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The quarterly church buildings newsletter for the Diocese of Coventry



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Winter Maintenance Tips

At this time of the year, it is important to check that your gutters and downpipes are empty of debris and flowing freely, and replace or refix any slipped or missing tiles. Water ingress from roofs and rainwater goods is the leading cause of defects and consequential damage, and can quickly make a small repair project into a big one, if left too long.

Unfortunately, the best time to inspect your rainwater goods is when it's raining so you can easily spot if water is going into places it shouldn't, or not draining away where it should.

Ensure your frost protection controls – if you have one – on your heating system are working adequately, and ensure any vulnerable pipes and tanks are insulated.

Finally, remove any large overhanging branches from around your building, and ensure your flagpole is securely attached.

And remember, if you don't feel safe doing any of these tasks, then get someone else in to do them for you. The SPAB's [maintenance calendar](#) is a useful, handy sheet to help you arrange your seasonal maintenance tasks.



Churches & the cost of living crisis

Tips to reduce your energy consumption...

Heating a church building can be notoriously difficult at the best of times, but as we slide further into the cost of living crisis, fueled by rising energy costs and inflation, the challenge is only going to get harder.

There are things that PCCs can be doing to ensure that they are using their energy as efficiently as possible over the coming months.

For example, simply by ensuring your radiators are bled, and your heat emitters are unobstructed, dust free, and insulated appropriately, you will maximise their heating potential. Reviewing your heating controls, thermostats, and frost settings could also make a difference.

Churchcare have produce a lot of guidance to support PCCs during this period, including [Practical suggestions to help parishes save energy and money](#), with further guidance specifically on heating on their [Heating your church this winter](#) webpage. Its also important to remember that, the more damp a church is, the colder it will feel, and the more difficult it will be to heat, so ensuring your building is in good condition and well maintained will also help to tackle your energy consumption.

Check that your rainwater goods are flowing freely, surface water is drainly properly, and those slipped slates are refixed, that split lead

'the more damp a church is, the colder it will feel, and the more difficult it will be to heat'

is patched, and that debris and vegetation up against the church walls is removed. You can find advice on church maintenance on our [website](#). It may be that you have a smaller suitable space in your church, which can be separately heated, that you could relocate worship to during particular cold snaps. Of course, sometimes the old ways can be the most effective - there are plenty of churches who are offering blankets or even hot water bottles to alleviate heating issues over the coming months. Sadly, the cost of living crisis is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. In future issues we will begin to look at longer term energy saving measures that require a bit more planning ahead, including energy efficient heating solutions.

People & Places >>>

A new extension for All Saint's Church, Burton Hastings

Back in October I had the opportunity to visit the new extension at All Saints Church, Burton Hastings, which has provided the church with an accessible WC, and improved facilities for serving refreshments.



The church dates back to the 14th century and is listed Grade II*. The village has no public house, shops or a village hall, meaning that the church is the only public building in the parish. It had no WC facilities, ability to safely serve refreshments, or even mains water. Back in 2015 the PCC suggested that an extension on the North side of the church,

accessed through a now blocked up North door would be the best way to meet their needs. Planning permission was granted in 2016, followed by Faculty consent in 2017. One of the biggest obstacles to the project was raising the funds to finance it. The PCC worked exceptionally hard on local fundraising and external grant applications and eventually succeeded, with the support of Andy

Duncan, the Church Building Funding Support Officer. The Coronavirus pandemic caused some delays to the construction but the extension was finally completed in early 2022. It was formally blessed and dedicated by Bishop John in June. Since it has been completed, the church has held numerous events, including a community quiz night, coffee morning, and it was



also the focus for the village Jubilee celebrations. Anne Dickinson, Churchwarden, reports that the whole community made suggestions for how the church could be used, including for art classes, film nights, photography clubs, and craft workshops amongst a whole host of other things. The church's peaceful location also ensures that it can remain a quiet place for people to recharge their batteries and connect with God. We look forward to seeing how their story progresses in the coming years! [Watch our video about it here.](#)



Energy Footprint Tool

The Energy Footprint Tool opens again to churches on the 1st January, 2023 – make sure you're ready!

