

 Diocese of Sheffield

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

Since May last year, I have been working half-time with Alex Shilkoff to discern a refreshed Diocesan Strategy for 2024-2032, which we hope will lead to a request to the national Church later this year for significant partnership funding. Without doubt, a high point of this work has been the privilege of spending a day in each of our twelve Deaneries throughout the second half of last year, to see and engage in conversations about what God is doing in and through the ministry of our churches, schools and various mission initiatives.

There simply isn't space to mention everything that we experienced, but I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that right across our Diocese, from Goole in the East Riding to South West Sheffield, the Kingdom of God is being served and realised through the many committed ministries of followers of Jesus. In addition to numerous encouraging conversations, we visited: several schools, all with excellent connections with their parish churches; church-based after school clubs, including the quite inspirational 'Chocolate Club' in Dinnington; Lunch Clubs and work with the elderly, such as those in Brinsworth and West Bessacarr; Social Supermarkets, Food Pantries and Foodbanks across the Diocese, through which community needs are being met and discipleship is taking place; wonderful examples of intergenerational groups, such as the

combined coffee morning and toddlers' group in Attercliffe and JOY (Joining Old & Young) in Wordsworth Avenue; and we even engaged in a bit of street evangelism and conversation in Doncaster city centre!

Of course, we also heard about the very real challenges that our churches and local communities face, and we know that difficult decisions sometimes need to be taken in order to release limited resources for new things. But, if ever you begin to feel discouraged by such challenges, please be reassured by the significant impact that all of the above and much more is having in our communities and in the lives of countless individuals, many discovering for the first time that they are greatly loved by God.

Churchwardens are essential in all of this, and are so often the unsung (even un-noticed) heroes of our parish churches, without whom we wouldn't have the secure base of good governance and cared-for premises from which to minister. So, as I share these encouragements, and as we look forward with excitement to all that God has in store for us as a Diocese over the next nine years, on behalf of both me and Archdeacon Javaid, I would like to say a huge "THANK YOU" to each of you for all that you do and for your commitment to serve as Churchwarden over the coming year.

Venerable Malcolm Chamberlain
Archdeacon of Sheffield & Rotherham



Javaid Iqbal
Archdeacon of
Doncaster



Malcolm Chamberlain
Archdeacon of Sheffield
and Rotherham



Strategy Refresh

A blessing of 2023 was being able to visit every Deanery in our Diocese to listen to and pray with people in each place. This will inform a refresh of our existing Renewed, Released, Rejuvenated strategy and plans for the next 10 years of mission and ministry. We have the opportunity to ask national Church for funding to help us have suitable resources to realise these opportunities.

In every Deanery one of our Bishops, joined by senior colleagues, met with Clergy Chapter, key lay leaders, visited churches, a school and/or a social action project. There was also an open evening session in each Deanery where we gathered feedback on what people would like to see happening in their Mission Area in 2032. These days provided an overview of the variety of mission and ministry in each Deanery and the opportunities that are on people's hearts for the future.

Each of our communities is precious and unique in their current ministry and opportunities. Within this variety though there were some themes that came out clearly across our Diocese:

1. A desire of people to share resources and learning more across Mission Areas and beyond to help people to support and learn from each other.
2. Social action and community engagement done in partnership with other churches and community organisations is being fruitful and blessed across our Diocese. Also, a strong sense of people wanting to reach out and have more community connections.
3. A desire to engage with more children, young people, and families came out in every place and specifically doing schools engagement and all-age worship well.
4. A concern for the church to be better equipped to support people of all ages through challenging times, with a particular emphasis on mental wellbeing.

We are now analysing and reflecting on what we heard to develop plans and funding applications for the future.

The best part of each day was the stories of what God is doing amongst his people – we've included a selection in this magazine. We hope that you both enjoy and are encouraged by them.

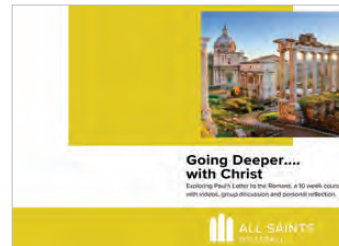
Alex Shilkoff

Strategic Programme Director

Going Deeper... with Christ

The Assistant Minister at **All Saints Ecclesall Parish Church**, Godfrey Smallman, was concerned that there was a feeling amongst some older Christians of being passed by, in the face of perceived priorities in church life. He had been looking for ways to encourage assurance of faith for older believers and to affirm whole-life discipleship. A particular ambition was to include the older generations in the teaching ministry of local church life.

In his discussions with the Vicar, it became clear there was a space in the church calendar into which a new initiative would neatly fit. So,



Godfrey launched a **daytime teaching ministry**, following the weekly Wednesday morning celebration of Holy Communion. The aim was to give those with time in the week, the opportunity for a fresh encounter with God, through the regular study of the Scriptures.

The kindly warning from the Vicar was "Don't worry if nobody comes at first, or maybe only half a dozen". Godfrey says: "So we prepared and prayed and braced ourselves for 'nobody' – but it was a thrilling start and we had over 30 people on the first day!" There is now an established fellowship of 40 – 50 believers meeting regularly, growing in understanding of, and confidence in their faith. The feedback is very positive, and this completely fresh part of church life is now well established.

Revd Godfrey Smallman

Assistant Minister All Saints Parish Church

St Leonard's Church Dinnington – Working with Young People



Chocolate Club began in 2018 and was an instant success. After school, each Tuesday, we serve free hot chocolate drinks to students from Dinnington High School. This has brought us into contact with around 100 young people each week, from Year 7 up to Sixth Form. Initially, there was some suspicion about why we

wanted to give them a free drink, but they accepted our explanation that we were giving God's love to them. Over time, our relationship with them has developed into a warm and mutual respect that is both a joy and a blessing.

During our conversations with the students, we discovered that there was nowhere safe for them to meet with their friends. In November 2023, we launched Safe Harbour. Church is now open on Wednesday evenings providing a safe place for them to socialise with each other.

Irene Madeley

Coordinator for Children and Young People's Work
Churchwarden, St Leonard's Dinnington



Enhance your church's fundraising efforts

Whether you're raising funds for new facilities, building repairs, youth worker recruitment, or daily running costs, the Ecclesiastical Fundraising Hub provides resources to aid your church's growth in fundraising. This practical hub is organised into user-friendly steps, each offering information, guidance and tools, regardless of your fundraising experience.

Explore a wealth of articles, blogs and supporting documents on various topics such as digital fundraising, capital projects, understanding the grants process and forming fundraising teams. Access a free searchable list of church funders providing grants, along with tailored fundraising support for small rural churches.

Also, to support time-constrained churches and volunteers, looking for quick information on the diverse fundraising landscape, the hub offers concise, insightful bitesize videos addressing key fundraising issues. Additionally, sign up for live, free webinars conducted in collaboration with Philanthropy Company across 2024. For additional help, call the fundraising helpline below.

📞 0345 601 9959

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising



An update from grant-making charity, Benefact Trust



BENEFACT TRUST

Every day, Benefact Trust, the charitable owner of Benefact Group, witnesses the crucial role churches and charities play in our communities. Since the Trust was established in 1972, it has awarded over £256m in funding to support these organisations to thrive and make a positive

impact in society. Benefact Trust's grants support a range of causes and there are many heart-warming stories to be found on the website.

🌐 www.benefacttrust.co.uk/news



Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good Awards programme is back again with grants of £1,000 and more to give to churches and charities. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, who are giving away over £1 million to churches and charities in the 2024 Movement for Good Awards.

£1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your church or favourite charity for the £1,000 draw.
- You can nominate as many charities as you like; it's one nomination per charity per person.

There are six £1,000 draws this year giving away between £50,000 and £120,000 in each. Once you've nominated, share your nomination, and get your friends and family to support too.

Did you know?

The Movement for Good Awards has gifted over £5.75 million to more than 2,500 charities since the initiative started in 2019.

Last year, A Rocha UK was awarded £5,000 in the Environment and Climate special draw. A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and is committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

Also, in 2023, £11,000 was awarded to 10 church-related charities through the £1,000 Movement for Good Awards; Kilkenny Christian Centre in ROI actually won twice! So please get nominating; next time it could be your church! You can find out more at:

🌐 www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical

Contains promotional material

Would you like to sign up for e-news?

