

PCC News

The newspaper for all PCC members to help support your church



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Setting up a new choir can bring fresh life into our communities

Joyfully, merrily, lustily?

Ashley Groat
Master of Music
Norwich Cathedral

The Psalms are filled with exhortations for us to sing: most of these references are accompanied by adverbs such as ‘joyfully’, ‘merrily’, ‘lustily’. Singing should be a happy and joyous activity, whether in church or otherwise. Articles in the weekend supplements, television talent shows, scientific studies and social media all constantly convey the message that singing is good for us, both as individuals and as communities - so we should surely be doing all we can to encourage it in our churches.



Setting up a choir may not be easy, and to pretend otherwise would be to overlook the very real challenges that many of our smaller church communities face in providing any kind of music for their worship week by week. For all singers, but for volunteers especially, singing has to be about enjoyment. People have to want to be in a choir, and have to enjoy it when they get there. They don't want it to be another chore in their already full week. Think, therefore, about when the best time is for a choir to meet. How can it be a social occasion, as well as a musical gathering? Why not make

coffee and cake part of your weekly rehearsal? A handful of people gathered to sing in someone's living room with a glass of wine in hand is a much more attractive prospect than a chilly and damp chancel on a Friday night! Children like to feel ‘special’ - so for them, if being in the choir means they enjoy a snack & drink at rehearsal, get to play games with friends before or after the singing, or go on the occasional outing - so much the better. Whoever is leading needs to realise that their singers are there first and foremost for their enjoyment: nothing is more likely to put them off than an over-ambitious choir

master or mistress barking at them. Think about the core aims of any singing group. Where and when is the group going to sing, and how often? What time commitment is reasonable and sustainable? What kind of music is the group going to sing? If in church, a well-rehearsed piece once a month is surely preferable to struggling through a communion anthem. Failure to judge any of these things correctly can spell disaster from the outset. Choose the kind of music that your singers want to sing, not what you or anyone else think they should be singing. And, as with anything a worshipping church community does, the focus should be on striving for excellence. Working with children, I am constantly reminded of their thirst to be challenged and their innate desire to succeed - so don't underestimate what they are capable of, or their appreciation of doing something well. Delivering simple music, sung well, is overwhelmingly more satisfying than the opposite, both for those performing and those listening, and builds a more solid foundation from which a choir can progress.

Top tips for winter church maintenance

Matthew McDade
Executive Officer(DAC Secretary)
for Church Buildings

With winter now upon us there are some useful steps that we can undertake to minimise the risk of cold-weather related incidents.

Rainwater goods, gullies and drains. Make sure that gutters, gullies and downpipes are clear of detritus (such as leaves) and clean out any drains to ensure they do not become clogged
Pathways. Keep pathways clear of snow and use grit/salt on the

main approach to the church if freezing weather is expected
Pipes. Lag any pipes to lessen the risk of fracture and service the boiler/heating system regularly. If you have a frost thermostat make sure it is working. Should a pipe become frozen turn off the water at the mains and gently unfreeze the affected pipe by using some gentle heating machine (such as a hairdryer or hot water bottle). Should a pipe burst make sure the mains water is disconnected, drain the liquid into an appropriate holder and repair the breakage as soon as possible
Temporary heating. Sometimes



heating systems fail during the winter months. Should you require temporary heating you could introduce electric heaters but liquid petroleum gas versions should be avoided at all cost. This is due to them producing lots of water vapour, which can be extremely damaging to the church building
Candles. Simple precautions can avoid the risk of fires, should

candles be used during services. Make sure that candles are kept away from flammable objects and are never left unattended
Roofs. A once-weekly visual inspection of the roofs can identify issues (such as slipped slates). before they become a major issue. Should repairs be minimal and be on a like-for-like basis these should be undertaken immediately.



New funds for mission

Two new grants schemes are being launched as part of the Mission Strategy to support parish's mission:

Bishop's Mission Fund
Up to £20,000 per year
(from January 2018)

Grants for **people based mission projects** and to equip mission activities more effectively in your area, such as:

- direct mission projects to assist parish Growth Plans and vision
- indirect mission projects 'seedcorn' funding for feasibility studies for mission orientated projects
- Christians to work together ecumenically.

Growth in Service Grants
Usually up to £1,000 per year

This new 'Committed to Growth in Service' Grant Scheme offers parishes support towards **mission through service** in local communities; demonstrating the love of Christ to their neighbours. Activities must:

- focus on the local community, with involvement from local community
- concentrate on empowering and encouraging community members to use and develop their gifts and skills.

Both funds will prioritise new projects but consider existing projects developing parish mission & outreach.

Find out more about both at www.DofN.org/funds

Editorial

Robert Culyer
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I am sure that we have all sat looking at a blank piece of paper, not being able to get started with writing a letter or a magazine piece, and this was my dilemma this time!

I had a few ideas, but could not get started! And then, on Saturday, I attended the most magnificent service of worship at St. Peters Church, Eaton Square, in London. I then started to analyse the elements that made it special. Our own Bishop Graham did the sermon, which was, as usual, witty and inspiring, but it was also the music that made me feel uplifted. I do wonder how many of us feel as though we have really worshipped Our God at a service, or do our congregations just go through the motions. Every time we worship, it should be special; an experience.

Augustine of Hippo said 'He who sings prays twice', so I thought that we would investigate, in this edition, about setting up music groups in your parishes/benefices. Setting up a musical group need not only be for services of worship in your parish, but could be just a community activity that your church just happens to lead. You are onto a winner because you have the venue and also the acoustics!

As we move into the last quarter of the year, it is nice to reflect on all the great things that have happened across our

Diocese. So many churches have completed major works, hosted events, and, hopefully, more importantly welcomed new people into our churches. As a family, I hope that we share how we have achieved all these great things by sharing good practise, and I hope that PCC News does this in its own way.

The team at Diocesan House are constantly thinking of ways that we can help and guide you. For example, James South came through to my office a couple of days ago to ask if he could include a piece in the paper, as he had received several calls about energy suppliers. The care of Church buildings department often ask to run items in the PCC News to flag up issues with church buildings. The communications department constantly send information to be included, to help share great news and good practise with you all. The team work as one big team, which is here to serve you, the parishes. Fortunately many of you appreciate this. In this edition you will see that I have included a piece about the services provided by some of the departments to support you.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of YOUR newspaper and really do hope that you get inspiration from the articles. In Sir Francis Drake's words 'Disturb us Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves; When our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little.'

The Bishop's Lent Appeal 2018

People have little materially, but hope eternally.

Together we can help build the church in Papua New Guinea.

Up in the western highlands of Papua New Guinea, there is a small church building which caters for a scattered population of 25,000. People have very little materially: no toilets, kitchens or cars, but the church is growing. We want to help develop a larger church building and facilitate new mission initiatives with the young people of this scattered community. **Can you help by giving today?** Visit www.DofN.org/lent

Ideas for community engagement

Here are some great ideas to use the Lent Appeal as a mission opportunity:

Pancake Party

Invite your friends, family, neighbours and church members to come along and join in the fun. A small donation can be made on the door. Offer a selection of toppings such as; lemons, sugar, honey, banana, chocolate buttons, sprinkles, ...the list goes on!

Lent lunches

Why not hold a week of Lent lunches? Invite a speaker who's been to Papua New Guinea to share their experiences. Visit www.DofN.org/lent for names.

No technology day/week

Simbai - the region in which we're supporting church growth - is a very remote part of Papua New Guinea. Why not give up technology for a day/week/



month and get sponsored for it. See how long you can cope!

Friday Fish & Chips evening

Traditionally, during Lent Christians did not to eat meat on Fridays. So why not start a Fish & Chips evening and invite your community?

Barn dance / Ceilidh

Always a popular evening! Hire a music group to organise the dancing or alternatively try being the caller yourself.

