



Diocese of Hereford

archdeacons' visitation news

Welcome from our Archdeacons

As you read this in summer 2025, we are about halfway through our diocesan Year of Engagement. This is one of our three core behaviours here in the Diocese of Hereford, along with being Prayerful and Christlike. In 2023, we celebrated a Year of Prayer and in 2024 we strengthened our confidence in the gospels through our Year of Faith. Equipped with faith and supported by prayer, in 2025 we turn our face outwards to engage with our communities. There are still plenty of events planned for the second half of the year, which we hope you and your parish community will consider joining.

In engaging, we practise active listening to find out how we can make a difference. We have listened to you, to shape the resources that we are offering throughout the Year of Engagement and beyond. You have your ear to the ground, you know what works. We heard from you that one size doesn't fit all, that every parish is different. Still, there are tools that can help you to manage the basics more efficiently, so you have greater capacity to engage.

With safeguarding such a driving issue for the Church, any push for engagement must consider safety. On the back cover, we share a checklist of the minimum requirements for parish safeguarding.

On page 2, our Property Team explains how to save money while reducing the carbon footprint of your church buildings, using the Energy Footprint Tool. And we explore how those buildings

(now snug and warm!) might be vehicles for greater community engagement, using the Growing Good Toolkit. On page 7, we learn how our efforts in Bishop's Castle and Leominster are helping those communities to 'grow the church younger', through our Youth Hubs Pilot scheme. Also on page 7, we hear how weddings and baptisms are helping parishes engage with families while inspiring generosity, through the use of QR codes and contactless giving.

As one of our clergy says on page 7, "What we can do is help people step over the threshold into church... and see that they can be part of a community, or sit quietly and meet with God." Your heartfelt service in the name of Christ, honouring and preserving the ordinary and everyday patterns of worship and service, makes this possible. Thank you for your commitment, continuing the faithful service of generations before you. We hope that these stories, and our shared worship at the Visitation services, will offer encouragement in this Year of Engagement, as we find ways to build God's Kingdom together, here in our diocese.



The Ven Fiona Gibson
Archdeacon of Ludlow



The Ven Derek Chedzey
Archdeacon of Hereford

Produced and printed by

Key diary dates

Bishop's Teaching Events

(all 9.30am-1pm)

Saturday, 19th July 2025 – St Michael's Church, Madeley

Saturday, 13th September 2025 – St Michael and All Angels Church, Ledbury

Saturday, 8th November 2025 – St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye

Bishop's Study Days

(all 10am-3pm)

Tuesday, 24th June 2025 – Halo Craven Arms Community Centre

Wednesday, 22nd October 2025 – St Peter's, Hereford

Spiritual Question Times

(some venues and times to be advised)

Tuesday, 17th June, 7.30-9.00pm – Wentnor with Giles Tulk, at The Crown Inn, SY9 5EE

Tuesday, 8th July, 7.00-8.30pm – Bridgnorth with Suzan Williams

Tuesday, 21st October – with Wyesham Together & Tim Starling

Tuesday, 25th November – Bromyard with Phil Miller

The Energy Footprint Tool is your friend

Besides helping churches to reduce their carbon footprint and save money on energy bills, completing the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is a requirement for parishes applying to our Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins grants and the Church of England's Net Zero Demonstrator Projects funding.

At St Mary Magdalene in Quatford, Shropshire, winning grants for energy improvements, such as under-pew heating, also helped them attain their Silver Eco Church Award.

The diocese's Mission Enabler for the Environment, The Rev'd Stephen Hollinghurst, says, "EFT can help with getting grants and faculties for work on church buildings. It also helps us know which churches to prioritise and provides ways of measuring impact. It will also, in time, help us offer real evidence when advising churches on reducing fuel bills."

Lorna Theophilus is the diocese's Church Buildings Support Officer. She says, "The Quick Wins grant can be used to deliver small-scale projects to reduce the carbon footprint of the building. It can also include temporary heating where an existing system has failed."

Look out for announcements in our eNews about the opening date for the 2026 EFT. The Energy Footprint Tool can be found here:

🌐 parishreturns.churchofengland.org

Information on all the C of E Net Zero grants can be found here:

🌐 churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare



How outreach and listening can help building works go right

If your PCC is considering building works to meet local needs, the Growing Good Toolkit can be the first step. It is a six-session video series based on three years of research across every setting in the Church of England. Says The Rev'd Joe Simons, our Mission Enabler for Society, "The Toolkit is a great place to begin the journey of listening to your community and congregation, and discerning what is right for them."