The monthly e-news is full of useful information to support you in areas such as fundraising, church security and environmental impact. Signing up is easy and you can unsubscribe whenever you choose. Many of Ecclesiastical's customers have chosen to receive this and we hope you would like to join them.

 www.ecclesiastical.com/signup



Financial support for your 2025 sabbatical

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) have assisted over 1,400 clergy members in funding a variety of extended leave projects.


The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a positive and long-lasting impact on your church and community. One of the 2023 recipients, the Rev'd. Heston Groenewald, vicar of All Hallows Church in Leeds, received a bursary to support his local interfaith ministry.

He visited India and Pakistan to experience and learn more about the diverse cultures and customs that make up the fabric of the local community. On his trip, Heston experienced the Holi festival in India and celebrated Easter with Christians and Muslims in Lahore.

// The MBA grant enabled an amazing adventure around India and Pakistan and so has been a valuable, wonderful investment in my wellbeing and in my local interfaith ministry. **// Rev'd. Heston Groenewald**

The application window for the 2025 MBA programme is now open and closes in September 2024. In 2025, we are particularly keen to see more sabbaticals which aim to support the drive for net zero carbon.

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

 www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Invest in making a difference

Worries about social matters, our planet and the environment are factors most of us think about daily. To do more to help address these concerns, there is increasing interest from people looking to invest ethically in accordance with their principles.

What is ethical investing?

Richard Wood, Director of Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (pictured below), explains, "Put simply, ethical investments allow people to invest without sacrificing their environmental, social, moral or religious principles while at the same time aiming to make a profitable return."



Ethical investment funds can be screened using negative or positive criteria. For negatively screened funds, the fund manager will, for example, be screening investments to avoid a range of activities considered harmful – such as companies involved in manufacturing tobacco.

When using positive screening, fund managers actively identify companies that make a positive

social impact or who invest sustainably and/or responsibly. They will have, for example, good corporate governance and employment practices as well as being active in making a positive impact on the environment.

To find out more about ethical investing, contact Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services today.

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

Please note: The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invested. Your capital is at risk.

Looking for help to go green?

Give your parishioners a warm welcome!

We all want our church buildings to be welcoming spaces for both prayer and for wider community activities, but particularly in the chilly months, keeping buildings warm is a challenge and can be costly and harmful to the environment.

Wherever you are in your journey to reduce your church's carbon emissions, Ecclesiastical would like to help. For example, they would like to spread the word about some interesting innovations that they've come across recently.

Warming chandeliers

St Matthew's has been trialling innovative radiant heating chandeliers in their church in Bristol. These chandeliers use a very gentle wavelength of heat, like that of the winter sun, and they warm just the space needed, not the whole church. They have proved much cheaper to run than a central heating system and can help to lower your carbon footprint.



Through the Movement for Good awards, Ecclesiastical awarded a £35,000 grant to St Matthew's in 2023, which will allow them to make the trial installation permanent. If you would like to consider applying for a similar grant, further information can be found on page 3. Also, if you wish to install this type of heating, please let the Ecclesiastical Underwriters

know, so that they can advise on any potential insurance implications and ensure the system itself is covered.

Heated cushions

Another innovation, helping church communities take steps to reduce their carbon emissions by warming people not spaces, is a heated seat cushion! These are powered by lithium-ion batteries which are widely used as a power source in portable electrical products. However,



if you do choose this option, it is important to select seat cushions and fabrics that have an appropriate fire performance and to follow the guidance on charging the cushions. Cushions should comply with British Standards and have the CE mark. If you think that this is an option for you, you will find guidance about the cushions here:

www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-heated-cushions

Ecclesiastical has also developed a new Made Simple guide, which can support you on your journey to make your church buildings more environmentally friendly. It includes information about other alternative heating systems like heat pumps, information about LED lighting and much more.

www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple

If you have any tips that have helped your church in its environmental journey, why not drop Ecclesiastical an email and they can share your ideas in their monthly digital newsletter.

weboffice@ecclesiastical.com



Insurance made simple!

As church insurance experts, Ecclesiastical is well placed to help you navigate many of the complicated insurance responsibilities of your church. They have created a series of 'Made Simple' guides which highlight potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches.



