

archdeacons'

visitation news

2020 - issue 15

Dear Churchwardens

'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.'

These words from the Old Testament Book of Jeremiah were originally written to God's people after Jerusalem had been captured and they had been taken away into exile in Babylon. It was a time of devastating national crisis. But God was reminding his people that he is faithful in all circumstances and that he has wonderful plans for his people and his world. The greatest sign of that was when he raised Jesus from the dead at the first Easter. But it is also true for us every day.

It has been really important to hold on to this truth over the last few months in the unprecedented circumstances we have all faced. In all the anxiety, disorientation and sadness caused by the pandemic, God has still been at work, as he has promised he always will be. And the ways that parishes across the diocese have responded in mission and ministry have been truly wonderful. Whether it has been local initiatives to help the vulnerable in our communities, rapid upskilling to provide

new online worship, or pastoral care by phone, parishes have stepped up and churchwardens have been at the heart of this.

In the middle of this crisis, we have had the great news of the appointment of Mark Tanner as the new Bishop of Chester. The announcement of Bishop Mark's appointment, and the confirmation of his election, have of course had to take place online. But in these events and in other ways in which Bishop Mark has begun to meet virtually with groups from across the diocese, there has been a real sense of expectation and excitement about all that God has planned for us, now and in the future. Please do pray for Bishop Mark and Lindsay as they move to Chester, at the start of this new chapter in our common life in the service of Jesus Christ.

Thanks to Ecclesiastical for providing this publication free to you all and we hope that what you read here will help you in your calling as Churchwardens.



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**Ecclesiastical**

Chester Diocesan Board of Education

Church schools have a vital role in the mission God has entrusted to us. Jesus said, "I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness."



(L – R) Charlotte Somers, Simon Geddes, Chris Penn, Sue Noakes & Sandra Reynolds

Inspired by those words, church schools aim to provide an environment which is deeply Christian, serving the common good, to enable children and young people to flourish. This article gives a very brief introduction to the Board of Education, which works with our schools.

Chester Diocesan Board of Education is a separate company to the Diocesan Board of Finance and is thus constituted and resourced separately. The Board of Education has a number of members appointed by Diocesan Synod with others co-opted on to the Board for their skills and experience. The Board of Education's work and staff are funded through its own investments and not the Parish Share. The Board's officers are tasked by the Board to support its 115 schools across ten local authorities by providing educational, pastoral, spiritual and practical guidance. This is done through published guidance, training and conferences, cluster groups and personal contact with schools and school leaders.

The team is led by Chris Penn who is Diocesan Director of Education, overseeing the work of the Board across all areas. Chris's PA and administrator for the team is Charlotte Somers, who enables the smooth running of the team's many events. Sue Noakes is Deputy Director of Education with a particular focus on supporting schools in the areas of admissions, governance and other matters. She also visits every new member of the clergy who has a church school in their parish to discuss



how the church and school can support one another. Mark Whitehill is the Schools Effectiveness Officer providing support for schools with standards, inspection and curriculum development. Jen McIlveen is the Christian Character and CPD Officer with a particular focus on supporting schools as they develop their distinctive church school vision, SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) and the training of current and future church school leaders. Simon Geddes is the Finance and Buildings Officer, leading the voluntary-aided school capital programme but also providing support for trustees of church school land

if it is needed. Often the church school land trustees are the vicar and Churchwardens, but very rarely does this require any action only if land is to be transferred or the school converts into an academy. Sandra Jones as Schools Assets Administrator supports Simon in the management of the capital programme and central finance functions. Sandra Reynolds is the Schools Administrative Assistant part time for the Board of Education as well as working on reception at Church House. Sandra has a particular role in the appointment of foundation governors and liaises with clergy and PCCs in order to secure skilled and faithful congregation members to undertake church school governance as part of their Christian service.

Of course, the last few months have brought unprecedented challenges for our schools. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the team has continued to support its schools remotely as schools have been open for children of key workers and have been providing materials for children to learn from home. The team has kept in contact with each of its schools to ensure that they feel well supported and that the staff and children are coping with the very difficult situation they find themselves in, and as they have been looking towards fuller re-opening in the autumn term. Capital projects have continued and foundation governors are still being appointed as governors meet remotely. The support of the local parish as well as the DBE and wider diocese has very much been appreciated by our church schools and we hope that you can continue to serve them and support them as they look beyond this current crisis.

