



Diocese of Chester

# archdeacons' visitation news

## Dear Churchwardens

Can you remember parents and grandparents instilling in you the importance of saying thank you? Perhaps you can remember being made to write thank you notes to aunts and uncles you barely knew, or being cajoled, 'So what do you say?' when a gift was given. It's a good lesson to learn – 'give thanks in all circumstances', wrote St Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. So, let's start there – thank you to all of you who have offered yourselves this year as Churchwardens – it is a wonderful thing you do. Thank you to Ecclesiastical Insurance for sponsoring this Archdeacon's News and thank you to everyone who contributes to making the Archdeacon's lot a generally happy one. Maybe to mention Laura and Deb, our PAs, and an honourable mention to Pat who retired this year – thank you.

Thankfulness is a principle that should be hard wired into the people of God. Jesus gave one of the clearest reminders to people of the importance of gratitude when he healed ten lepers and then watched only one come back to say thank you to God for the healing. 'Where are the other nine?' he said – rather exasperated. 'Was no one found to give praise to God except this foreigner?' – he, it turned out, was a Samaritan – the least likely to say thank you.

We know in our heads that we should be more grateful for all we have. The creation we enjoy is especially a gift of immense generosity that we should care for better – you can read more about that in this edition of the Archdeacons' News. But more than that, gratitude is about who we are supposed to be.

Too often we see the problems and the challenges and take our eyes from the wonderful world around us and the generosity of God. There shouldn't be sour-faced Christians – it's all gift; we have no absolute right to health, wealth and happiness but sometimes you'd think we do the way many people moan about their lot.

That shouldn't diminish the fact that there are unquestioned challenges around. As Churchwardens, many of you will be anxious and worried about the building, income, volunteers and relationships in your church. But maybe try and say thank you first. Thank you for the gifts we have rather than fixate about the absence of resources; say thank you for the friendships we enjoy instead of bemoaning the difficult folk; give thanks for people that do rather than moan about those that don't; and thank God especially for Jesus.

Jesus turned to the leper that came back and said, 'Rise and go, your faith has made you well.' Maybe we'd all sense being healed and made whole if we truly could find the way to say thank you in all circumstances.



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## Churchwarden Training

**15 July** – For New Churchwardens  
Church House

**14 October** – For All Churchwardens  
St John's Church Hall, Lostock Gralam

Details of how to book will be on the Diocesan website and in the E-Bulletin nearer the time

**Booking is essential for catering purposes.**

Any questions, please contact **Laura Howard** 01928 718834 ext 234 or **Deb Toole** 01928 718834 ext 221

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## We would love to welcome you to Foxhill



For those of you who don't know us, we are Lucy and David Brewster and we recently joined the team at Foxhill – the Diocesan Retreat House – Lucy as Director and David as Chaplain. We moved here in September and it has been a big change for us both. Lucy was previously curate in Partington and Carrington,

and David was vicar of St Matthew's, Edgeley and Cheadle Heath. We've swapped the sound of planes for the cries of kestrels and owls, and urban streets for country lanes.

Foxhill, a beautiful Victorian house set in 70 acres of Cheshire countryside two miles out of Frodsham, is a central resource for prayer and discipleship in the Diocese. As well as being a space used by the Diocese for training and retreats, we love to welcome parish groups on church weekends away, PCC visioning days, and individuals on day retreats – any way in which we can support the local church in mission and discipleship.

In addition, we also run our own programme of residential and day retreats – seeking to cater for all personalities – those who love nothing more than to sit on their own in silence as well as those who need to talk or be active in some other way. You can come on your own or join together with friends – however you come you can expect a warm, welcoming atmosphere, you'll be surrounded by prayer, and offered great food.

When you take a look at our programme for Residential Retreats, which includes amongst other things a singing retreat, contemplative photography, a retreat for those who are not internal processors, and a silent retreat, you'll see that we have introduced an early bird discount. When you book over three months before the start of the retreat you will receive a 10% discount when booking directly through Foxhill by BACS payment, cheque or cash. If you book on four of our Encounter Days (day retreats which include lunch and refreshments), you will receive a fifth free, again when booking directly through Foxhill by BACS payment, cheque or cash.