St Peter's in Peterchurch undertook a re-ordering of its space after a process of discernment. 'The Hub' now offers a café and library, and is buzzing with community activities. It was recently presented with the King's Award for Voluntary Service. Says The Rev'd Simon Lockett, "The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), DAC Secretary Stephen Challenger, and the property team at the diocese guided us through the faculty system. But we started with lots of praying and listening, which made a difference." A member of the congregation, Judith Robinson, says the local youth club, which now uses the space, is a huge success: "I was delighted to see it in action; its positive response to young people."

Listening to the community before committing to building improvements can also generate increased engagement. At St John's, Doddington, a heritage project has involved local partnership to create new facilities to serve both the community and the many visitors to the nearby Shropshire Hills. With support from the DAC, the builders are carefully restoring the fabric of the building while adding an accessible toilet, servery and heritage displays. A flurry of heritage activities have sprung up in parallel, including making tiles from local clay, songwriting and illustration projects, all energising the local community.

For information on starting the process with the Growing Good Toolkit, email:

✉ Joe.Simons@hereford.anglican.org

For guidance on how to navigate the building work process, including drawing up plans, involving architects and applying for the required 'faculty', visit the Property Team's website pages here:

🌐 hereford.anglican.org/parish-support/property/church-maintenance-repairs-and-improvements

You can apply for advice online, or email the DAC Secretary:

✉ s.challenger@hereford.anglican.org

Support and resources for Churchwardens from Ecclesiastical

Ecclesiastical understands that volunteering for the role of Churchwarden and supporting your church can be a demanding job. Managing a treasured building and ensuring that it's a safe place for your congregation to worship, visit and enjoy can be daunting, but you don't have to do it alone.

Ecclesiastical church support managers

At no additional cost, Church Support Managers are there for their Ecclesiastical church customers. Providing tailored help and training to support church insurance needs, they can offer guidance on risk management, health and safety legislation and direct you to online resources. They can also deliver online and in-person group training sessions around topics including the basics of insurance, fire safety, fundraising, climate change and net zero, open churches and theft of metal.



Heather Ford



Joseph Davies

Heather Ford – Church Support Manager for the North.

Heather has roots in the Church, having previously worked for the Diocese of Manchester, and understands the demands of church life. Heather is passionate about supporting churches to understand how insurance can help, rather than hinder, to enable people to focus on their ministry and thrive.

Joseph Davies – Church Support Manager for the South.

Joseph is very much part of the Church family – his father was a parish priest, his mother a hospital chaplain, his wife was recently ordained as a curate, and he spent nine years as a verger at Salisbury and Ely Cathedrals.

“ Fundraising is crucial for sustaining church activities and initiatives. I am always delighted to offer guidance on effective fundraising strategies. We have an excellent online Fundraising Hub which has lots of information about how to get started and how to keep going on your fundraising journey. ”

✉ meetus@ecclesiastical.com
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/church-support-managers

Fundraising hub

Fundraising plays a key role in boosting finances for your church. Ecclesiastical's fundraising hub offers user-friendly support guides which take you from 'where to start' through to 'key factors for successful fundraising' and everything in between.

If you have an Ecclesiastical policy, you can also contact their fundraising helpline, to arrange a call back from their expert team.

📞 **0345 601 9959**
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising



Ecclesiastical's plain English guides

If you are looking for help in areas such as legal expenses, building work, or outreach, Ecclesiastical has a range of easy to understand Made Simple Guides to help, and their comprehensive document library is full of useful tools like risk assessment templates and Guidance Notes.

🌐 ecclesiastical.com/church/#madesimple

Ecclesiastical church insurance team

Do you have questions about your Ecclesiastical policy?

📞 **0345 777 3322** – lines are open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays
 ✉ churchteam@ecclesiastical.com

Risk Advice Helpline

Are you looking for advice on how to minimise risks as you manage your church?

📞 **0345 600 7531** – lines are open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays
 ✉ risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

A claims team that really cares

Ecclesiastical's claims team are experts.

📞 **0345 603 8381** – 24-hour reporting service
 🌐 ecclesiastical.com/claims/claim-online

Ecclesiastical would love to hear from you

Do you have a story for Ecclesiastical? Perhaps you overcame a fundraising problem or found a way to get your local community more involved with your church. Sharing 'a day in your life' could really help other Churchwardens and members of the PCC.

✉ meetus@ecclesiastical.com

Contains promotional material

Month-by-month support

To help you plan maintenance and manage your church and its grounds, Ecclesiastical has created a calendar to keep you organised and on track – you can download your copy using this link:

 ecclesiastical.com/risk-calendar



Get monthly tips straight to your inbox




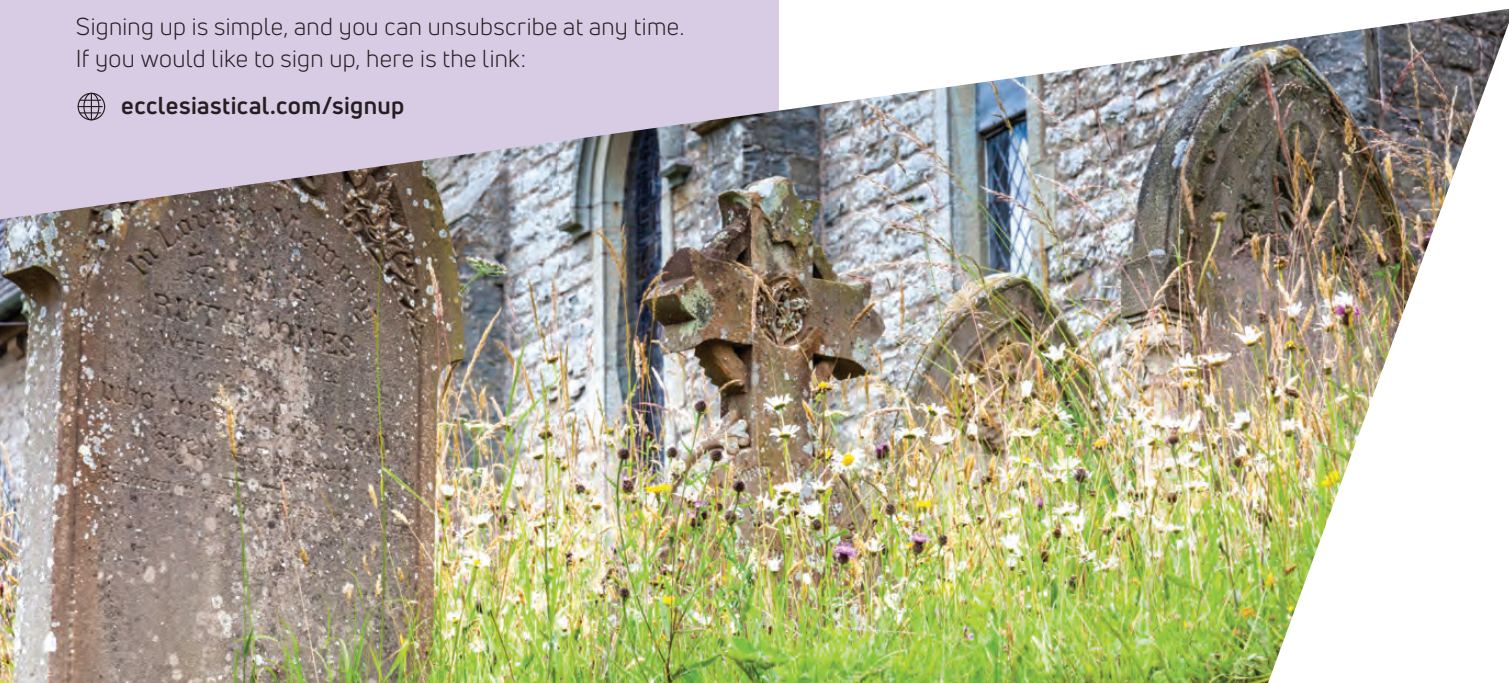
Join the community of church leaders who receive Ecclesiastical's monthly e-newsletter. It's packed with valuable advice about church security, event planning, fundraising and more.

Many of Ecclesiastical's customers already benefit from this e-newsletter, and we hope you'll join them.

Feel free to share the sign-up link with others in your church community who might be interested.

Signing up is simple, and you can unsubscribe at any time. If you would like to sign up, here is the link:

 ecclesiastical.com/signup



Why should net zero be a focus for churches?

A Q&A with the Church of England



BENEFACT TRUST



Julian Atkins

In 2024, our Group's charitable owner, Benefact Trust, pledged £1.5m towards the Church of England's ambitious goal of reaching net zero by 2030. Benefact Trust's funding is focused on equipping and inspiring churches across the UK to start their journey to net zero and reduce their impact on the environment.

Benefact Trust sat down with Julian Atkins, Net Zero Programme Director for the Church of England, to talk through some of the most commonly asked questions about the Church's net zero goal.

Whilst many of us want to play an active role in tackling climate change, the prospect can seem overwhelming due to the scale of the issue, the urgency to take

action and the abundance of complicated information. In Benefact Trust's short Q&A with Julian, he emphasises how important it is to keep things simple and start small.

Julian discusses what net zero actually means, why the Church has a responsibility to reduce its impact on the climate and low-cost ways to get started. Watch 'Net Zero and the Church' on Benefact Trust's YouTube channel:

 youtube.com/@benefacttrust

Here you'll find a host of helpful videos, including a full podcast with Julian Atkins.

Ecclesiastical supports sabbaticals

Ecclesiastical aims to support Anglican clergy by offering financial assistance for life-affirming sabbaticals through their **Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs)**.

Established in 1987, these awards have distributed over £1.4 million, benefiting more than 1,500 clergy members. An MBA can rejuvenate and enhance the ministerial development of clergy, offering them opportunities to engage in extended study, travel, or other enriching activities that can have a lasting impact on their personal growth and to the ministering of their congregations.



St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Kolkata, West Bengal, India

The **Revd Adam Dickens** is a recent recipient of such an MBA and he told Ecclesiastical:

“ I was very grateful for the MBA grant as it facilitated my sabbatical visit to Kolkata and wider West Bengal where I spent a month engaging with projects run by the Cathedral Relief Service of Kolkata Cathedral, as well as visiting various establishments that came under the ambit of the Diocese of Calcutta; these included churches, schools, colleges, a TB clinic, an AIDs hospice and a residential home.

“ It was an extremely rich time as I was offered a window into the joy and despair of life for people living in the city (as well as some of the rural areas in the state of West Bengal) and the creative ways in which church communities were responding. It provided interaction with a very different culture to the one I'm used to inhabiting, with all the challenges and growth that comes with it. ”

The application window for the 2026 MBA programme opens in spring 2025 and closes in September 2025. In 2026, we are particularly keen to see more sabbaticals which aim to support the drive for carbon net zero.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit:

 ecclesiastical.com/mba



Give yourself a financial health check

In today's world, with the high cost of living and rising taxation, it's more important than ever to ensure your finances are in top shape.

Expert advice for clergy



Ben Dabbs




Ben Dabbs, an independent financial adviser with Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Service (EFAS), emphasises the importance of financial planning for clergy. “With little time available for clergy in their busy lives to focus on themselves, it's important for them to seek expert advice to manage their finances effectively and ensure their personal well-being and that of their

dependants is planned and catered for,” he explains. “Too often, clergy members will delay financial planning until the twilight of their ministry, which can lead to unnecessary hardship.”

Plan ahead with confidence

To help you review your financial arrangements, such as life assurance, pension savings, investments, mortgage options¹ and retirement planning, it's worthwhile seeking expert advice from an independent financial adviser who understands your circumstances and can put in place a plan to help give you peace of mind for the future.

If you would like to arrange a financial health check or receive a brochure providing information about the advice and services available, please contact EFAS at:

 **0800 107 0190**
 **getadvice@ecclesiastical.com**
 **ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice**

¹Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage. The value of your investments including pension investments can fluctuate, and you may not get back the amount you invested. Your capital is at risk.



Join the Movement for Good



Ecclesiastical is part of the Benefact Group and we do financial services differently – we give all available profits to charity and good causes. It's thanks to our customers that we can make this happen.

The Movement for Good Awards is our annual giving programme and anyone can get involved. The Awards give you the opportunity to nominate the charitable causes that matter most to you.

We're proud to have supported churches, Scouts groups, food banks, hospices, heritage charities and more, all nominated by their supporters.