Find out more about the Bishop's 2018 Lent Appeal at www.DofN.org/lent

Lent Bible Study course

The Revd Dr Paul Overend
Lay Development Officer

Lent is an important season for Christians as we prepare to journey with Christ through Holy Week and maybe renew our baptismal promises again at Easter: it is a time of self-examination, reflection, study and prayer, often facilitated by a Lent course or book. Our planning

for Lent each year often begins before Christmas, so it may be helpful to know of resources.

For our Diocese, 2018 marks the 50th year of our link with the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea. There will be celebrations of the 50 years of common bonds between us during the year, including a service planned in the Cathedral on Sunday

25 January 2018, at 3.30pm.

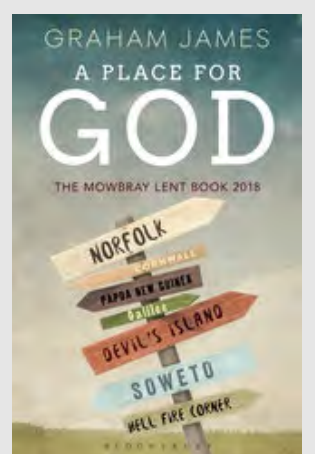
For a Lent Bible Study course in the diocese, we are commending a Lent Discussion Guide produced by the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership. This 20-page guide with information about the church in Papua New Guinea, gives points for discussion and suggestions for prayer. Visit www.DofN.org/lent

Bishop's new book

In *The Lent Factor*, Bishop Graham wrote about 40 people (one for each day of Lent) who had inspired him and helped to shape his spiritual journey. In this new book he turns his attention to places, from the Flinders Ranges in Australia to Devil's Island (French Guiana) via the Holy Land,

Center Parcs and Holborn Underground Station.

Each chapter offers a daily reflection, beginning with a suggested Bible reading and ending with a short prayer, and employing the same engaging combination of autobiography, history and spirituality. www.DofN.org/book



THE ARCHDEACON'S CHARGE and PICNIC

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 7 MAY

Holkham Hall

A fun & easy way to raise money for Parish Share

The Archdeacon's Charge is an excellent way for parishes to raise money towards their Parish Share. The Diocese organises the venue, course route, refreshments, family

activities and more – all you have to do is walk the 2.5 mile route and ask your friends and family for sponsorship. Why not give it a try? Put the date in your diary and sign up today!

Mission in the rhythm of rural life

Stephen Richards
Musical Director, Southrepps Chorale

In 2010 a new annual Southrepps Classical Music Festival was founded, centred on St. James Church. For the first two years the closing 'gala' concert required a chorus to assist the professional singers, so a scratch choir of locals and visitors was assembled by Tom Primrose (then Organ Scholar at Norwich Cathedral).

For a year or more, some of those local amateur singers kept nagging me to start a more permanent choir so they could sing all year round. And in November 2011, in an upstairs room adjoining the church, although I was expecting about a dozen, in fact 30 brave souls turned up to sing. Some of these had not sung before, some others not since school days many decades before.

That was the start of the community choir Southrepps Chorale which over the past six years has grown in numbers to 60 voices, in skills, in self-belief and confidence. It is our mission to provide our members with a wide variety of musical experiences which have led us to performances in some notable Norfolk churches including Binham Priory and the RC Cathedral of St John in Norwich, and in a totally different context in Morrisons, Cromer.

Now formally constituted with chair and committee, we really do live our constitution:

we promote community activity, education, enjoyment, mutual support, equality and social inclusion through singing

we encourage and facilitate personal creativity through the shared experience of singing together



we try to share and enrich wider community life through public performance

And the other key to our success so far is to have the right music in front of us at all our weekly rehearsals; a varied musical repertoire that entertains and yet continually challenges us.

The Southrepps Music Festival also grows in strength and ambition, and each year invites us to perform a concert in the otherwise professional week-long programme. A look back at those programmes perfectly shows how the Southrepps Chorale has developed: 2012 - Gilbert and

Sullivan highlights; 2013 - Songs from the Shows; 2014 - English madrigals and Captain Noah; 2015; our first commission from local composer Geoff Cummings-Knight, along with Fauré's Requiem; 2016 - West Side Story and other Shakespeare derived music; and in 2017 our most ambitious yet, Karl Jenkin's stirring but reflective Mass for Peace - The Armed Man.

Essentially, while the Chorale is a secular village project, in a Norfolk village the church is never far from peoples' sight or their thoughts, so the Southrepps Chorale naturally takes its place in the service of the village and the rhythm of rural

life. We sing at some weddings, at the annual Remembrance Sunday service and, each year since our very first Christmas in 2011, we perform at the village Carol Service.

Looking ahead to 2018, we shall be presenting 'Music for Valentines (at the Lighthouse, Sheringham) on Saturday 10 February), and in summer 2018 a concert 'By Royal Command' complete with trumpets, trombones, drums and organ, featuring joyous, majestic and sombre music of royal occasions.

Full details will appear on our website at: www.southreppschorale.org.uk

Consumed with the day to day running of our churches, we don't always get the chance to step back and reflect

what goes on inside them.
I therefore asked the Revd Timothy Weston to put together some ideas that you

and your PCC might like to consider in relation to worship and music in your churches:

Let the outreach – Shine!

The Revd Timothy Weston

Rather out of the blue, I received an email asking if I would write an article explaining how important music is to the act of worship, including comments on selection and delivery.

I have a small amount of musical experience as I found myself leading the music group Shine! at Watton for a number of years. In my time with them, we usually had 6 - 8 singers plus rhythm guitar, base guitar and, for a while, drums.

I count myself fortunate that now I worship where a small but excellent choir sing their anthems during the distribution just in front of the pews and facing the congregation. Being close, I feel involved despite just listening. Having received, I sit quietly praying, allowing the music to wash over me, taking me into a deep communion with God.

A congregation needs to be led by the singers but, unless their volume is enhanced, they won't be heard. That is why you will see music groups and praise bands using microphones and speakers. Mixing desk and speakers need not be too expensive and they

can be very useful away from the church in village halls, high streets, outside services and so on. And why not let your local, aspiring teenage pop group use the equipment – good outreach?

If you are like me, public singing can be very embarrassing, so I don't – I mime, which isn't uplifting at all. But if there is a good volume, organ or group, I can sing loudly too with only me and God hearing my efforts – and he doesn't seem to mind.

But is music important in worship? Well, music seems to be important to most of us, in church or out. Look at the wonderful singing at Welsh rugby matches, at football grounds, and at the Proms on the last night. If music wasn't important, if it didn't lift us and give us joy and emotion, there wouldn't be any. So, of course it is important in worship. It has the ability to take us out of ourselves. It surrounds and uplifts. It can move us to laughter or tears. It helps us put aside our immediate problems and cares, helping us into a place where we can concentrate our hearts and minds on God. Music seems to draw a congregation together in a shared experience which then translates into moving collective worship.



Most of all, musicians and singers, remember why you are playing or singing. It is not a performance. Your role is to enhance worship, to lead and help others into a space where they can experience the presence of God. In this task, yours is a giving role whereby the needs of the congregation take precedence even if, sometimes, you do not particularly like what you are playing or singing.

But, in my experience, there is nothing like a joyful response to encourage you. Shine! once went into Wayland Prison to their Sunday Service with all our gear and played 'Amazing Grace' to the tune of 'House of the Rising Sun'. The singing almost raised the roof and the resultant worship was extraordinary. Try it, sometime.



Using music on church premises

Chris Williams
Christian Copyright Licencing International (CCLI)

Church buildings can be used for many activities outside of regular times of worship and if any of these activities include the use of music you will need to ensure that the appropriate music performance licences are in place. The playing of music from a commercial sound recording such as the radio, a CD or MP3 player all require the cover of both a PRS for Church Music and PPL Church Music Licence. Music sung or played in acts of worship are exempt but dance classes, youth clubs, children's groups or just music played to

create an ambiance require both licences. Churches showing films will also require the cover of a PRS for Music Church Licence for music included in the soundtrack. Please consider all premises owned by the church including halls, coffee shops or any church grounds where music may be played at fetes or festivals.