We would really encourage you to consider which members of your congregation might be able to make a difference to the lives of children and young people through governance of a church school, and encourage them to apply. We are always looking for foundation governors and would welcome applications from across the diocese, especially from those parishes that do not have a church school but could support our schools in other areas. Governance is vital in ensuring our children gain an effective and distinctive education rooted in the Church of England.



Mark Whitehill
Schools Effectiveness
Officer



Jen McIlveen
Christian Character
and CPD Officer

We have donated more than £325,000 to churches around the UK

Trust130 is a special promotion to increase our support to local churches and their communities. It was initially introduced as a one-off giving programme in 2017 to celebrate and thank our church customers for trusting us over the previous 130 years.



Raise money for your church with a Trust130 donation – now extended until 31 December 2020

Trust130 is very simple... For every new direct home insurance policy taken out with Ecclesiastical, we offer to donate £130¹ to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.

A donation of £130 may not sound much, but churches and congregations have used the donations to fund all sorts of things. From the restoration of church artworks to new sound systems, from family BBQ and fun days to new chairs to replace pews, and from structural repairs to new noticeboards and kitchen equipment, the money really does make a big difference.

There is no limit to the number of donations you can receive, so start spreading the word.

If you would like some posters or postcards to help you promote this locally, please don't hesitate to contact us on **0800 783 0130**.

If you or your church family would like to know more, or to get a quote, simply call us on **0800 783 0130** quoting **AVNEWS20** or visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Has your church benefited from one of our Trust130 donations? We'd love to hear how the money has helped your church. Please send your story to: trust130@ecclesiastical.com

¹ Subject to terms and conditions – please visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130



Contains promotional material

Do you need financial advice you can trust?

We know how important having reliable guidance about your finances can be. That's why our Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Service (EFAS) provides expert, unbiased, independent financial advice for clergy, church people and PCCs including:

- fully-independent pension and retirement planning advice about the clergy pension, other church pension schemes and all other plans and schemes you or your partner have from previous employers or insurance companies across the market
- saving and investing for your future (including ethical investments and PCC funds)
- life assurance and protection for you and your family
- mortgage advice and specialist advice for those living in tied accommodation who want to buy a home, or re-mortgage.

To find out more about the advice we can offer, contact our team on

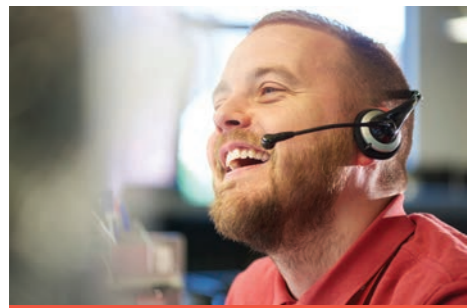
0800 107 0190 or email: getadvice@ecclesiastical.com

Please note: the value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Your capital is at risk. Your home may be at risk if you do not keep up the repayments on any mortgage secured on it.

Taking a sabbatical in 2021?

Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards provide financial support for members of the clergy taking extended study leave, and we are now accepting applications for sabbaticals taking place in 2021. You can find out more about the Awards, check the eligibility criteria and apply on our website. Find out more: www.ecclesiastical.com/mba





Risk Advice Line

We know that managing the risks associated with church premises can be a demanding responsibility. That's why we offer a Risk Management Advice Line. Whenever you need information about managing risk, and can't find what you are looking for on our website, our experts are here to help.

We also have a preferred supplier network of market leaders in their chosen fields offering a range of risk management products and services available at preferential rates.

Call our Risk Management Advice Line **0345 600 7531** or email us at: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com.

Please have your policy number to hand when you call. The line is open from 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays.

Information at your fingertips

More than ever, it's important to feel informed. Please also feel reassured that we continue to be here for you.

We are updating our website regularly with the latest **COVID-19** advice. The website is also a fantastic source of information from safety to security and grants to outreach, plus our products and services.

Find out more at: www.ecclesiastical.com/church

For our latest **COVID-19** statement please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church/coronavirus



Parish **Pixels**
Regional winners

Show your support!

The first stage of our Parish Pixels competition is complete.

Congratulations to our nine Regional winners.

Now our judges would like your help in deciding the overall National winner. Please 'show your support' for your favourite entry by voting online at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/parishpixels

Vote now



1 Scotland

St Cuthbert's: Like the ice appears to break the window, we are a beautiful church in a broken world doing our best to live as Jesus commanded.

2 North East

St Stephen's C of E Church: We are a church family that is open and active every day to support our local community through the beautiful chaos of life and help people to discover the love and grace of God.

3 North West

Freedom Church: We may not have our own church building and we may live in an area of deprivation, but we believe that it doesn't matter where you meet to worship God, as long as you meet to worship God.

4 East Midlands

St Stephen's: We will not be beaten by metal thieves!

5 West Midlands

St Luke's: The St Luke's family has been sparkling like a diamond at the centre of the community of Kingstanding for over 80 years, shining out the love of God for all to see.

6 Wales

St Teilo's: A place for quiet reflection.

7 Eastern

St Paul's: We are open every day of the week, welcoming all, offering space, time and hospitality to our local community and beyond.

8 South East

Parish Church of St Stephen: Inspired by the angels, our choir fills our beautiful building with uplifting music to worship the Lord and feed our souls.

9 South West

All Hallows: We celebrate our faith joyfully.



Our Movement for Good awards



Ecclesiastical has always believed in supporting the causes that can make a positive difference to people's lives.

That's why we work closely with the communities we serve to tackle the issues that are important to them.

We recently launched our Movement for Good awards for 2020 – a programme designed to give £1 million to charities.¹

These awards are a way of recognising and supporting the efforts of these dedicated men and women – people who devote their energies to changing people's lives for the better.

We've opened up the awards to exempt charities so are delighted that churches can be nominated for a donation – don't forget to tick the exempt box on the registration form.

More details about the awards programme can be found on our website at: www.ecclesiastical.com/movement-for-good

¹ Please note, anyone can nominate but only eligible charities can win an award. Go to the website address above to view the full Terms and Conditions.



Do we have up-to-date contact details for you?

If you need to update us on changes to names, email addresses, phone numbers and changes to PCC members, you can do this by calling our team on **0345 777 3322**



Funeral plans

A funeral plan from Ecclesiastical is an ideal way to make financial provision for your funeral, as well as reducing the worry for your loved ones at a difficult time. You can pre-plan your funeral in as much or as little detail as you like. Making your funeral wishes known in advance and providing for the cost makes sound financial sense.

Please contact us for your **FREE information pack** or visit www.funeralplans.co.uk to find your nearest funeral director.

Call: 0800 055 6503
Email: info@epsfunerals.com



Car insurance tailored for the clergy

Ecclesiastical Insurance Services offers extra tailored motor insurance to the clergy, with benefits including business use (relating to the church), no direct charges, no administration fees for changes to the policy, and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.

Our Clergy Motor Insurance isn't available through price comparison sites or online, because we think it's important to speak to you so we understand your specific needs. Give us a call today to find out more.

Call: 0345 450 9396
www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance

Another million pounds to support church youth work

Another million pounds is being made available by Allchurches Trust – owners of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group – to support churches and Christian organisations to connect with young people.



The latest round of grants took the total amount of Growing Lives funding awarded by Allchurches Trust to over £1.3 million pounds, benefiting more

than 140 projects. St Margaret's Church in Aspley, Nottingham, has a £7,000 Growing Lives grant to develop its 'Bee family' programme – an after school community group aimed at young families who live on the local estates.

With demand for grants still high, Allchurches has decided to continue the Growing Lives programme into 2020, making another million pounds available.

Allchurches Trust chairman, Tim Carroll, said: "Our Growing Lives grants programme supports a wide range of projects with young people at their heart. It's always inspiring to read about the innovative ways in which the organisations we fund are working together to meet local need and realise the power of young people to strengthen community."

Under Growing Lives, grants of up to £25,000 are available and the amount depends upon the cost of the project and the level of need in the community, ranging from 10% of project cost to 80%. Churches can apply for a grant under this programme even if they have received funding from Allchurches in the last two years, as long as it is for a different project. The programme is also open to cathedrals.