How to nominate a charity or church to win £1,000

1. Visit movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical
2. Nominate before 15 December 2025. Your nomination will be included in all the remaining £1,000 draws in 2025, so the earlier you nominate, the more chances you have. It's one nomination per charity, per person, so you can get as many as you like in the mix.
3. Further down the page, there are resources you can personalise and share with your colleagues and congregation to encourage more nominations.
4. Keep scrolling to sign up for notifications, including special £5,000 draws and larger awards through partnership funding.

You'll also find more information about the Awards, including the terms and conditions at:

 movementforgood.com/tc

Best of luck!

Trust Ecclesiastical to insure your home and give back to your church!

As a church official, your home could serve as both a living space and a place for your ministry. You might host prayer meetings and counselling sessions from your home, or even help parishioners plan weddings and funerals. You will be supporting your parishioners throughout the years, and Ecclesiastical Insurance is there to support you, with their tailored home insurance policies.

A home insurance policy from Ecclesiastical Insurance can be adapted to suit the needs of the clergy in your work on behalf of the Church, or the general needs of your congregation and community.

Ecclesiastical Home Insurance

Ecclesiastical Home Insurance provides up to £750,000 for buildings and £75,000 for contents as standard. This cover includes protection for your home, personal belongings and even contents away from home up to £3,500. Additionally, 24-hour home emergency assistance and legal expenses are included, helping to ensure you are covered in unexpected situations.

But there is more!

When you take out a new home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical, they will donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of your choice¹ – this programme has already contributed over £500,000, to churches across the country.



You can trust Ecclesiastical. They regularly win coveted awards for their home insurance products. In November last year, they retained their top spot in the Fairer Finance Home Insurance league table for a record twentieth time and remain the UK's most trusted home insurance provider!² Importantly, in today's online world, they also have an 'Excellent' score on Trustpilot too.³



When you talk to the friendly experts at Ecclesiastical's UK-based Head Office, they will work with you to make sure that your home and its contents are well-protected against a variety of risks. By choosing Ecclesiastical, you're not just insuring your home; you could also be helping your church. Call us today!

 **0345 777 3322** and quote **CHOPS25**
 **ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance**

¹Terms and conditions apply. Visit ecclesiastical.com/trust130-terms. ²Fairer Finance Home Insurance customer experience rating, spring and autumn 2015 – 2024. ³Trustpilot reviews – 419 between 1 February 2023 – 14 April 2025. Correct at time of going to print.

Boosting parish finances with smart tech

Smart tech, such as contactless payment devices and unique QR codes, is boosting income from weddings, baptisms and funerals across the diocese. Data from 2024 show that contactless payment devices raised on average £1,300 per parish, raising over £260,000 since we launched in 2023. Even small, rural parishes are benefitting, with many raising over £1,500. This is support that might have walked out the door were it not for contactless devices.

Says our Giving Adviser Rosa Speyer, "People attending a life events service may not be ready to attend services regularly, but a financial gift to the work of the parish, however small, is a meaningful connection."

Lead Giving Adviser Mark Simmons, continues, "It's important that, as charity trustees, PCCs make sure visitors and occasional attenders know why you need their support, the difference you make in your community and how you spend their money. People give because they are asked, and because they have encountered something special in your church which they value and makes them want to join in."

St Michael and All Angels, Dewsall, is linked with Dewsall Court, a busy wedding venue. Says The Rev'd Preb Mark Johnson, Rector of Wormelow Hundred benefice, "Being connected to a busy wedding venue like Dewsall Court is certainly an advantage. About half the collection from our weddings and blessings is now coming through contactless. It helps to remind the congregation during the service that they can make a donation on their way out, but we also put parish-specific QR codes on service booklets and on cards in the pews, which guests can take away with them. Rosa and Mark are very helpful with the set-up. After that, it's very easy to manage. What clergy can do is to help people step over the threshold and make them feel welcome and able to ask questions about a family event. Hopefully they also see that they can be part of a community or find a place where they can sit quietly and meet with God."

You can email our Parish Giving Advisers:

- ✉ Rosa.Speyer@hereford.anglican.org
- ✉ Mark.Simmons@hereford.anglican.org



Growing new disciples in this Year of Engagement and beyond



The refreshed Diocesan Strategy includes the goal of becoming an intergenerational church, growing younger by increasing the number of young people and children engaged in worshipping communities.