Your church may hold these licences already but if you're unsure we suggest that you complete a Church Copyright Healthcheck via www.DofN.org/ccli or call 01323 436100.



Are you ready to welcome?

Do you think your church is welcoming? Nominate your church today! In 2016 the Tourism and Open Churches Mission Action Team launched the Welcoming Church Award. The award is designed to encourage good practice in welcoming visitors during times outside of church services.

Over thirty churches entered the competition in 2016 and All Saints Church, Hemblington and Wymondham Abbey were named the winners.

Do you think your church could win this year? How to enter:

Entering is easy and requires no form-filling. Contact Caroline Rawlings on **01603 8822351** or **caroline.rawlings@dioceseofnorwich.org** with your church's name, location and your contact details.

Please note you must have your Vicar/Rector or churchwarden's permission before entering into the competition.

Entries close on Wednesday 28 February 2018 and the Judges will be visiting (unannounced) between Easter and June. They will be assessing the church for its weekday welcome, rather than its architecture or historical value.



Five top tips for welcoming:

Ensure gates, boundary walls, hedges and noticeboards are well maintained

Place a 'Welcome' or 'Open' sign outside your building

Can you provide disabled access? If so, are the instructions for assisted access clearly displayed?

Do you offer guides and interpretative material? Perhaps consider having a child-friendly guidebook. This is also an opportunity to include information about Christian beliefs, baptism and weddings

Could you create a designated prayer area with invitations to pray or with candles to aid reflection and meditation?

For more tips & information visit: **www.DofN.org/awards**

A reflection on budgeting

Susan Martin
Lay Deanery Synod Rep, Yaxham

Sitting quietly watching around him, the Wise Old Owl observed their faces. He didn't consider himself to be particularly "Wise" or particularly "Old", but having been named Richard he decided it was better than being permanently known as "Dickie Bird".

He waited for the audience to settle and started to speak; "I am going to tell you story, a story of events that happened a long way away, many years ago. Once there was country of many tribes, two of the tribes amicably shared life in a beautiful valley. The two tribes lived peaceably, we will call them "Debere" and "Credere".

However, in spite of their many similarities, they ran their finance in very different ways. The Credere always looked at their budget annually; worked out what they needed to spend; how to raise the money and then divided all the amounts by twelve. At the end of each month they could sleep easy as they had fulfilled their obligations. The Debere worked to a different system. They looked at their finances, collected all taxes, donations and charges, and made payments they were forced to or at the end of the year. This caused hard feelings between the tribes. Those who paid monthly to the Central Tribe Council felt that they were unfairly subsidising those who

didn't pay regularly".

Wise Old Owl stopped and looked around, paused and continued "What do you think they did?" he asked. Heads were shaken. "I will tell you" he continued "they decide that Deberes would no longer receive the shared benefits brought by working together. One morning in the tenth month, as the weather was getting colder they woke up to no heating or light; the shops had not received deliveries and the workers from other Tribes had all gone home. They looked for their leader and couldn't find him. All they found was a note, saying he had left as his salary hadn't been paid for ten months".

So why have a budget?

We are often told that a budget is an important way for the PCC to manage the Parish Finances. However, many on a PCC or in a congregation don't know why it's important. Maybe you set a budget at the beginning of the year and never hit any of the numbers. You wonder, "what's the point?" Or, you set a budget and always come in over on revenue and under expenses, so you think, "I can do this without a budget". Budgeting takes time and a lot of mental energy that is hard to drum up sometimes. So, why is it important? Here are three reasons why a budget is important for your Parish.

1. A budget, that is shared, gets everyone singing from the same page

Unless everyone knows what it costs to turn on the lights and the heating; pay the insurance; pay the Parish Share, it is hard to know how much a PCC needs to raise through its collections and fund raising events.

2. A budget helps you to see changes you need to make ahead of time

When you set your budget at the beginning of the year, you can see problems or other issues to address ahead of time. Your budget helps you to plan out the year, understanding when you need to make payments. Also it takes the worry out of how you will handle cash flow shortages or even better, windfalls!

3. A budget gives you a measuring stick

When a PCC uses a budget to help manage funds, it can determine whether or not it is on track. The budget is based on what you want to happen and what you think is going to happen. As you move through the year, you can analyse whether you are doing better, worse, or exactly as you thought you'd be doing. You can make adjustments to your plans to help you get to where you want to go.

If you don't have a budget, you won't know that you didn't get there! If you don't have a budget you won't know when to ask for help!

Parish Budget template

Download an Excel template at **www.DofN.org/budget** to help you prepare a budget. It can be adapted to meet your specific parish needs.

Alarming our church buildings



Churches across the Diocese have been suffering from a sustained spate of lead thefts. At its height, on average three to five churches were targeted every month.

Despite the continued support of the Police and the local community, churches are still being targeted and extensively damaged.

To protect this community space, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham James and others have been working together to find a long-term solution and have created The Roof Alarm Scheme. The Scheme has raised over £250,000 and will be spent installing alarms on a number of churches.

Bishop Graham said: "This roof alarm scheme is an imaginative and effective way of combating these thieves and giving heart to those who care for our churches so well."

PCC members should be aware that without an alarm approved by insurers, they may not be fully insured and may not receive sufficient insurance to cover repairs if there is any damage or theft. Bishop Graham and the Police and Crime Commissioner are also asking if the public might consider contributing to install alarms on other churches by donating to the Raise the Alarm campaign.

If you see or hear anything suspicious around a church please report it to the police. To report suspicious activity please call 101 or if you see a crime in progress please call 999.

For further information about the scheme see pages 28/29 of the Nov/Dec issue of The Magazine, or visit **www.DofN.org/alarms**

It is important that parishes read the conditions of their insurance policies, because quite often without an approved roof alarm system insurance companies will not pay out for lead theft.



PCC Tonight

The Revd Dr Paul Overend
Lay Development Officer

On Thursday 5 October, about 120 clergy and PCC members attended the PCC training

evening 'PCC Tonight'.

Graham Archer of CPAS (the Church Pastoral Aid Society) led the training session, which explored the purpose of the PCC, introduced participants to some of

the common dysfunctions of PCCs, and explored some ways to make faith-filled and fruitful, purposeful and productive PCC meetings.

We considered how we might keep a focus on Christ and work well as a PCC team. He pointed to the importance of helpful agendas and time management of meetings, and the value of creative "conflict". The evening also introduced a valuable CPAS resource, 'PCC tonight', which outlines for leaders the 12 common dysfunctions of PCCs to be aware of, and gives training materials for six 35 minute sessions for PCC members, which might be used as a part of regular PCC meetings or as a training course when a new PCC is formed. The pack comes with a password to access very helpful downloadable resources for PCCs.

This evening took place in Eaton Parish Church, and was a part of the 'Empower' work stream of the Committed to Growth Mission Strategy 2021. This work stream hopes to repeat the evening in other parts of the diocese over the coming years.

The 'PCC Tonight' pack (£18.75) is available from **www.cpas.org.uk/shop**

It's getting easier than ever to create beautiful websites which attract new members to church

Can I visit your church?

Gordon Darley
Director of Marketing & Communications

Last weekend I caught a bus and headed to an event at a church some distance from home.

Like millions of others every day, my experience began online. A few weeks before I googled the type of event I was interested in and it brought up search results from an assortment of websites. Clicking on a few near the top of the listings, perhaps spending up to 30 seconds on each site, I found one on a church website which looked good.

The event was free. I clicked 'Book ticket', entered my contact details, and received an automated email a few moments later confirming my booking and a reminder of the key details (date, time, venue). A few days before the event I received a similarly helpful reminder email.

Websites are one of the most common ways for people to discover events. Had it not been for this church telling potential visitors about it online I would never have known and gone. Whilst people rarely visit a specific website as the first port of call, it remains an essential place to promote your regular services, activities, and special events because people Google everything, and Google gets its

results from your website.

Indeed I regularly attend the church I do because I first found it online. The site's design looked modern and professional, and when I walked through the door for the first time the welcome and interest in me as a person (Godly love shown and felt) was warm and memorable. Why wouldn't I want to be part of this local Christian family called church?

Can I encourage you to take a fresh look at your church or benefice website? What does it say about you?

Visitors won't read much, they'll skim it quickly looking for essential information. Everything should be findable within three clicks of the home page. The design style of the site speaks volumes. Images are seen first before a glance is made at some of the words.

You may not be a professional website designer, but you don't need to be to make a site which looks superb. Take a read below of some different easy-to-use system churches are using to be a more visible light in the local community.

If you don't communicate your events and services online, I won't find you to visit!

P.S. The new C of E website launches just as we go to press. Take a look and be inspired!

Top tips for excellent church websites

Essential information to include:

Church location(s) – street name, postcode, pin on a map

Nearest parking

Contact details – a name, number and email address

Is the church building wheelchair accessible?

When is the church building open during the week?

Dates and times of regular services, activities and groups

Style of services (traditional, family service, communion, worship band)

What's available for young children during services?

Special events (if in a village or church hall, what's its location?)

Baptisms, weddings and funerals – who to contact



Calendar

Include a calendar showing services, activities, regular groups and special events. In a benefice with multiple churches include services and activities across all churches, colour coding different churches so it's clear. Use a free Google Calendar at www.google.com/calendar



Photos

Keep the majority of photos of the building away from the homepage. Photos of people are more engaging. Ask permission before taking them and clearly state they are for the website.

Free good quality images

Try these websites: unsplash.com, freeimages.co.uk, pexels.com, pixabay.com and lightstock.com ("faith-focused but paid for").

Web address

Keep it short and easy to say and spell. Include on noticeboards, banners, posters, leaflets, invitation cards and service sheets.

Promoting special events

Use Eventbrite for online booking/tickets – it's free, simple and easy to use. Add the link it creates to your church website as a 'Book now' link. If taking payments, contact Parish Buying at www.DofN.org/eventbrite to get reduced payment rates from Eventbrite.

Mobile friendly

Check what your existing website looks like on a mobile phone. More people now visit websites

through mobiles than on a computer, so if it displays poorly you frustrate visitors and miss out communicating with them. Using a modern website system (examples below) ensure you don't have to worry about mobile compatibility – it just is by default.

Simplicity

Don't overcomplicate your website or fill it with unnecessary content. Keep it simple and clean; white space is good in between short sentences. Never use a background pattern or unusual fonts.

Local links

Show you're an integral part of local community life and link to local websites such as the village hall, parish council, pub, sports clubs, cafes and businesses. Ask them in return to link to your site. This raises your listing on Google.



Online giving

Make it easy for visitors to give to your church. Set up a JustGiving page for projects and appeals and link to them from your website. Have a general donations page and donations via text message. Read more at www.DofN.org/txt

Website systems which work for multi-parish benefices



Jason Baldry
STN (St Thomas Norwich)

We have been using Squarespace for over four years now, moving over to the platform from WordPress. What Squarespace offers us are websites that are clean, responsive and easy to maintain whilst ensuring absolute security.

Squarespace also has amazing support built into the yearly subscription fee, so if you ever need help they are on hand. It fits our brand perfectly. We strive to not just have one of the best church websites, but also a website that can compete with the best that the private sector has to offer. Being a platform used by both churches and professionals in multiple industries, Squarespace allows us to capture that level of quality.

At STN we want to work with other churches to help them bring their websites to life, and can assist with integrating other key services such as domain names, email and social media. www.squarespace.com



The Revd Adrian Miller
Rector, Mulbarton Group

The ChurchNet website system we use, along with several other benefices, I created and designed primarily for multi-parish Anglican benefices (although can be used by single parishes or non-Anglican churches). I've spent nine years

using my previous technical experience to build something that really fits our context, and that others can use too.

It gives a really good first impression to those curious about one of our churches. With high population turnover, and new housing estates, having a professional looking site for people checking us out is very important. The site looks great on any device, and because it is dynamically generated from a database, it never goes out-of-date. The database is super-easy to keep up-to-date with fresh news, events and resources for people to download. We regularly receive comments from baptism families, wedding couples

and visitors to the church, telling us how surprised they were by how good the church website is!

It goes far beyond a simple shop window web presence, however. It helps ease communication and administration in the benefice, with a host of helpful features, including a full secure email server, with unlimited email addresses and group forwarding, automatic email updates, service rotas, booking systems, community engagement tools, and much more. The feature list is extensive, and all as standard. It is being actively developed and is well supported.

The complete system is available for churches for just £120 per year per benefice, regardless of how many parishes make use of it. This is a less than anything comparable, and made available at such good value out of a passion for less well-resourced churches to have really decent websites.

www.churchnet.co or contact me on adrian@churchnet.co

Funding available to commemorate the end of WW1

Grants are available of between £3,000 and £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help parishes look at the heritage and impact of the First World War on your parish or even benefice.

This is a marvellous opportunity for your parish to be involved with the local community. There is the possibility of involving local residents who are related to those who were killed in the war and also involve your local school. Part of me feels it is our duty to pass on this heritage information to future generations.

You may feel that it is beyond what you are able to achieve, but the grant allows you to pay someone to do this investigative work.

Hopefully this will lead to you having an exhibition, and possibly a talk, which people from outside your local parish will come along to. You can even apply for money to host the events.

Your church, for past generation, was the centre of the local community, and we need to re affirm this position.

For more information visit: www.DofN.org/ww1

About to start a project in your church?

We have a team of Church Building Ambassadors who are here to help you. Whether it is advice, a sounding board or guidance with filling in

application forms - help is at hand. To access this help, contact Caroline Rawlings on **01603 882351** or **caroline.rawlings@dioceseofnorwich.org**

How external funding...

Saving Knapton's Angels



Elizabeth Winter
Churchwarden

This Medieval church with its unique painted Flying Angels and Double Hammer Beamed Roof has been repaired to allow future generations to appreciate its craftsmanship and beauty. The restoration has been achieved with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund without whose help and guidance this could not have taken place. Other major contributors were: The National Churches Trust, WREN, Norfolk Churches Trust, All Churches Trust, Garfield Weston, Peterhouse Cambridge, The Bishop of Norwich's Fabric Fund, and Church Care on behalf of The Wolfson Foundation.

In August 2013, the first application for funding was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Unfortunately, this was rejected. A second application made in February 2014, was successful. The project was described as "Urgent high level structural repairs to the badly leaking roof of the nave and repairs to the fabric of the tower including the removal of asbestos from within the tower, and to associated gutters, down pipes and soakaways, to make the building weather proof. Plus, a new guide books and website. Also, the installation of a disabled toilet and kitchenette, giving the building a greater use for the community and visitors alike".

Work began in November 2015 with the removal of the asbestos. The main project started in April 2016. The Tower had extensive repairs to the Stonework. Whilst this was progressing work began inside the church with the removal of the collection of grave covers from the west end of the nave. The conservator who oversaw

the removal reported that "This is a remarkable collection of high status memorial sculptures dating to between c.1120-1250, unique as a group in Norfolk at least, and all pre-dating the present church at Knapton. As such there is no doubt that they are of exceptional regional as well as local cultural significance." Due to the unique collection of covers it was decided by the Churches Building Council that they should not be covered by the Choir stalls as originally planned, a Faculty Variance was applied for and granted. This means that the grave covers are now on full display to visitors.

The disabled toilet and kitchenette have been installed. New guide books have been produced and a quiz sheet for children visiting the church. www.knaptonsangels.co.uk, the churches new website is slowly taking shape and will give the church a fresh window for the world to see.

The cost of the latest repairs and improvements was over £370,000.

Parish Insurance

A new alternative from Trinitas Church Insurance Services

We understand that church premises can vary considerably.

This means risks and security can be complex and specific to individual sites.

As you know, when such buildings have valuable fixtures and fittings, with regular public access it is vitally important to have the right insurance.

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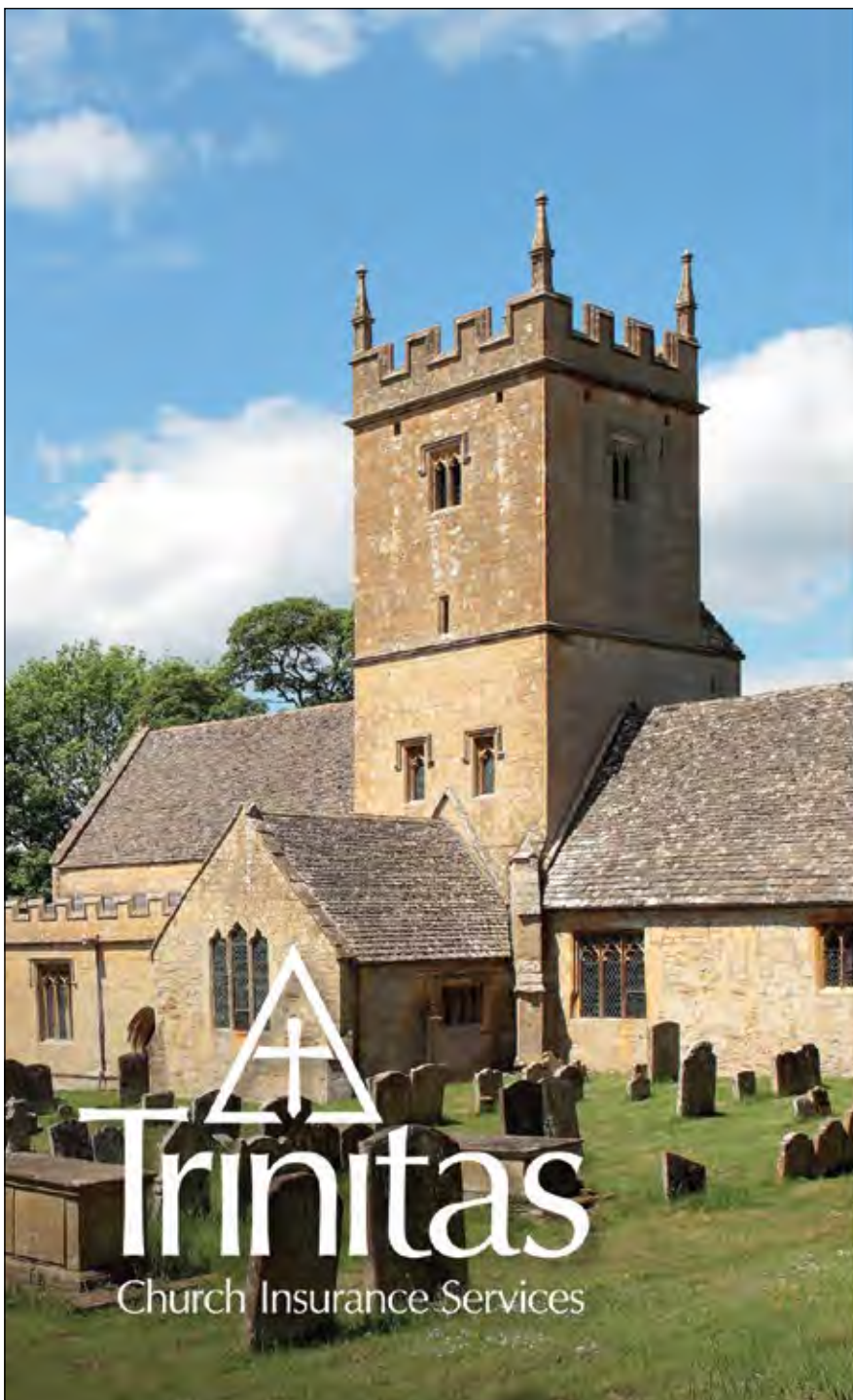
To request a quote call

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or visit

www.trinitaschurchinsurance.co.uk

Trinitas Church Insurance Services is a trading style of Stackhouse Poland Limited who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to sell general insurance products. Our firm reference number is 309340.



...is making a difference



John Brydon
Churchwarden

St George Tombland is a 13th century grade 1 listed building and is one of eight medieval churches in the city still in regular use. Old age has taken its toll and over recent years we have had to

A labour of love

undertake major works on the building. These have included, in 2008 restoring the clock tower and building a disabled toilet as well as a foldaway kitchen. More recently during 2013 to 2015 we undertook major work, which involved refurbishing the clerestory windows and replacing outer brickwork. Additionally, the south porch and the south-west window were restored, tie bars installed, and new corbels to support the nave roof. In 2016 the electric pew heaters were replaced with more efficient units.

Currently we are about to undertake restoring the medieval staircase in the tower turret which is beginning to collapse. At the same time we will be opening up the north porch doors which were the original entrance to the church.

None of the above could have been accomplished without the generous support of our congregation in giving both money and time; the latter in respect of appeal letters and applications for grants. We were

also supported by a number of local charities as well as substantial funding via English Heritage and subsequently the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Indeed it is only through the support of the latter that we are able to embark on the restoration of the tower turret and the north porch door.

We do have a duty to care for the building entrusted to us, both as a place of worship but also as part of the heritage of Norwich and the country. Apart from this, the benefits have included, 'a working together' by numerous members of the congregation who undertook various tasks, making the building more user friendly for both regular worshippers and visitors and when the current north porch work is completed, providing easy disabled access.

Finally, money included HLF support continues to become ever tighter and the information required more rigorous. We would be happy to share our experiences and any expertise we have with others.

Mass migration avoided

The Revd Adrian Ling

Like many medieval churches, All Saints' King's Lynn was a cold church. In 2013, the central heating system was condemned, and for three years the congregation mounted an annual exodus to the much warmer Roman Catholic Church of the Annunciation for our Sunday Masses. Various grants were applied for, but sadly one major funder repeatedly turned us down because we could not 'prove our community worth.' The three charities that did help us were Anglo-Catholic societies that accepted our argument that without heating, we were severely restricted in our mission and outreach. Why would any enquirer from the surrounding housing estate want to leave their warm flat to come to a freezing cold church?

There was, however, a substantial deficit still to fill. We decided to ask the congregation to pay for individual heaters, and we said that we would monitor progress with a chart in the church. The first chart had pictures of pews which would have little pictures of heaters put beneath them as



money was received. It was such a dull chart. So in an effort to grab the people's imagination we put pictures of cold penguins on every pew on the chart. As sufficient money was received, the cold penguin was replaced by a bird from tropical climes, a happy toucan. It might sound rather twee, but the conversion of penguins to toucans at the end of mass helped sustain interest and momentum in the fund-raising, and heaters were installed under every pew ready for last winter. And this year there was no need for us to fly off on our annual migration.



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Keeping you informed... updates from the Mission Strategy streams

LISTEN

Since our last report we have held two workshops, **Transforming your church building for mission** in Old Hunstanton and Filby. Emphasis was on:- 'it's not being a building project, but a mission project that happens to involve a building'. Both have been well received and due to demand a further workshop is planned for 23 November.

We now have a number of **Church Building Ambassadors**, available to provide training and support for parishes in the best use of their buildings and how to apply for grants. Details of this service can be found on the Diocesan website.

To support our **Fabric Officers**, we are currently looking at creating a template that could be used when engaging contractors, detailing what needed to be considered/checked before using anyone.

The **Diocese of Norwich Churches Trust** had hoped to have started vesting some of our churches but a delay has been caused whilst a rather complicated issue of insurance is ironed out.