The first step to reducing your carbon footprint is to find out what it actually is in the first place. The Church of England's [Energy Footprint Tool](#) is the easiest way to do this. By inputting the data from your energy bills, and adding in an estimated hours of usage, you can find out your carbon footprint then track the impact of any carbon reduction steps you are taking in the coming years. It opens up to all churches on the 1st January 2023, and will remain open until the 31st July. You can find out more here.

Last year, 61% churches in Coventry Diocese completed the Energy Footprint Tool, which was higher than a lot of other Dioceses. Lets see if we can do better in 2023!

Recent events >>>



Climate resilience workshop

On Wednesday 9th November, churchwardens, Environment Officers, architects and church volunteers from across the Dioceses of Coventry and Leicester met at St Martin's House for a workshop on the subject of climate resilience. The session was hosted by our Church Buildings Team, and led by Dr. Chris Walsh, a researcher from the Tyndall Institute of Climate Change currently on secondment to the Church of England.

Chris began by outlining the current expected rate of climate change and the impact we are already beginning to see in the UK in hotter and drier summers, more frequent intense rainy periods, and extreme storms. Rather than focusing on reducing our carbon emissions, the workshop sought to consider how these extreme weather conditions will (and are already) impacting on church buildings, and how we can best respond to that. Using case studies from across the country as examples, and through table discussion, we explored what practical steps we can take to adapt our buildings to alleviate this impact, and help our churches become more resilient to these pressures. We also considered how churches can support their local communities during changes in climate and extreme weather conditions, e.g. as cool spaces, or as refuges from flooding. It was a very informative and enjoyable afternoon! You can find out more about climate resilience and the impact on church buildings on the [Churchcare website.](#)



Meet the Church Buildings Team...

Over the last 12 months there have been a few staff changes in the Church Buildings Team. Claire left temporarily (then came back) , and our previous DAC Secretary Will Jones, moved on to pastures new. With the relaunch of our newsletter we thought there was no better time to reintroduce ourselves and what we do to you!



Claire

Claire Strachan is the **Church Buildings Project Officer**, and her main role is to support parishes with large (and small!) projects, and provide training and support to Churchwardens on all matters relating to the care and development of their church building. She also leads on the wider Diocesan strategic work on church buildings, and is one of two representatives for church buildings on the Diocesan Net Zero Steering Group. As of the 24th November, she has worked for the Church Buildings Team for a whopping 14 years!

Outside work, she enjoys hiking with her husband, two children and family doggo Attlee Cheeshound. She is also a self-confessed book worm, and novice embroiderer.

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Andy

Andy Duncan joined us in 2019 as our **Church Building Funding Support Officer**. His role is to signpost parishes towards relevant grant funders, and support parishes with their grant applications and fundraising campaigns. Andy comes with a huge wealth of knowledge and experience, having a background in regeneration, bid writing & project management in the charitable sector & local government. As such he has a lot of expertise in project development and management too.

When he's not being very helpful in the Diocesan office, he enjoys spending time with his family, particularly if it involves eating out and real ale pubs.

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Tim

Tim Latham is the **DAC Secretary**, having started at the Diocese as Assistant DAC Secretary in June 2019. His role is to support parishes with and oversee the processing of List B and Faculty applications. This involves organising and preparing for DAC meetings and liaising with various heritage bodies and the Diocesan Registry, to ensure that DAC gives accurate advice and decisions, sensitive to both significance and mission.

Outside work, Tim enjoys a wide range of sport, visiting National Trust properties and other places of historic interest, reading, gaming and spending time with his wife and wider family.

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Mark

After nearly 7 years of working in various ministry roles, Mark Seabourne took an unexpected detour to the DAC in July, as our new **Assistant DAC Secretary**, and we're so pleased he did! His main role is to support Tim with Faculty and List B applications and enquiries, prepare for DAC meetings and liaise with DAC members, processing QI reports, and being pretty much all round helpful and awesome.

In his own time, his faith in Jesus is pivotal and he loves spending time with his wife and two young sons who keep them on their toes! Other interests include football, music, films, creative writing and his guilty pleasure... WWE wrestling!

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Church Buildings Team website: <https://coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/church-buildings-dac/>

Diocesan Environment Group: <https://coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/deg/>

Churchcare: www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare