

archdeacons'

visitation news

Spring 2011 - issue 7

Churchwardens with attitude!

'Growing disciples of all ages' is the diocesan vision for the next ten years.

After a long process of prayer and reflection, we believe that God is setting before us an exciting vision of being a diocese where growing as disciples and making new disciples is central to the life of all our churches. We want to see churches marked out by their deepening maturity in the faith; by expectant prayer and lively worship; by their community service; evangelistic engagement and loving relationships. This is a worthy vision for the church of Christ and one to which Christians in the diocese are giving a thumbs up! Some of our younger members are saying "bring it on"!

Churchwardens are key to making the vision become a reality. Your contribution will be at least fourfold.

Firstly, churchwardens are to lead by example. It is true of all us in our various roles in the church's leadership that we are first and foremost disciples of Jesus. That is our core identity. Which means that our first responsibility isn't to the church building. It is to building up our own lives in Christ and growing in our own discipleship.

Then, secondly, the 'Canons of the Church of England' tell us that churchwardens have a responsibility to "co-operate with the

incumbent". Our clergy are going to be at the sharp end of the implementation of the diocesan vision. They will be asking churches to define their strategic intentions in Mission Action Plans and helping churches to chart new territory. In such a demanding task the clergy will need both the support and friendship of their churchwardens.

Leaders at all levels in the church will need to give a 'can-do' and 'will-do' message to their churches and not a 'can't-do' or (even worse) 'won't-do'! This is a third area where churchwardens can help the discipleship vision to become a reality. Your words and attitudes will help determine the mood and resolve of your church, either to face change positively or to resist it determinedly! A positive, encouraging word from a churchwarden can lift the sights and spirits of a whole church and help people move forward despite their concerns and anxieties.

And, fourthly, there are specific areas where churchwardens can take a lead in implementing the vision and strategy. Making sure our buildings are "equipped and used for multi-purpose service within the community" is one of them. Ensuring that visitors of all ages are properly welcomed and integrated is another.

In all these ways the churchwardens will be key contributors to the success of the diocesan vision. Can we, as archdeacons, thank you for all that you do and offer you our ongoing support in the tasks ahead.

We are very grateful to Ecclesiastical for their help in producing this newsletter at no cost to the diocese.



**The Venerable
Kevin Roberts**
Archdeacon of Carlisle



**The Venerable
Dr Richard Pratt**
Archdeacon of West Cumberland



**The Venerable
George Alexander Howe**
Archdeacon of Westmorland & Furness

Churchwardens' training...

The next training day for churchwardens will take place on Saturday 11 June 2011 from 10am to 4pm. Once again the venue will be Penrith Methodist Church.

The day will be led by the archdeacons and there will be guest speakers addressing a variety of topics relevant to the work of

churchwardens in the diocese. We are delighted that Mrs Jane Lowdon, the Diocesan Registrar, will be with us, along with Mr Derek Hurton, the Diocesan Secretary.

There will be specialist seminar options during the training day as well as plenary sessions and worship, with plenty to inform,

help and inspire. We shall be taking a particular look at issues relating to the diocesan vision and strategy and at the key role churchwardens have in resourcing our churches for growth.

We anticipate this being a popular day, so be sure to book soon if you have not already done so. Booking forms can be found on the churchwardens' pages of the diocesan website.



Caring for one another

In his letter to the Galatians, St Paul exhorts us to “work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith”.

Within that family, clergy and churchwardens have particular responsibilities for one another's welfare. Regular meetings with churchwardens should not just be seen as “yet another meeting”, but rather as valuable opportunities for building up fruitful working relationships, ensuring open communications and mutual care.

With the introduction of “Common Tenure” as the means by which eventually all clergy will hold office, new responsibilities are placed on us all in this regard. Every office holder will have a written statement of their terms and conditions of service and an agreed role description clarifying expectations and objectives. Those objectives will be a key part of a regular cycle of review and appraisal in which churchwardens will be involved. This is not intended to be overly managerial, but rather to assist laity and clergy to work more effectively together for the glory of God and the furtherance of his Kingdom.

In the ordination service, the bishop asks the congregation if they will uphold the candidates in their ministry. That question features in an important document entitled “Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy”. It reminds us of the fundamental principle of “care for the carers” and suggests that churchwardens have a particular responsibility to ensure that their clergy have:

- a safe environment in which to live and work
- sufficient time off for rest, recreation and holiday
- an annual week's retreat
- adequate administrative help
- full reimbursement of expenses
- the opportunity to contribute to the wider mission of deanery and diocese
- encouragement for ministry to the whole community.

Please see: www.commontenure.org
www.chpublishing.co.uk (to download the “Guidelines” document).



Solar panels on the roof of St Denys, Sleaford www.epic-lincolnshire.org

Greening the church

“Who is my neighbour?” asked a smart young lawyer of Jesus. His answer was the parable of the Good Samaritan, in which the neighbour turned out to be someone the traveller had never met, who indeed should have been his sworn enemy. But circumstances brought them together: the need of one and the care of the other made them neighbours.

Our understanding of neighbour is being hugely, even painfully expanded. Our actions affect people on the other side of the globe. The consumption of the west impoverishes the south. The waste the rich create affects everyone, but has a disproportionate impact on those more helpless. We share our global environment with all humanity. Our neighbours are not just people either. We affect, and yet are dependent upon, all the other living things with which we share our planet.

So care for the world in which we live is a central part of our calling to love our neighbours as ourselves. The Church, to its shame, has not always recognised this. Sometimes it has put the world to come ahead of the world in which we live. Yet Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God is upon us now, not just some time in the future. As Christians, we are called to take a lead in caring for our neighbours throughout the world, caring for the world which nourishes and supports us.

There are many ways in which the churches and their people should care for our world, and should be seen to be doing so. We especially all need to reduce our “carbon footprints”, the

amount of carbon dioxide our consumption generates. This means being aware of our energy use, our consumption of goods and our travel. Being aware is the first step towards taking action. Effective action focuses on the things that really generate carbon dioxide: nominal actions that look good but actually achieve little are distractions. Above all, we all need to take responsibility for living more lightly on the Earth, in our home, in our work and in our churches. It is our task, not someone else's.



Air-source heat pumps at Somerby, Leicestershire
www.orionairsales.co.uk

Revd Prof Ian James
Diocesan Environment Adviser



Pictures: Canon David Fowler

Church Buildings Strategic Review...

Cumbria's churches are varied, numerous and often delightful. There are approximately 635 places of worship in the county, ranging from the 12th century or earlier to the present day. Almost 40% are listed by English Heritage because of their special architectural or historic importance and most of these are Anglican.

Each year, about 85% of the country's population visits a church, and in Cumbria alone churches contribute almost £10 million a year to the local economy through the work of their volunteers and by attracting visitors. These statistics demonstrate that churches appeal to many people on different levels and for diverse reasons.

In order to remain as places of worship in the long-term future, many churches will have to adapt to a situation that some face already, namely one of declining and ageing congregations, and call on the support of others including visitors and the wider community. The Church Buildings Strategic Review is a process that encourages PCCs to think differently about how their church, hall and land are used and cared for and by whom.

The review began in November 2010 and is being led by the Churches Trust for Cumbria, the Diocese of Carlisle and the Methodist District. It is currently being piloted across Windermere and Penrith Deaneries. Each church or Methodist chapel has a nominated representative who, with the help of their PCC/church body, will complete a questionnaire. The questions examine four key areas: reordering and adaptation, promotion and accessibility, energy efficiency and maintenance.

We are currently collating information on each church and chapel in the pilot area to get an overall feel for how well the PCC is

placed in terms of planning for the church's long-term future. The information contains details about income, congregation and the building's condition etc. and we will ask churches to check that it is accurate.

After 1 March - the deadline for the return of the questionnaires - we will examine the answers to identify what the common needs are and how we might help support churches. For instance, some churches may wish to buy their utilities together in order to reduce costs, come together to create a tourist trail in their area or sign up to an organised maintenance scheme. We can help facilitate these. The questionnaires will also highlight where best practice is taking place so that the experiences of these PCCs can guide others.

