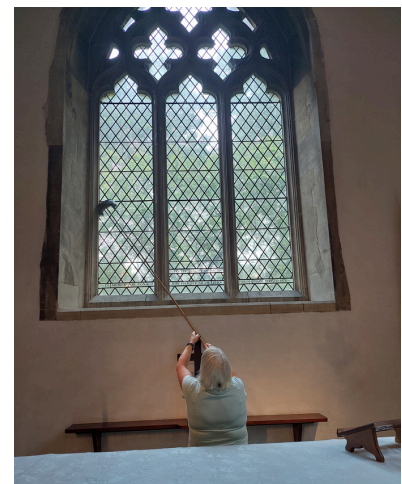
For more details visit the website: [CHCT Events](#).

SPRING CLEAN

Spring can be a great time for an annual tidy and clean of your church. Many of us wouldn't question using our domestic cleaning products in churches, but not only could we be doing more harm than good, we might actually be cleaning far more than we need to.

There is a difference between cleaning and 'conservation cleaning' and many people enjoy exploring conservation practices that will help them to safeguard the history and heritage of their church. Changing practices and attitudes can take time, but with an understanding of the basic principles you can gradually make small changes that will have long-lasting benefits.

You can find [links to helpful resources here](#).



MAINTENANCE MATTERS



Recommended Monthly Tasks from [SPAB's Faith in Maintenance Calendar](#).

March

- Check that eaves, gutters and downpipes have not been damaged by frost.
- Look for cracks and leaks in rainwater goods.
- Clear parapet and valley gutters of snow to prevent melt water rising above them and causing damp internally. Take care in icy conditions.

April

- Check the roofs for frost, snow and wind damage. Look for signs on the ground like broken bits of slates and tiles. Check for splits and cracks in areas of flat or sloping sheet roofing.
- Inspect lead flashings and mortar fillets at chimneys for signs of decay.
- Clear leaves and debris from gutters and rainwater pipes regularly. Cast iron gutters may also require repainting.

May

- Regularly clean out gully and drains to make sure water flows freely away from the building.
- Make sure that windows and ventilators are operable so that the building can be ventilated.
- Lubricate door and window ironmongery and check security of locks.
- Have the boiler serviced, bleed radiators and ensure that the frost thermostat is operational.
- Clear away any plant growth from around the base of the walls and in particular from the drainage channel.

Further information: [Building Maintenance](#)

RISK CALENDAR

Taken from [Ecclesiastical Insurance's Church Risk Calendar](#).

March - Ladders

If using ladders or stepladders check that they are right for the job, free from defects and used properly, being appropriately positioned and secured.

April - 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. *Remember, major works to trees need List B consent and felling may require a faculty.*

May - Events

Events are a great way to engage with the wider community and raise vital funds. Larger events or unusual fundraising activities can present additional risks. These may need to be properly managed to ensure everyone remains safe and your event is a success.



REMINDERS

Contact Details for Church Officers

Please remember to send the Diocese a list of your church officers each year. Without this, the contact details we have on our database may be incorrect, meaning information is not getting to the right people. This should be done at the APCM, but if any details change in the interim, it really helps to let us know. If the care of the church building is carried out by someone in a 'different' role, and they would prefer not to be added to the database, please ask them to contact Holly to receive information relating to church buildings.

Quinquennial Inspections

Please ensure that your Quinquennial Inspection (QI) is up to date, as well as your maintenance plan and logbook. Reminders are being sent out for QI's due this year; please contact Sam if you have any questions. More information: [Quinquennial Inspections](#).

For help appointing a new architect please see the [Information and Guidance](#) section.

Reduced VAT on Energy

Did you know, charities and non-profit organisations (including churches) are entitled to a [VAT reduction](#), down from 20% to 5%, on energy used for 'non-business' purposes, as well as exemption from the Climate Change Levy? Visit [this website](#) to find out more.

Get Ready for Ride and Stride

One of the biggest fundraising events for historic church buildings takes place on the **13th September**. It's a national event, but it is organised locally by County Historic Churches Trusts. There are numerous ways to take part to make it as inclusive as possible.

Find out more in [Cambridgeshire](#), [Norfolk](#) and [across the country](#).

You can also take part in [Heritage Open Days](#). **12th - 21st September**.

Faculty Consent and the OFS

If you have a problem or a question concerning the Online Faculty System (OFS), the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), and/or a Faculty or List A/B application, call 01353 652729 or email dac@elydiocese.org and the Church Buildings team will help.

DAC Meeting Dates		
Meeting Date	Papers Deadline	Target Feedback Date
20th March	3rd March	1st April
15th May	29th April	29th May
10th July	30th June	24th July
25th September	9th September	9th October
20th November	4th November	4th December

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Appointing an Architect

Whilst many PCCs keep the same architect for several years, it is considered good practice to review the appointment every 5 years. This is particularly important if you think you will need to apply for grants during the next 5 years, as it may be necessary to follow the procurement legislation that covers the use of public funds. To help you understand the process, whether your QI is due or you are considering a big reordering project, we have produced some guidance to help which can be found on the [Quinquennial Inspections](#) page of the website.

National Wall Paintings Survey

The [National Wall Paintings Survey](#) is a vast and internationally important archive, comprising records of all known British medieval wall paintings as well as extensive material on post-medieval schemes of painted decoration.

Set up by Professor David Park in the early 1980s, the Survey documents the nation's most lavish courtly and ecclesiastical murals alongside paintings in more humble contexts. Encompassing photographic records, conservation reports and previously unpublished art-historical research, as well as some 2,500 original paint samples, the archive constitutes an exceptional record of the condition of our wall paintings and forms an essential point of reference, both for art-historical scholarship and for those charged with the ongoing care of these works. The survey is rich in Ecclesiastical material, with over 30,000 entries for ecclesiastical paintings in England.

New Church Tourism Resource: 'Discover Churches: A Toolkit for Welcoming Visitors'

This is a resource designed to help volunteers extend a warm and meaningful welcome to visitors exploring church heritage, art, and community.

Launched at the Churches Visitor and Tourism Association Conference in October last year, this is a new, practical church tourism resource providing churches, chapels and meeting houses with everything they need to know about opening their building safely and providing a positive experience for their visitors.

[Discover Churches Toolkit](#).



All Saints, Broughton



All Saints and St Andrew, Kingston



BUILDING VOLUNTEERS

Church Buildings Support Network

The network started as a pilot in 2024 with a series of online meetings. This year it has been expanded to offer monthly online sessions alongside regular in person events. These events will all be FREE and open to everyone involved with a church to attend and will include:

- In person drop-in surgeries where the Diocese buildings team will be available to answer your questions about faculties, funding and community engagement.
- Heritage Skills sessions – a chance to learn basic heritage maintenance skills.
- Training and talks on interpretation, technology, and Net Zero.

The network was launched in 2024 by Holly Robinson, and is now being managed by Samuel Pedlar, our Church and Community Support Adviser. Samuel will be present at all meetings, so please contact him if you have any questions or want more information ([details on final page](#)).

You can see the full annual programme in the new [Church and Community](#) section on our website. Dates over the next few months:

Zoom Meetings 7.30 - 8.20pm

- Taking your project from concept to completion - Wednesday 19th March
- *Extra session: Update on Grants - Tuesday 8th April (morning 10am, evening 7:30pm)*
- Bats and Ecology - Wednesday 9th April
- Community Consultation/Engagement and Creating Surveys - Wednesday 7th May