In response to this, as a diocese, we have received national funding for a Youth Hubs project. Our goal through this is to offer a model for rural youth ministry where every young person across the diocese has access to a

worshipping community. In each Hub location, we will have a Youth Pioneer and a Youth and Community Worker who will engage with local schools, communities and churches to pioneer new opportunities for young people to come to know the love of Jesus for themselves. We have begun by piloting two Youth Hubs in Bishops Castle and Leominster with a long-term plan of expanding to seven Hubs across the diocese over the next eight years.

The hope is that through this 'Hub' and 'Spoke' model, wider deanery areas in which the Hub is situated will reap the benefits of the work as Spoke parishes are supported in engaging younger people through Hub activities. This support might look like training for clergy and/or laity, the creation of learning communities to share experiences and pray for one another, engagement with primary schools to lay foundations, and location visits.

Work has already begun in both pilot locations, having now got both Youth Pioneers in post. So far, we have seen a reinvigorated youth drop-in in Bishops Castle with over 30 young people engaged and in Leominster we are halfway through training a small group of individuals who want to engage with younger generations in their contexts.

Looking ahead, we have a residential booked in the autumn for any young people connected across the diocese. With 50 spaces available, we hope this will be a really fruitful opportunity to gather young people across the diocese from dispersed rural locations together to encounter God in different ways through sport, art, drama, music and more.

If you would like to know more or you're interested in supporting this work, please get in touch with our Youth Hub Coordinator, Heather:

- ✉ heather.martin@hereford.anglican.org

Annual Parish Safeguarding Checklist

Our website and the national Church website have in-depth safeguarding guidance about all the steps below; at a MINIMUM each PCC (or equivalent charitable body) must:

Appoint:

- ☐ At least one appropriately experienced, designated, lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).

Safer Recruit, Support and Train:

- ☐ Obtain DBS checks for all PCC members. The Diocese of Hereford **expects** all PCC members to get a 'Basic Level' DBS check.
- ☐ If a PCC sponsors and approves, in its own name, work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Diocese of Hereford **expects** all PCC members to get an 'Enhanced DBS check without barred list check'.
- ☐ Ensure all PCC members complete and sign a Fit and Proper Persons Form.
- ☐ Ensure all PCC members complete our Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training.
- ☐ Ensure that all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults:
 - are recruited following the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment practice guidance;
 - are aware of and work to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (includes both policies and practice guidance);
 - attend safeguarding training at least every three years.
- ☐ Provide appropriate insurance to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults.

Display on the Website:

- ☐ Ensure safeguarding information (or a prominent link to it) is displayed on the front (home) page of your parish website, or parish web page in a benefice or deanery site, including:
 - the contact details of the PSO; **and**
 - the contact details of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

- ☐ Also consider adding safeguarding information to your social media profiles, to any community websites where you are featured and to your page on AChurchNearYou.

Display in your Building:

- ☐ Display the required safeguarding information prominently and accessibly in your building; the diocese provides convenient posters which meet these requirements when properly filled in by the parish.

Respond:

- ☐ Create a welcoming and respectful environment which enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly and consistently.
- ☐ Have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance and in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).
- ☐ Report all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to the DSA.
- ☐ Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSA.
- ☐ Comply with all data protection legislation including records of volunteers and any safeguarding records.
- ☐ Ensure that an 'activity risk assessment' is completed/regularly reviewed for each activity associated with children or vulnerable adults, run in the name of the Church.

Review and Report Progress:

- ☐ PSO to report regularly on parish safeguarding via a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. At the APCM, the PCC should provide an annual report in relation to safeguarding progress and PCC compliance with the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance.

Hiring out your Church Premises:

- ☐ Ensure any hire agreement for church premises includes the required safeguarding provisions.

During a Clergy Vacancy:

- ☐ The PCC must follow diocesan guidance about the secure storage and distribution of safeguarding information to be passed to the new incumbent.

For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churchteam@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical

Whilst Ecclesiastical has used reasonable endeavours to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication, please note: (a) the information is not intended to constitute a definitive or complete statement of the law on any subject, (b) the information may over the course of time become incorrect or out of date; and (c) neither Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc. nor its subsidiaries or parent company can accept any responsibility or liability for action taken or losses suffered as a result of reliance placed on the information provided in this newsletter.

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