Our prayer is that we will be a place of rest and refreshment, love and acceptance, encouragement and inspiration to support all of you in the discipleship and ministry to which God has called you. We really look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to this beautiful place.

## Buildings for Mission



Sheena Wilson

Sheena Wilson has joined the team at Church House where she began her role as Buildings for Mission Advisor, working in the Outreach Team, in August last year. She moved to the Wirral two and a half years ago. She is married with two sons.

Before starting to work for the Diocese of Chester, Sheena worked for 35 years as Civil Engineer and then

Infrastructure Asset Manager. Five years ago, she was licensed as a Lay Reader in the Diocese of St Albans and is currently part of the Ministry team at St John the Baptist, Great Meols.

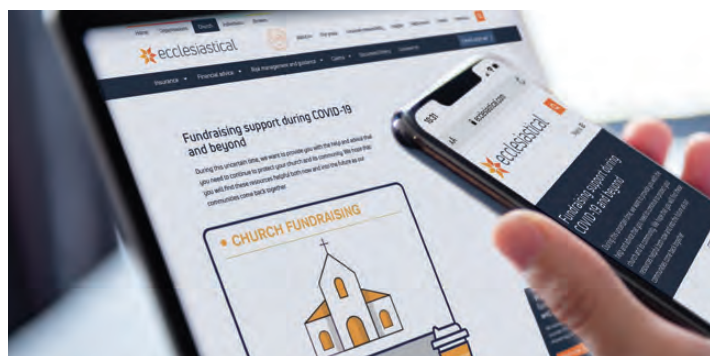
In these challenging times where money is tight, both for running and maintaining our beautiful buildings, Sheena is very keen to help parishes to review how they are using their church spaces for mission and outreach. As well as being able to assist with finding funding streams for repairs and improvements, she is also very happy to assist with technical building enquires.

Please get in contact with Sheena for help and advice on all things church buildings. From facilitating PCC discussions on church layouts and missional use to helping secure grant funding and providing technical support with repair and development projects.

Sheena says, *"It has never been a more important time for our church buildings to provide a warm and safe haven for our communities, while striving for them to continue to be engaging places of worship, despite the ever-increasing costs of maintaining them."*







## Fundraising hub to support your church

Fundraising has always been vital for churches, from the traditional, well-loved flower festivals and cake sales to the world of digital fundraising opportunities that the internet has opened up. But it can be daunting to know where to start, so Ecclesiastical's easy-to-use online fundraising hub is here to help with great ideas and simple advice.

Drawing on the advice of experts and our own 135 years' experience in working with churches, we've pulled together a range of top tips to help you boost existing income streams and develop new ones. There's help with researching sources of funding and writing professional grant applications that can make all the difference to the answer you receive. There are great video webinars with fundraising specialists offering their insights into key fundraising issues.

Other guidance includes fundraising in less affluent areas, fundraising in rural parishes, how to build a fundraising team and more to keep your congregation and the wider community informed and engaged.

**There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at [www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising)**

## Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good giving programme is back with awards of £1,000 to give to charities helping those in need. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, and together they are giving away over **£1 million** to charities in the 2023 Movement for Good Awards.

### £1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your favourite charity or church at any time for the £1,000 draw.
- It's one nomination per charity, per person, so if you have more than one favourite, get them in the running today!
- There are three £1,000 draws this year giving away between £120,000 and £150,000 in each.
- Once you've nominated, share your nomination and get your network to support too.

**Get nominating and find out more at [www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical](http://www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical)**

### Did you know?

**In 2022, 15 churches each won a £1,000 grant.**

There were thousands of nominations for these churches. The more nominations received, the greater their chance of winning.



Contains promotional material



# Rebuilding the historic Church of the Ascension in Salford

**In February 2017, a fire broke out at the Grade-II listed Church of the Ascension in Lower Broughton, Salford, Greater Manchester. Six crews from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service battled for hours to contain the blaze, which ultimately devastated the building.**



Many members of the local community gathered outside the church building to survey the damage, some reduced to tears. Much used and loved by young and old, the building plays an important role in both spiritual and social terms as an inclusive community space accessible to all. The church had recently undergone a £250,000 restoration project which people in the community had helped to fund.

Immediately following the fire, Ecclesiastical carefully assembled the right team of experts to attend the site as soon as the fire service authorised it.

Repair work began in October 2018 with teams of carefully selected experts appointed to complete the works. Phase one included reinstatement of the structural elements of the building,



such as columns, roof structures and slate coverings; stone and brick repairs; stained glass window and window guard replacements; and ceiling finishes.

Phase two began in September 2021, focusing on preserving the historical features of the church. As part of the restoration, Ecclesiastical worked with customers to build in modernisations to enable them to make the space better serve the requirements of today's use.

Restoration of the building was completed by the end of September 2022.

In November 2022, the church and community came together to mark the completion of the £5m restoration project with a rededication ceremony.

**Read the story in full and see more pictures at**  
[www.ecclesiastical.com/church-of-the-ascension](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/church-of-the-ascension)

// It has been a long five and a half years since the fire... we can now look forward to the future with a beautifully restored church which is fit for the 21st century. //

**Shirley Kehoe**, PCC Secretary at the Church of the Ascension



## Take our advice – for a brighter future

Ecclesiastical is well-known as a leading insurer of churches and other heritage buildings. But many people aren't aware that we also have a stand-alone financial advice arm here to help you make the most of your money.

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



You don't have to be an insurance customer to use the service – we're happy to help anyone – but we obviously have specialist knowledge of the church sector, as IFA Kieran Harper explains.

'I've been in the industry for seventeen years and with Ecclesiastical for all but two of those,' said Kieran, who's based in our Gloucester office. 'When it comes to

providing regulated financial advice to the clergy and the wider church community, that experience helps.

'Many of our customers are clergy – we understand their pension scheme, we know about the issues with living in tied accommodation such as vicarages – so when it comes to retirement planning, we're already ahead of the game. We also have a deep understanding of ethical and sustainable investing – as you would expect of a company with such strong links to the church – and this area is getting ever more popular with a lot of our customers.'

Please get in touch to find out how Kieran and his colleagues could help you.



0800 107 0190



[getadvice@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:getadvice@ecclesiastical.com)



[www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice)

## Have you signed up for Ecclesiastical's monthly e-news?



This monthly email is full of tips and information for all Ecclesiastical's church customers and anyone in your church community. Signing up is easy 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 the sign-up link to anyone you think would like it.

Sign up at [www.ecclesiastical.com/signup](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/signup)

## Support for your 2024 sabbatical

### Are you planning on taking a sabbatical in 2024?

Did you know that there may be support available for you through Ministry Bursary Awards? 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 2024.

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community.

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards have supported over 1,400 members of the clergy to finance a wide range of extended leave projects and plans. The application window runs between April and September. Judging will take place in November 2023, with the awards made in December 2023.

**If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit [www.ecclesiastical.com/mba](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/mba)**



## Have you visited the Ecclesiastical website recently?

It's full of information to help you run your church, such as the **Made Simple Guides**, which cover these key topics:

- Church insurance made simple
- Administering your church insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Community outreach
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises

You will also find information about church, home, commercial and legal insurance and how to make a claim. **Explore the website at [www.ecclesiastical.com/church](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/church)**



# Protect your home and support your church with £130 donation



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its available profits to good causes, one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical do this is through the 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

In the **Parish of Harpenden**, the donation will be used to support Cornelia's Coffee Shop, which is a community resource that enables them to engage with local people, offering fellowship and raising funds for charity.

It needs some new equipment – not least, a new freezer – and the donation will help in this general regard. It does great work to benefit the community and other great causes. One of our recent events at Cornelia's was to help our local Ukrainian arrivals.

**Kevin Featherstone**, Parish Warden

**St Mary's Church, Wythall**, used their donations to offer a weekly hot meal to families struggling with the increase in the cost of living.

This happens directly after school and includes activities for children and a Bible story or video. £130 will pay for meals for about 20 families, funding the food for about two weeks, which is a great boost financially, but also to the step of faith which this venture is.

**Pam Miller**, Treasurer

## Award-winning home insurance



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.

Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in spring 2023 for home insurance for a record 17th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status.<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastical was also voted the best home insurance provider in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2022.<sup>3</sup>

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit [www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130)

Call us for a home insurance quote on **0345 777 3322** and mention code **TRUSTPA**.

<sup>1</sup> Terms and conditions apply. <sup>2</sup> [www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance](http://www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance) <sup>3</sup> [www.thetimes.co.uk/money-mentor/article/times-money-mentor-awards-2022-winners](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/money-mentor/article/times-money-mentor-awards-2022-winners)



## 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.<sup>1</sup>



**0345 450 9396**



[www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance)

<sup>1</sup> Subject to terms and conditions.



## Funeral planning

Ecclesiastical can help you make financial provision for your funeral, reducing the worry for your family and ensuring your wishes are provided for. Terms and conditions apply.



**0800 055 6503**



[info@epsfunerals.com](mailto:info@epsfunerals.com)



[www.funeralplans.co.uk](http://www.funeralplans.co.uk)



## How to respond to the environmental crisis

It is impossible to miss the issues around the global environment crisis. As Christians, we have a particular theological view about the gift of creation and our responsibility to cherish that which is given by God. How do we do that? It is a deeply challenging global problem and the Church, by itself, isn't going to solve the issues. Ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising, weather patterns are changing and we are potentially on a path to self-destruction.

What can we do? As the slogan declares 'there is no planet B' and the fact is that it will be governments, business and individuals working together that will be needed. The Church is a small part of that coalition – but an important part and that's why we're encouraging your church to do three things urgently:

1. Measure your carbon footprint. General Synod called the Church to work towards being Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and the Chester Diocesan Synod endorsed that call last November. It's early days as we move towards that challenge but as a start the request this year was for all churches to measure their carbon footprint and to report the result to the APCM and submit those figures using the parish returns process. If we are going to bring carbon emissions under control then we need to know where we are, so that we can plan how to improve. Can you please use the Energy Footprint Tool on the Church of England website as soon as possible:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool>



2. Sign up for Eco Church: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>  
Eco Church is a learning community of churches of all shapes and sizes. It provides a framework to support your church and its leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth. It includes a toolkit of resources, an online survey, a quarterly email update, online events, prayer forums and occasional conferences. It will make you think about climate change and the bio-diversity crisis. It will make you ask questions about how you teach and preach, how you manage your Churchyard and how you reflect theologically on the issues around the environmental crisis.
3. Think ahead, especially about your heating system. If the boiler breaks down, how will you replace it? This is likely to be the most expensive item you face in getting to Net Zero, so plan what you will do when you need to. Talk to the PCC about setting aside resources to pay for a new environmentally friendly system in due course.

There is of course so much more to do, especially in raising awareness, linking theology, liturgy, prayer and practice, inspiring change in the congregation, challenging and speaking prophetically to society and developing partnerships that drive transformation. But start where you can and begin to change.

The responsibility here is a shared one and everyone needs to be a part of it to save the gift of creation, so please join in the project and be a part of saving the earth.

## Departures and arrivals



Laura and Deb

It's all change at the Archdeacon's office at the Diocese of Chester. Pat Pugh, who has worked for both Archdeacons, most recently the Archdeacon of Macclesfield, Ian Bishop, has retired. As well as leaving her role, Pat is also leaving the area, to live in Prestatyn on the North Wales coast, where she plans to enjoy

the fresh sea air, sandy beaches and sunshine, though she's not holding her breath for that one.

Ian Bishop says, "Pat has been a massive part of the Archdeacon's team for many years, and has been key to the smooth running of the office. She's been a joy to work with and has given sacrificially to the work of the Diocese. I know that many parishes have been deeply thankful for the encouragement she has given them, often at very difficult times. I am also personally grateful for all that she has done and for the personal support she has brought to me and to Mike. I have had the privilege of working with Pat over a period of almost 14 years and I know how crucial she has been in managing such a demanding workload."

In the months prior to her leaving, Pat was able to pass on her skills and experience to two new arrivals. They are Laura Howard, PA to the Archdeacon of Chester, and Deb Toole, PA to Archdeacon of Macclesfield.

Laura Howard (shown left) was a teacher of RE and History for 20 years before taking up her role as PA to the Archdeacon of Chester here at Church House. She has been a confirmed Anglican since she was 20 years old and says that working for the Diocese fulfils her long-time goal to work in a role where she can fully commit to fostering and supporting parishes with the church of England. Laura has a passion for the environment and is a keen grower of vegetables. She enjoys playing the piano and watching Liverpool play football.

Deb Toole (shown right) was previously a medical secretary at Halton and Warrington Hospital, where she worked for 29 years. Originally from Sunderland, Deb moved to the area in 1991 to work at The Foundry Church in Widnes, she says: "I really enjoyed working there, and ever since I've always been thinking about working in a Christian workplace. When I saw the P.A. vacancy advertised, I thought it would be a perfect fit for my skills and my faith. And here I am."





## The Department for Outreach

The Department for Outreach is part of Church House, whose staff are committed to supporting the life and work of the parishes, schools and chaplaincies of the Diocese. For us, this means enabling mission, the ways that we express the purpose and love of God for the communities we serve. We are a team of specialities reflecting the five marks of mission, identified by the Anglican church as an expression of Christian discipleship.

### We are involved in a variety of initiatives:



John Hellewell

Our Mission Adviser, **John Hellewell**, as well as offering specific advice on evangelism and discipleship resources, is working with parishes and others on developing their vision and strategy, in particular helping them to discern what might need giving up to make the most of the opportunities of the present time.

**Jonny Masters**, our Youth, Children and Families Adviser, has been enabling us as a whole team to bring the gospel to a new generation. One way of doing this will be through Launchpad, a national initiative helping church leaders build their youth work. Very sadly for us, Jonny's time with the diocese will be finishing at the end of June. He will be greatly missed, but he has made provision for his initiatives to be



Jonathan Masters



Jane, Bessia and Laura

seen through and we will be looking to appoint someone to continue supporting ministry in this area..

**Bessia Kanengoni**, the Digital Giving Adviser, is preparing for a 'digital roll out', distributing contactless giving devices to 50 parishes across the Diocese, and training church members to use them. This is part of a national scheme, funded centrally, helping churches to adapt to the changing ways people handle their money and their giving.

You will read elsewhere about **Sheena Wilson**, Buildings for Mission Adviser. A particular focus for her is the open churches project, encouraging parishes to make the most of the missional benefits that come from being accessible to the community.



Vanessa Layfield

Our support for refugees continues, led by **Vanessa Layfield**, Engagement and Inclusion Adviser, with regular Zoom get-togethers of those involved in this important work. She is also developing a scheme to recognise disability-friendly churches. Along with the members of the Race and Ethnicity Forum she has been developing training in Unconscious Bias, which will initially be provided to PCCs going through vacancies.

Collaborating with the Department for Ministry, **Peter Mackriell**, Head of Counselling, has been developing Pastoral Supervision, addressing concerns about clergy well-being.



Peter Froggatt

These are just some highlights. Do contact Church House for any advice or support – our administrators, **Becky Hathaway** and **Hannah Jones**, will be very glad to talk to you.

**Peter Froggatt**  
Director of Outreach

### For more information

**Call:** 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com  
**Facebook:** Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

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