In-person Meetings

- Fundraising, Grants and Community Consultation Surgery

Wednesday 2nd April, 2.00 - 5.00pm, St Lawrence, Bythorn

- Using the Environment in Mission

Wednesday 23rd April, 1.30 - 4.00pm, St Peter and St Paul, Alconbury

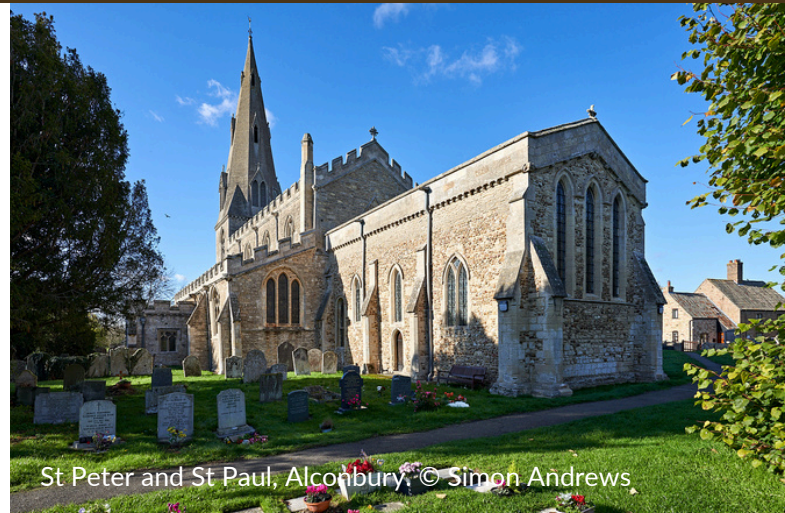
- Net Zero Surgery

Wednesday 21st May ,1.00 - 4.00pm , St James, Spaldwick

The Marsh Awards: Volunteers for Museum Learning Award

Each year The British Museum and the Marsh Charitable Trust celebrates the achievements and contribution of volunteers in museums, galleries **and heritage sites** all over the United Kingdom, through the Marsh Awards. The Awards recognise dedication, innovation and excellence in engaging with the public.

You can nominate an individual or small group of volunteers who have engaged with the public, enhancing their learning and enjoyment. Details will be announced soon; the closing date is usually in July. For more details visit [The Marsh Awards](#).



St Peter and St Paul, Alconbury, © Simon Andrews

GRANTS: NEWS

To find out more about the recent changes to grants, book onto one of our grant information and Q&A sessions - see the Building Volunteers section on the previous page.

Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme (LPWGS)

Earlier this year the Government announced that the LPWGS, which refunds VAT for repairs and alterations to listed places of worship, will continue for another year (until 31st March 2026).

There are some key changes, however, which have been made. From the 1st April 2025:

- The maximum claim for a building during the year will be capped at £25,000
- The total pot of money set aside for the scheme will be reduced by half.

What happens if the total pot is oversubscribed is currently unknown, as is the future of the scheme beyond March 2026. For more details on the scheme visit the [LPWGS website](#).

For projects which have started and already have grant offers in place, you are advised to contact your Grants Officer(s) to discuss what options there are to cover any shortfall.

Advice from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for existing applicants is to speak to your project contact at the Fund. For new applicants the advice is **NOT** to include the LPWGS as a source of income anymore, unless you are 100% sure you will be able to claim the amount before 31st March 2026.

If you previously wrote to your MP about the LPWGS, you may want to write again expressing appreciation for the extension to March 2026, together with your hope that despite pressure on government finances it will be extended again. Of course, if you are negatively affected by the cap, explain politely why - evidence on the impact of the cap will help make the case for the future shape of the scheme.

Expanded Conservation Grants Programme is Open for Applications

The new Cathedral & Church Buildings Department's expanded conservation grants programme is now open for applications. The conservation grants programme has been running since the 1950s to support the conservation of special features in church, including bells, clocks, organs, stained glass, wall paintings and monuments. All this remains, but now with additional funding to help more churches thanks to a five-year partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

The expanded programme allows the Department to make grants towards building repairs of up to £25,000 that are linked to the conservation of an object.

For further information, visit: [Conservation Grants | The Church of England](#)

Please note: these grants cannot be used as part of a larger repair project which is also funded by the NLHF.