Statistics for Mission – a meeting with the Church Commissioners focused on how the information requested is used at

national level but more importantly the interpretation and benefits that can be gained at parish level. This in turn freeing up time to be used in Mission. The **Parish Dashboards** created with this information are available via our website. The response has been very positive – if you know why information is being collected and the benefit it can provide you then remove the perceived burden and bureaucracy.

We are working with the **Imagine Norfolk Together Development Workers** to facilitate a process to help churches think about themselves in relation to the local community they seek to serve.

At the Bishop's Day of Celebration and Prayer we had four key areas relating to how we listen to the Church, community, ourselves and God.

We included a 'Sign Post' area where practical help was given but where we also collected details from those offering help. Responses to the feedback collected at March's Synod were also on display.

We also had the use of St Catherine's Chapel where people were able to go to pray and 'Listen' to God.

The Diocesan Mission Strategy document describes the role of the Celebrate Workstream as follows: *"To develop more effective ways of sharing what God is doing among us, and make more widely known the growing body of good practice and the key resources that can support growth"*.

During the past six months the Workstream has met three times and we have focussed on:

Short films/videos

Tim Rogers, the Digital Communications Officer for the Diocese, is producing short films highlighting stories of parishes engaging in mission. The first of these was shown at Diocesan Synod in March and celebrated the work of a group of parishes in Norwich who are working with people who have resettled in Norfolk and are seeking friendship and the opportunity to learn English. Tim's aim is to produce a new video about every two months, so if you have a project to celebrate please get in touch with him on **01603 882376** or **tim.rogers@dioceseofnorwich.org**

Mission Is

This visual display is available for parishes to borrow and it highlights stories of imaginative activities going on all over

the diocese, reminding us of how diverse mission can be, ranging from Pub Church, to Science Festivals to Dementia Clubs.

Thy Kingdom Come

Our Diocese responded very positively to the call from the Archbishops for a wave of prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost. Beacon services were held in the Cathedral and the two Minsters at which special candles were given out to every parish in the diocese encouraging daily prayer. All three services were well attended with 800 + at the Cathedral, and 200+ at each Minster ~ these reminded us that all of our mission endeavours need to be grounded in prayer and they were also a wonderful opportunity to join together in worship and celebrate our faith.

This Publication

It struck me as I read the last edition of PCC News that this is a fantastic example of "Celebrate and Share" – so do make sure you share your expertise, good ideas and experience through this publication and we in our Workstream would also love to hear from you if you have news of what you've been doing which you think might help other people.

IMAGINE

The Diocesan Mission Strategy 2021 opens with: *"To God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine..."* (Ephesians 3.20-21)

What is it to imagine? To some it is just naïve fanciful daydreaming, wistful wonderings whilst the pragmatists roll-up-their-sleeves and get on with the business of reality. However, imagination can be world transforming if we give it over to God and allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to be co-creators with Him. Jesus often spoke of God's Kingdom being near, even though the reality of life in 1st century Palestine was oppressive under Roman occupation. Yet, through his life and teachings Jesus empowered his followers to imagine and live out God's Kingdom there-and-then: spiritual imaginings became physical reality. In the same way the Church is called to imagine a better world, to live out that imagining now, and point to Jesus the one who makes those imaginings a reality.

This 'imagine' dynamic is what I saw

in microcosm at the Bishop's Day of Celebration and Prayer. It started with a blank sheet of paper and prayer, and ended up with immense creativity. To enter the Imagine zone you stepped through Dr Who's time travelling TARDIS and leapt to the 1950s when the Church was at the centre of community, a hub for socialising, celebrating and shaping lives. We remembered and were thankful for the treasures we had back then.

In the present we held up a mirror to ourselves and looked at how society stereotypes Church as judgemental, self-obsessed or irrelevant, but also recognised the Church's ongoing love and service to the most marginalised people in our society. We reflected on our current standing and that we are just viewed as one of many options that people can follow to shape their lives.

Finally, we leapt into the future by entering into the fantasy world of Narnia. There we were encouraged to imagine what the Church could/should/would look like. Do you dare to imagine and work with God to create the Church of tomorrow today?

Work is progressing well with the EMPOWER workstream.

The **Undergraduate Training Scheme** is an attempt to train local young people to work in some of our secondary schools, and is being spearheaded by Jonathan Richardson. This is planned in association with Ridley College Cambridge, and will give students practical experience alongside a professional qualification. The students will be based in secondary schools, where there is good support from local churches, already engaged in work in the feeder primary schools. We plan to start two students in 2018, and hope that the initiative will grow and may attract funding under the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme. This is in response to a sense that many of our churches undertake excellent work with children and young people at primary level, but that there are fewer cases of this continuing into secondary level. We are keen to build confidence and capacity for this important aspect of our mission and ministry.

We have received four strong bids from

schools and churches across the diocese.

Similarly, we are in the process now of looking to recruit a small group of young people who will explore their vocation together for a year, as part of our **Ministerial Experience Scheme**. This comes at a time when we have seen a very encouraging increase in the numbers of people beginning training for ordination and also in beginning the process of exploring their vocation. However, we need to continue to pray for new vocations to all forms of ministry.

The first group of clergy and lay people have been invited to register for our initial residential course on **Leading your Church into Growth**, and there has been an impressive uptake for the training session **PCC Tonight** which we are running in partnership with CPAS.

Applications for **Growth in Service grants** can now be made, and details are found at **www.DofN.org/growth**

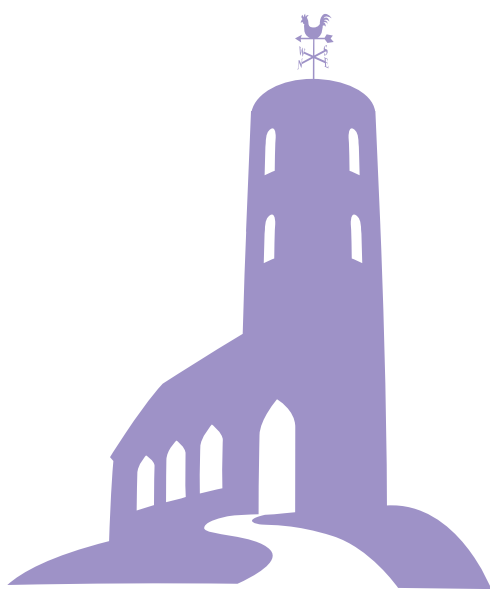
Do continue to pray for us and with us in the faith that God is able to achieve among us more than we can ask or imagine.

EMPOWER

You are the Diocese

Whether you believe this is or not, but YOU, yes YOU, reading this now, are the Diocese!

Occasionally as I travel across the Diocese, I am told that the Diocese takes all our money, but if you think about it logically you and everyone else who sits on your PCC, and the people who work at Diocesan House to help and support you are the Diocese. Support provided for you at Diocesan house comes in many forms, so in this edition I have asked some of the departments to provide a resume of what services they provide to help and support you.