You can find out more at:
www.allchurches.co.uk/growinglives



St Margaret's Church in Aspley, received a

£7,000

grant to develop its 'Bee family' programme...



Keeping in touch

More than ever, it's important to keep in touch. We hope that you, your church and community are well and finding new ways to stay connected.

We send updates and useful advice by email once a month. If you or anyone else in your church would like to be added to the list, please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/signup. If you no longer wish to receive them, you can unsubscribe at any time.



Everyday Faith

Everyday Faith is a national initiative to encourage Christians in their everyday discipleship...

The Diocese of Chester has been quick off the mark in getting involved. We want to encourage a clearer sense of Christian identity in everyday life, individually and collectively; increased confidence among Christians to express everyday faith; and we want to encourage the church when it is gathered on a Sunday to resource everyday faith more effectively. A core team in the diocese, led by Archdeacon Mike, has been taking this work forward.

In last year's Archdeacons' Visitation News, we told you that a number of parishes

across the diocese were taking part in a pilot exercise, to trial different resources and approaches to see what worked well in fostering everyday faith in congregations. That pilot exercise is now complete, and the results have been very encouraging. For example, in a survey conducted at the end of the pilot, we found that people in these parishes had noticed that preaching, worship and prayer in their churches had all become more helpful in boosting their confidence in following Jesus in daily life. They also shared overwhelmingly

that during the period of the pilot exercise they had become more confident that God was using them in the places they spent most of their time; more confident in sharing their faith with others; and clearer about how their church helped them to live with purpose in the world.

We were just about to follow this up more widely in the diocese, but the pandemic has interrupted plans to arrange meetings in deaneries and parishes on the ground as we had hoped. We are aiming to do that as soon as circumstances allow. Meanwhile, we have been trying to get the message out virtually. One of the 'Back to Better' webinars featured on the Diocese of Chester website is about everyday faith. We have also been recording a series of podcasts, under the Chesterbox banner, highlighting peoples' stories of everyday faith during the pandemic – again, you can find these via the website.



Growing Faith

Growing Faith is a call from the national church to get us all thinking more urgently and creatively about how children and young people are nurtured in the Christian faith.

In particular, it stresses the importance of the ways in which churches, schools and households can work together in this vital area. Recent research showed that 76% of practising Christians came to faith under the age of 18, so early years are crucial.

The Growing Faith report, which was welcomed last year by General Synod, set out a challenging agenda:

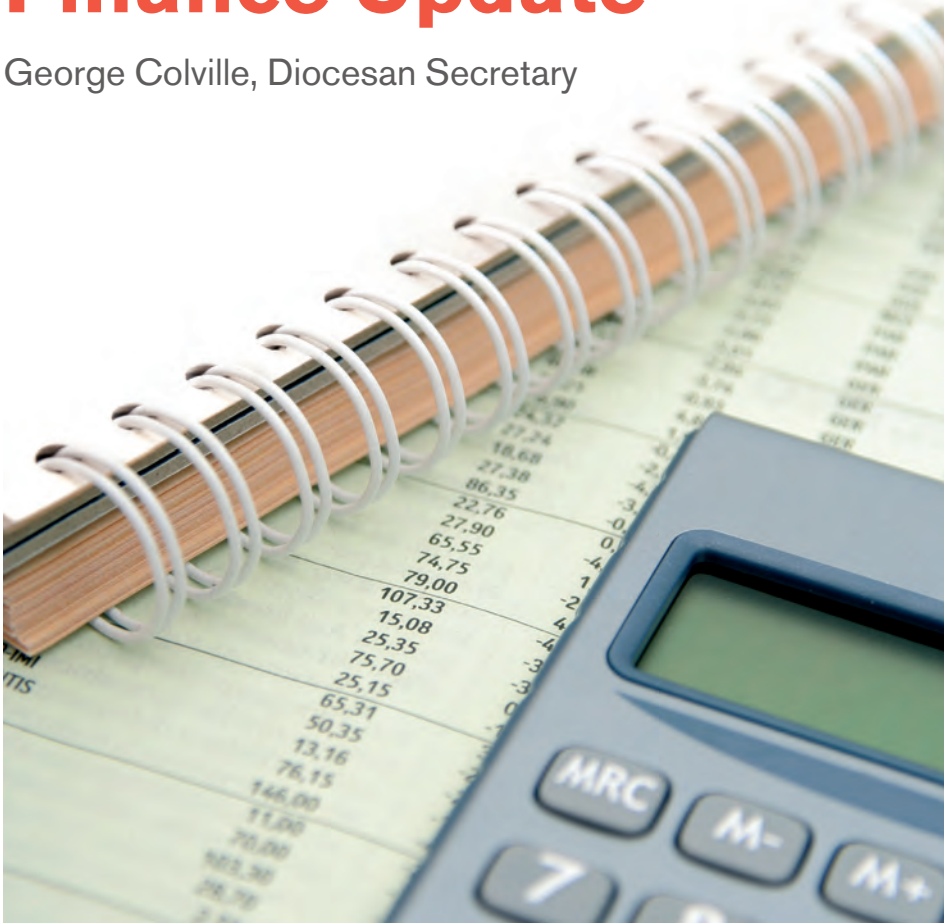
- Every parish creating expressions of church where children, young people and households are actively involved, growing spiritually and have their voices heard.
- 100% of Anglican parents recognising the importance of sharing faith with their children and actively engaging in this responsibility.
- Clergy and lay ministers who are confident in supporting households in sharing faith at home.
- Congregations which nurture and support the faith of children and young people.
- Churches which serve and are served by their local school communities, actively building strong relationships between church, schools and households.
- Children and young people who are confident to share their faith with their peers and families.