NZ Grants

South Cambs DC: [Zero Carbon Communities Grant](#) - projects that reduce carbon emissions, or increase community engagement. [Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Grant](#) - towards installation of a public EV charger. [Community Chest Biodiversity Pot](#) - projects that create or improve habitats; plant native trees or hedgerows; install bat or bird boxes

Fenland DC : [Glassmoor Local Environment Fund](#) - for groups in Whittlesey area that improve the environment and enhance knowledge of an environmental issue. Current round deadline 8am March 31st.

Huntingdonshire DC: [Community Chest Grant Scheme](#) - projects that help to lower carbon emissions.

GRANTS: DEADLINES

Current Deadlines

March

- 1st The Joseph Rank Trust
- 1st Thalia WB Community Fund
- 4th National Churches Trust Large Grants
- 5th Mick George Community Fund
- 31st Church Buildings Council (Bells)
- 31st Simon Gibson
- 31st William and Jane Morris Fund

April

- 7th Church Buildings Council (Clocks)
- tbc The Worshipful Company of Glaziers
- 30th ON Organ Fund
- 30th National Churches Trust Small Grants

May

- 1st Cambridgeshire Community Foundation
- tbc The Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust
- 1st Congregational & General Charitable Trust
- 2nd The Leche Trust
- 7th Augean Landfill Fund
- 14th FCC Communities Foundation
- 23rd Norfolk Churches Trust
- 28th National Lottery Heritage Fund

Early June

- 1st Thalia WB Community Fund
- 2nd Church Buildings Council (Organs)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (Church Plate)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (C/yard structures)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (Brasses, metalwork)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (Monuments)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (Textiles)
- 9th Church Buildings Council (Wooden objects)



All Saints, Offord Cluny

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
- 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
- Paul Bassham Charitable Trust (Norfolk only)
- Round Tower Churches Society
- Schroder Charity 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](#)

[King Charles III Charitable Fund](#) now publishes deadlines for its small grants scheme as and when it is ready. Each round tends to be for a specific theme, the current being Social Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing in priority areas.

Keep an eye out during the year for a round focusing on heritage and churches - the deadline might be tight.

ENVIRONMENT AND NZC

Work out your church's carbon footprint to help care for God's creation

ENERGY FOOTPRINT TOOL



The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT)

The EFT is a relatively new annual submission on Parish Returns and is similar to the Return of Parish Finance and the Statistics For Mission Return. A church enters their energy usage (e.g. electricity, gas or oil) for the previous year, taken directly from their energy bills. So this year, data for January to December 2024 is being collected. We recommend that this is done at the same time as the Return of Parish Finance, as these same bills will be required for both submissions.

The deadline for submissions is 30 June, but we would ask churches to submit by 31 May, after which we will be contacting churches individually.

The energy needs to be entered as kWh (rather than pounds sterling), which might not be an immediately obvious number on the invoice. In the example bill shown below you can see the kWh highlighted in yellow. The kWh for each month (or for each invoice) will need to be added together, to obtain the total number of kWh for the whole of the year 2024.

Also, in the example bill you can see highlighted in green the Climate Change Levy (CCL) charge is set as £0 and highlighted in blue, VAT is set as 5% - this is the standard VAT Reduction and CCL Exemption for Charities and Non-Profits. If you are seeing a CCL charge or 20% VAT rate on your bills or for more information about CCL and VAT rates for churches, you can find out more about how to amend this [here](#).

If you submitted the Energy Footprint Tool last year, there have been a few changes to the questionnaire to reflect feedback and to help the Church of England better understand all the buildings we use. You will, for instance, notice that you don't need to enter work-related travel expenses this year.

New questions have also been added, to help find out about all the buildings in your parish. A new online [building scope checker tool](#) can help you to determine which of these buildings you need to report on and what information you need to provide for each.

When you have finished your survey, you will see a report which shows the total carbon emissions for your Parish and also the carbon emissions of each building for which you have reported energy usage data.

We also wanted to let you know that the list of approved green tariffs is changing and this has impacted whether the EFT will automatically offset some of your carbon emissions when you select a particular supplier. Look out for an extensive list of approved green energy suppliers later in the year - the Church of England has appointed specialist consultants to work on this. Also, the Parish Buying Energy Basket will be open in the Autumn and there will be lots of advice and resources about switching later this year.

Please contact Net Zero Carbon Officer, [Sacha Watson](#), if you have any questions.

Gas Consumption											
Serial Number	MPRN	Previous Date	Previous Read	Present Date	Present Read	Units	Correction Factor	Calorific Value	kWh	Unit Rate	Net Cost £
		30/09/2022	25506 (A)	31/10/2022	26167 (A)	661	1.02264	39.38065	7,394		
Daily Standing Charge	31		Days	@		daily					
AMR Charges	31		Days	@		£0.00p daily					£0.00
CCL Charge	0		kWh	@		£0.00000 per kWh					£0.00
Total Net											
VAT				@		5.00%					
Amount due for payment											

NB: Meter read types: A=Actual, C=Customer, E=Estimate

ENVIRONMENT AND NZC

Bat Evidence Surveys with the Bat Conservation Trust

Last summer, the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), on behalf of Natural England, successfully piloted the Bat Evidence Survey for Places of Worship in England. Following the achievements of this year, the BCT aim to deliver many more surveys in the summer of 2025.



The Bat Evidence Survey is an information gathering survey, aimed at Places of Worship which are curious about bats and would like to find out if their building houses them. This survey is not designed for Places of Worship with works planned or those experiencing issues with a bat roost – Places of Worship seeking a bat survey for these reasons need to contact the [National Bat Helpline](#) to enquire about a roost visit.

The Bat Evidence Survey can, however, support future bat surveys when your building has planned works, or any roost related issues. The more you know about bats in advance of any works or maintenance the better; planning and arranging works with the bats in mind prevents delays and extra costs.

Having bats also provides a unique engagement opportunity; numerous Places of Worship around the country regularly hold bat related events and activities, many of which have resulted in new church volunteers and new members of the congregation. If your Places of Worship is working towards [EcoChurch](#) status, this survey could also contribute to this.

If you know a Places of Worship that would be interested in having a Bat Evidence Survey this summer, please register your interest with the Bats in Churches Advisor, Hazel Tocock, at churches@bats.org.uk.

Love Your Burial Ground Week and Count on Nature 7th - 15th June

[Love your Burial Ground Week](#) is a celebratory week which has been running for many years.

Caring for God's Acre has been encouraging all who help to look after churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries to celebrate these fantastic places in the lovely month of June – in any way you choose. We've seen history talks, picnics, volunteering work parties and even abseiling teddy bears!

Churches Count on Nature is part of Love Your Burial Ground Week, focusing on the brilliant wildlife to be found in churchyards and chapel yards. It is a joint initiative promoted by Caring for God's Acre, the Church of England, the Church in Wales and A Rocha UK.

Churchyard Conservation Scheme

Find out how to encourage wildlife and create beautiful, tranquil spaces in your churchyard. Visit your county wildlife trust website to find more. [Cambridgeshire](#) [Norfolk](#)



Benefact Group's Movement for Good Awards Returns for 2025

The Movement for Good Awards have returned, providing awards of £1,000 and £5,000 to charities and good causes through random draws. This year two new boosted draws will be added to the programme.

Nominations are accepted between Jan 1st 2025 – 16 Dec 2025. Full details on the [Benefact Group website](#).

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 12th May.

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

James Ryder - Church Buildings Adviser

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Sam Reeder - DAC Administrator

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Holly Robinson - Historic Church Buildings Support Officer

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Samuel Pedlar - Church and Community Support Advisor

Telephone 07539 916607 or email Samuel.Pedlar@elydiocese.org

Sacha Watson - Net Zero Carbon Officer

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