Church buildings

We serve parishes by offering advice on numerous issues affecting church buildings and parishes, such as:

- Obtaining faculties and other permissions
- Working with architects and surveyors
- Interpreting quinquennial inspection reports
- Undertaking re-ordering schemes
- Adapting church buildings sympathetically
- Introducing facilities into churches
- Initiating regular maintenance and repair regimes
- Approaching and dealing with other interested parties (e.g. Historic England)
- Making buildings appropriately secure (including advice on lead theft)

Supporting you



Finance

Finance is the servant of mission, we provide advice and support to enable and promote Ministry and Mission throughout the Diocese:

Parishes/Treasurers

- Parish Accounts Workbook
- Training sessions
- Treasurers Handbook
- Gift Aid and GASDS
- Budgeting
- PCC Trust administration for over 1,000 Trusts

Spire

Spire Property Consultants is a company which provides surveying and architectural services to PCCs and church schools. The company was set up and is wholly owned by the Diocese of Norwich, with the intention that profits are passed back to the Diocese to support its mission and ministry aims. We deliver property services with Christian values and have particular specialisms around building conservation and creative use of buildings. We can help you with:

Church building projects:

- Feasibility studies – looking at project options
- Sketch ideas and full drawings
- Assistance with grant applications
- Help with developing community engagement
- Faculty applications and liaison with DAC
- Project management services
- Budgets and costings

Clergy

- Stipends administration
- Occasional duty claims
- Statutory fees
- Pensions

Church Schools

- Financial co-ordination, monitoring and project management of school capital projects

Parish Share

- Benefice Requests
- Benefice Support meetings
- Monitoring collection of Parish Share
- Advice to parishes on maximising income and reducing overheads, i.e. Grant funding, Gift Aid, Insurance, utility costs

Synod/Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance

- Statutory Finance (Charity reporting, Company reporting)
- Budgeting
- Trading subsidiaries
- Mission strategy
- Special appeals (Syrian Refugee, Church room alarms to name a few)
- Accounts for other entities in the Diocesan Family



Children Youth & Families

The Children Youth and Families Team works missionally by advising, resourcing, training and equipping churches across The Diocese of Norwich.

Advising

We work with national organisations ensuring new research and resources are communicated and made available. We visit churches helping them to think strategically and develop their youth & children's work.

Resourcing

We run resource centres to give churches access to shared resources. We hold a range of equipment including books, prayer materials, Godly Play, music, instruments, outdoor and indoor games, tents and gazebos.

Training

We run 6 core training modules which we encourage all workers and volunteers to attend over time. These cover: Physical & Faith Development, Behaviour Management, Session Planning and Risk Management, Transitions and Discipleship, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs, Team management and leadership. We run additional courses on topics such as mental health, bereavement and sexuality.

Equipping

We offer courses and residentials to bring young people from across the diocese together. We have recently launched a degree course in Youth Ministry with students placed in local churches.



Photos from three large events the Diocesan staff team helped support: Resourcing your Parish, the Royal Norfolk Show and the Bishop's Day of Celebration and Prayer

BRIGHT MAP

Promote your local church groups & activities

Bright Map is an online map where visitors can search for community groups and activities near to where they live, many run or supported by local churches.

Add your church's to the map for free at www.brightmap.org/norfolk

COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING 2018

The Diocesan Marketing & Communications Team will be running a series of training events throughout 2018. We would like to run them at a venue near you! Please call or email us if you have a venue and think you can gather 15 or more people from local benefices or deaneries who would find a particular training session beneficial.

STARTERS

One-to-one sessions. £5 per person. Book a date and time which suits you; we'll help you practically to get started with:

Setting up a
Facebook page

Setting up a
Twitter account

Using
A Church Near You

Designing a benefice
logo or branding

MAIN MENU

Half-day sessions for a morning, afternoon or evening. £5 per person.

Promoting your church news & events

What are the most effective forms of communication to promote your church news and events? We give an overview of using the local press and media, websites, social media, emails, writing news articles and more.

Using social media effectively

How can we use social media to promote church news and events with the local community? This training explores what social media channels are best to use and how to use them effectively in a church context.

Taking better photos

This hand-on training will give tips and guidance in how to shoot great photos that tell a story. Come with your smartphones or non-expensive camera to try shots out.

Getting a new church noticeboard

Practical advice on what makes an excellent noticeboard; from content to manufacturers.

Creating excellent benefice websites

What makes an excellent 'church' website? This session will give top tips and advice, looking at both the content and layout but also different website systems.

Using email to communicate effectively

E-newsletters can be a very effective tool in communicating both with church members and visitors. Explore setting up a MailChimp account and top tips.

Designing & printing publicity materials

Advice and guidance on how to create event posters, banners and more which have impact.

Organising a successful event

Organising an event can often seem overwhelming. Hear tips for good planning: everything from establishing the aim, organising a team, the administration and more.

An evening with the local press

Hear from members of the press such as the EDP and BBC Radio Norfolk about getting your story featured.

Press & media interview training

Designed for people who may have to give interviews to the print and broadcast media. Learn what the journalist wants, how to get your message across, and how to get the best from your time on air/in print. *(This training is for a full day and will cost £60 per person.)*

How to take and share good video

How to get the best from your smart phone or camera when filming, as well as advice on planning, editing and audio for your film.

Coordinating a benefice magazine

Parish or benefice magazines are a great way to communicate with the local community. Hear top tips and advice on how to produce one.

In addition to coming to you, all of the above training is available on set dates at Diocesan House in Easton throughout 2018.

Visit www.DofN.org/comms for dates and times.

Email angela.george@dioceseofnorwich.org for all enquires.

3 FOR 2

Book on two training sessions and receive the third absolutely free!

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Contact: Darren Butler MinstSCE
darren@churchsoundengineer.co.uk

ISCE
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It's not just for Christmas...

Jonathan Richardson
Children, Youth and Families
Development Officer

A famous advertising slogan is 'A Dog is for Life... Not Just For Christmas' which got me thinking about how this may apply to the church. We often put huge amounts of effort into the lead up to Christmas, planning events to invite people to – but maybe forget the follow up. We are all familiar with the post-Christmas blues – even to the point of people booking a holiday to recover from the rush! But what does this mean for those we try to connect with in our Christmas events. For many, loneliness and depression can set

in during the dark days of winter – their need is most when we are doing the least! The challenge therefore is to think of how you can stay connected and develop more permanent relationships following the Christmas high.

It is a bit early for Easter but you could have an invitation ready that you can give to people for an event after Christmas:

Do something around New Year

- Have a New Year Party
- Organise a New Year's Walk – finish with hot drinks and snacks at the church
- Do an outdoor gym or physical challenge to draw on people's desire for New Year's resolutions

Run a kids club to look after kids while parents go to the sales!

Do things around other Christian Festivals

- Hold a post-Christmas – 'Unwanted Present Swap Party' – you could schedule this around 'The Feast of the Epiphany' on 6 January – celebrating the arrival of the wise men
- Traditionally many churches remove Christmas decorations at Candlemas (2 Feb). Why not make a party of it – do some stargazing, have a bonfire and butties
- Hold a Valentines Dinner – you could start a 'Marriage Course' at the same time (<http://themarriagecourses.org>)
- Do not forget Easter! – start planning now...
- People love baking - Run a Hot Cross Bun making workshop
- Learn to run an 'Easter Experience' (training and resources are available through the diocese - www.DofN.org/easterstory). You could do this in the school – or



better still set the church up and invite classes down to the church if it is near enough.

Don't Forget other people

Find out if those in your community have other cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year (16 Feb 2018) and Passover (30 March 2018) – these can be useful times to engage with schools and maybe offer something different – how about doing a Passover meal

in the church for children from the local school and their families.

Do it on your own


Each of us should seek to be welcoming and hospitable and this does not need to be onerous, you could just...
Invite someone round for a meal
Commit to pray for the people you have come into contact with
Setup a babysitting group to offer to young families.

Services of celebration and thanks giving

Have you got an amateur dramatic production taking place in your local community?

Why not liaise with the group and have a special service of celebration/thanksgiving in your church? Get the people from the group involved, and ask them if they would like to do the readings and deliver the prayers. Although not an amateur dramatic production, the cast from the pantomime at Norwich's Theatre Royal go to St Peter Mancroft for a special service.

Send a card



Christmas is the time when non regular church goers are more likely to cross our threshold. The problem is letting them know what we have going on. An ideal solution to this problem is a simple Christmas card, wishing everyone season's greetings and listing services and events in your parish.

Pop one through every door. As a backup, and for people outside/visiting, all this information needs to be on social media sites. (Every parish has a grandchild that is computer literate!!) Also the Communications team at Diocesan House are more than happy to help you set this up.

* Last Christmas *



"Oh yes they are!"