Here in the diocese, a team led by Archdeacon Mike, from across different departments in Church House, has begun to think about how we might respond to the challenge. Do look out for a number of initiatives, including a new forum called Youth Voice, giving young people a real say in the life of our diocese, and a series of online podcasts and webinars. During the lockdown, the importance of parents and children talking about faith has been highlighted particularly, and the **Faith@Home** resources produced by the Church of England nationally are really helpful.

Maybe your PCC could discuss how effectively the church is engaging with local schools, and helping Christian parents in nurturing children in the faith; how well children and young people are included in worship and in church decision-making; and what sort of resources your church would find helpful in mission among younger generations.

Finance Update

George Colville, Diocesan Secretary



by delayed housing expenditure. We think a deficit of around £1.3m might be the outcome. We are also very aware that 2021 may prove just as challenging. An immediate return to something like normal will take time and it is likely that many parishes will continue to be impacted in a major way through 2021. The level of expected deficits in 2020 and probably also 2021, together with grants made to parishes represent a significant chunk of the DBF reserves that we expect to use. We are, however, in a much more stable position than many other dioceses.

Despite the continuing uncertainty and undoubted financial challenges ahead, there is much to look forward to over the coming year: Bishop Mark starting his ministry in the diocese, the reopening of our churches, using our newly learned skills, exciting new possibilities, and a chance to spread the knowledge of the love of Jesus in a world so in need of it. We can approach these with confidence in the Lord. As a result of efforts by the people and parishes of the diocese, we are getting through this, and we do not need to take drastic steps in diocesan finance to stabilise in ways that might impact on mission. That is something to thank God for. My continuing prayers are with you all.

I am writing this at the beginning of August as the holiday period is starting. It seems such a long time since church buildings around the diocese and Church House in Daresbury closed in mid-March, as the potential scale of the pandemic was just starting to become clear. We wrote a letter to all parishes about finance at that point. Now, nearly five months on, the parishes have responded well and the impact on diocesan finances, although large, seems manageable. We are very conscious that this effort will have had a significant impact on parish finances in many places. We give thanks to God for the response financially, for the maintenance of good communication between treasurers and finance staff at Church House, and for the patience and

care many of you have shown to us as we work together in God's mission across the diocese.

The response so far enabled us in June to send every parish £2,000 (£0.5m across the Diocese) to help with mission, and it has been a blessing to hear back from people about this.

At present, parish share is down around 10% and drifting down very slowly with only a few extra parishes each month experiencing difficulties. For a full year this would amount to about £1.2 million. For the nine months to the year-end we therefore expect perhaps an additional deficit of around £1 million. We anticipate at present that reduced fees and other income will be broadly compensated for



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