Once we have collated the results and identified areas of support, we will meet with church representatives in May and June 2011 to develop an action plan together for each church. Afterwards the project will be written up and then rolled out across the county. To see the questionnaires, visit www.ctfc.org.uk/looking-after-churches.html

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Churches Trust for Cumbria.
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Useful websites for churchwardens

Churchwardens potentially have to know about a huge range of things: Health & Safety, buildings (repair and maintenance, security, letting etc.), employment legislation (most churches employ at least an organist, possibly a cleaner) and leadership... as well as growing in their own faith and supporting the clergy!

There is lots of help and support available on the internet:

Carlisle Diocese
www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk

Ecclesiastical
www.ecclesiastical.com

Churches Trust for Cumbria
www.ctfc.org.uk

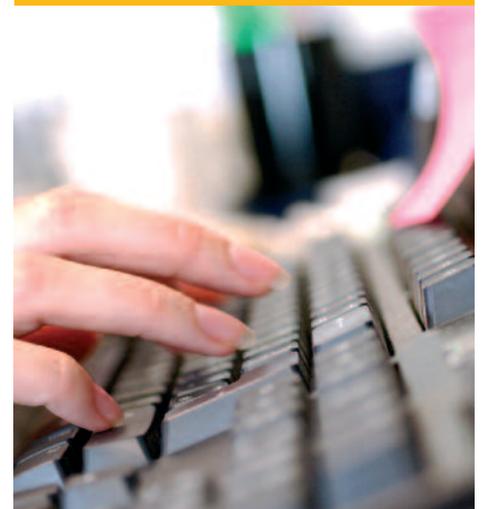
Churchcare
www.churchcare.co.uk

Church of England
www.churchofengland.org

Resources for Churchwardens
www.churchwardens.com

Books for churchwardens
www.churchwardenbooks.co.uk

Even more importantly, the archdeacons and others (the Registrar, the HR Adviser and the Safeguarding Adviser) are all here to offer help and support. Do ring and ask us whenever you are faced with something out of the ordinary or that you are not sure about.



Leaders in prayer

As an archdeacon for the past eleven years and a parish priest for over twenty years before that, I've more cause than most to be grateful for the faithful ministry of many good men and women who have served as churchwardens.

When you think of a churchwarden, your first thought might be about their sheer practicality; people you can rely on when the church boiler breaks down or a grave needs locating. That in itself is invaluable and should in no way be underestimated. Other churchwardens are good administrators and

are often willing to share that burden with their incumbent. Those combined skills in a pair of churchwardens are a gift beyond price!

Yet there is more to the office than that. Churchwardens are rightly to be seen as leaders among the laity in working together with the clergy for the whole mission of the



Church. And Canon Law specifically states that they are to set an example of encouraging others in the practice of their faith.

So what are the challenges and the opportunities here for churchwardens? One of the challenges may be that sometimes your practical responsibilities can detract from your own life of prayer and worship. It may not always be easy, for example, to engage fully with worship when you're "on duty" and ensuring that everyone else's needs are catered for. That can sometimes be resolved by sharing such duties with others who don't have to be churchwardens. You also need, of course, to understand that the routine tasks of your office are essential, and as such are a part of your offering to God.

Yet like all of us, you need to find time for the growth of your own faith and relationship with God. There can sometimes be precious moments of stillness and calm as you open up the church before everyone arrives or as you lock up after everyone else has gone. Regular meetings with clergy and other leaders should provide other opportunities for prayer, as well as the conduct of business. It will be a real encouragement to others if a churchwarden is seen to be an active participant in a house group or prayer group.

In another article, we've looked at mutual support between clergy and wardens. Prayer should be at the heart of that relationship and you should support one another not just in keeping the church in good order, but also in maintaining your own spiritual health.

George Howe

Churchwardens' website page...

The diocesan website is now quite a large site with nearly 1,000 documents and over 160 pages. To help you find your way around, there is a good site map, and we have upgraded the search facility. We have now also created a special page

for churchwardens which brings together much of what churchwardens might be especially interested in. If you have any suggestions or comments, do please let us know. Meanwhile, you can visit the page by going to the homepage, clicking on 'Support' and then on 'Churchwardens' or by going straight to

[www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/
support/churchwardens.html](http://www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/support/churchwardens.html)



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