The Revd Robert Avery

For many years the Church of St Peter Mancroft, next to the market square in Norwich city centre, has had close links with the nearby Theatre Royal. The highlight of the relationship is the Pantomime Carol Service which takes place every year on Christmas Eve, or the Friday before Christmas (as this year).

It is a carol service quite unlike any other, and the Church is completely packed, with many in the congregation returning year on year. Members of the Theatre Royal's staff and the show cast take turns to read, sing and perform. Anything can happen, and even the pantomime animal has a role. Last year Bishop Graham, who was giving the sermon, was led-in by Daisy, the pink pantomime cow (who behaved impeccably).

A service like no other... Oh yes it is!!!

It is a lot of fun, and in part it is designed to offer those involved in the Panto a chance to celebrate Christmas themselves. All of them work extremely hard over the holiday period with twice-daily shows, and most of them will be away from home, family and friends for the holiday period. We put on a bit of a party for them after the service ends.

At another level, it makes a connection between the world of theatre and the Christian story, which has the greatest drama of all at its heart – the story of God's loving redemption of humanity through Christ's incarnation. There are many themes that overlap, including love, hope, courage, transformation, the triumph of good when all seems lost, and the ultimate defeat of evil.

Community connections

Carolyn Thomas-Coxhead

Last December Fulmodeston Church held an Advent Market. Although it was felt attendance was down last year, possibly due to all the other markets springing up in the area, the quality of what was on offer was really wonderful, including the exhibition of Alan Heath's ikons and the harp music he provided.

The church has raised £260 from the market (produce stall, books and donations) and the Project Linus took £150 to help buy further materials to make more quilts and other items for babies in high dependency units at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital. The Food Bank box was also overflowing. The church is really pleased to be helping such important charitable works.



Fairtrade and other good causes also ran stalls which were well-supported. Leftover perishable produce was frozen and was given to the Soup for Yemen.

All the stallholders were pleased with the interest shown in their work: most are coming again this year. We have found this an excellent way of connecting with our local area, and bringing other stall holders to the event brings a diverse group of people to the event.



A Christingle service at St Andrew and St Peter's, Blifield, Norfolk

Don't delay: help visitors discover your Christmas services by adding them to 'A Church Near You' today!

Visit www.achurchnearyou.org

All things bright and bootiful

Linda Holly
St John the Baptist, Bressingham

More than 430 people attended a Medieval Weekend at Bressingham Church on the 5 and 6 of August.

The event was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as a heritage activity relating to a £250,000 grant towards replacing all rainwater goods and relaying lead roofs to make the church watertight. The event proved to be a great success, attracting a diverse range of people who visited the church for the first time. Demowbrays' Retinue, a troupe of living history interpreters, were superb. Each of the seventeen characters, ranging from the Duchess, Elizabeth de Mowbray to a humble baker, managed to bring 15th century England to life.

Demowbrays attention to detail was astounding: all the tents, costumes and artefacts such as medieval fiddles were carefully researched and authentically recreated. They stayed in character throughout - visitors



could have come at daybreak to see them mustering and holding household prayers in Latin. Demowbrays historical research was meticulous. For example, they recreated Bressingham manorial court under the lordship of Sir Thomas Pilkington in the 15th century! Processing each afternoon into the church led by the visiting Duchess, Elizabeth de Mowbray, Demowbrays were

truly magnificent to see. They very effectively kept a balance between entertaining and informing people about the medieval manorial court system. The court culminated with the baker found guilty of selling underweight bread and led out of the church to the stocks, to be pelted by the visitors with eggs! Please see www.bressinghamandfersfield.org for bright and bootiful photographs.

Visitors also enjoyed looking at the historical documents and local history display in the church. Thanks to the recent Heritage Lottery Funded bench ends research project, many admired and learned about Bressingham Church's magnificent and rare late 15th century to mid 16th century ornately carved bench ends. Visitors further appreciated seeing the archaeological finds discovered during building repair groundworks, especially as one of the archaeologists, Simon Underdown, helped out at the event explaining the finds. Visitors were further treated to medieval music beautifully played on the organ by Adrian Kitchen.

Refreshments were served by a welcoming team of volunteers. Visitors were treated to a wide variety of home baked cakes and savoury items, plus Pimms and a delicious local ale were served. At the end of each day, Demowbrays Retinue reentered the church to drink this ale in recreation of a traditional leet ale.

Freedom to choose

James South
Senior Finance Officer

We have become aware of an increased volume of energy brokers contacting PCC treasurers over the last few months.

Please note that the Diocese does not endorse any commercial companies that offer this service.

PCCs are free to deal with these companies. However, we suggest you do so with caution and ensure that you do not feel pressured into accepting quotes you are not comfortable with.

Were you to investigate energy bill levels, the Diocese does recommend the Energy Basket which is an initiative run by the Church of England in conjunction with the Church in Wales; more details can be found at www.parishbuying.org.uk

All creatures great and small!

The Revd Roger Key
Corton Benefice

It has been our tradition in the Benefice to hold a Service on Saint Francis of Assisi Day to which pets and their "owners" are invited.

Like many things in the Church it has had good, bad and indifferent responses over the years, but currently seems to enjoying a revival in respect of increased interest and answers to the invitation.

Corton has a working farm which lies close by the medieval Church and this aspect has lent itself to our being able to mark the seasons and the cycles of agriculture much more easily than has been possible in the dormitory suburb nature of Hopton Village and so we have used Saint Bartholomew's as the venue for the Blessing of Pets for the past two years.

Last year Sky, the horse, had been

specially washed in preparation for the Service and so she was unconditionally invited to enter the Narthex along with her canine companions and the humans who had come with them.

This year Sky brought Misty, the 23 year-old pony, along with her and once again we experienced exemplary behaviour from all the animals and, it can honestly be said, from most of the humans too.

Does this indicate some of the hallmarks of Committed to Growth?

During the short Service there is a Reading from Scripture and various prayers and a Blessing is said for the animals and their carers.

Afterwards the horses are given apples and carrots while each of the dogs receive a treat to chew.

Planning and preparation are relatively simple with only the need for the Liturgy to be printed off and a suitable scoop and brush to be provided for timeous intervention



in the case of the unexpected! The trustworthy Church Hoover (wet and dry vacuum) is used at the end to mop up the crumbs!

Publicity is through the weekly pew leaflet and mentioned at assemblies in the two village Primary Schools.

I suppose that the experts would

be apoplectic at our lack of Health and Safety signage and insurance provisions, but each animal has their carer who sees to their welfare and to the provision of high vis tabards and collars, reins and leads etc. and the rest is common sense and good old mother wit which is still plentiful in the countryside.

Events guide from Norwich Cathedral



A new quarterly publication introduced in April this year, the guide aims to inform even more people about the rich variety of services and events taking place at the Cathedral.

With a print run of 8,000 copies, the guide features in Take One Media racks across Norfolk, as well as at venues across the city. It is also available to view online at cathedral.org.uk/whatson.

If you would like to receive a printed copy for your church please email marketing@cathedral.org.uk

You can also sign up to receive the Cathedral's monthly e-newsletter directly into your inbox at cathedral.org.uk/newsletter

Data Protection guide for PCCs

Just like any other charity or organisation, all parishes must comply with new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which replace the Data Protection Act and take effect from 25 May 2018.

The new regulations give individuals more rights and

protection in how their personal data is used by organisations.

The national Church of England Parish Resources website has a page of advice, guidance, templates and a checklist to help parishes comply with the new regulations.

There are two guides: a two

page overview (designed for use with PCCs), and a more detailed guide for the person implementing this in the parish. The checklist covers the actions outlined in the guides, to help PCCs monitor progress.

Carrying out a data audit is recommended as the amount of

personal data your parish stores and processes may surprise you. Parish Resources has a template data audit document along with some helpful hints to get you started.

For more information visit www.DofN.org/gdpr