The guides also offer help with activities and projects that PCCs often become involved in, which include:

- Climate change and your church
- Administering insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Church valuation
- Community outreach
- Digital technology
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises
- Unoccupied buildings

You can find lots more information at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple

Herschel Infrared



Funeral planning

As you know, funerals can be costly, but Ecclesiastical can help you make provisions to reduce the financial worry for your family when the time comes and ensure your wishes are provided for.¹

¹ Terms and conditions apply – see website for details.

☎ **0800 055 6503**
✉ **info@epsfunerals.com**
🌐 **www.funeralplans.co.uk**

Car insurance

Ecclesiastical's Clergy Motor Insurance has been tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, unlimited windscreen cover and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹ To find out more about the benefits of this policy, get in touch with Ecclesiastical.

☎ **0345 450 9396**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance**
¹ Subject to terms and conditions



Month by month support



So you can better look after your church and parishioners, Ecclesiastical has again produced their easy-to-view calendar to help you plan maintenance activities throughout the year.

🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-calendar**

Insure your home with Ecclesiastical and they will donate £130 to a church of your choice

Trust130 is just one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical gives back to the community; for every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offers to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Since 2017, Ecclesiastical has donated over £500,000 to more than 2,500 churches in the UK.

A £130 donation really helped **St Peter's Church in Parwich**. Church Treasurer **Stuart Chambers** told Ecclesiastical:

“ If you're short of numbers, it's a big job keeping everything ship-shape. I have a ride-on mower, but you can't get to the actual graves on that so inevitably they can look a bit unkempt, which is a real shame. ”

With the £130 donation, St Peter's was able to keep its graveyard looking neat and tidy by paying for a man with a strimmer.

Award-winning home insurance

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining one of the most trusted home insurance providers with the happiest customers.²



Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in Spring 2024 for home insurance for a record 19th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status. Their buildings and contents cover is also a Which? Best Buy and it was voted the best home insurance in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2023.³



Get a home insurance quote

Ecclesiastical is a specialist insurer who understands the needs of those working in the church and for the church. Their policy helps to protect your home and takes into account the extra duties you carry out for the church.

☎ **0345 777 3322** and quote **CHOPS24**
🌐 **www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance**

¹ Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130-terms ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance ³ www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance

Focal Minister Team for the Cornerstone Benefice

Six Focal Ministers, three from each church, were licensed at the end of 2022 and were joined by one more in 2023 when the parish entered an interregnum. Although based in two different churches, we have met regularly to eat together and support one another as we took on the responsibility. From July, with the Assistant Priest in the Benefice, we have been self-sufficient in running the two churches, including five baptisms and nine funerals, carrying out repairs to both church roofs, and running a monthly service at the Christian Centre. Added to this, we have had two large services; a celebratory service at St Mary's with Bishop Pete to rededicate the church bells and a Confirmation service at St John's with Bishop Sophie, where nine candidates from the Benefice were confirmed. Both were wonderful occasions.



Focal Ministers of the Cornerstone Benefice in the churchyard of St Mary's, Bolsterstone. Left to right: Garry and Maxine Marsh (Churchwardens at St Mary's), Peter Ashworth (Reader and new Focal Minister), Revd Melanie FitzGerald (retired Priest), Elisabeth Coyne (Reader), Martin Price (Reader and Churchwarden at St John's, Deepcar) and Revd Sally Myers (Director of Focal Ministry)

We are very aware that we are in a pioneering role and need to work out how we function together as we go along. With our Annual Review approaching and no new Oversight Minister imminent we now need to make time to take stock. We have requested some team-building training which should give us a better understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses and enable us to improve as a team as we go into 2024.

I know that any sort of ministry can be bumpy at times and we were much encouraged by these words from our Area Dean:

"This has been a tremendous example of teamwork. It seems, from my perspective, to be a good place to serve either as lay people or as ordained. We must all remember though that nothing is ever perfect this side of heaven! However, you're all doing a great job in all your roles! Thank you for all your support!"

I think that we can be very happy with what we have managed to achieve and hopefully inspire others to risk doing the same.

Revd Melanie FitzGerald
Retired Priest and Focal Minister

Good News in Bentley



In 2020, I became the centenary project worker in my local parish church. Since then, working with the parish priest, Fr David, and an amazing team, we have built up an extensive children, youth, and families ministry.

We began with a Messy Church, which has become a real joy in the life of the parish; at its height we've had over 40 children and adults. Most of the membership have found a church home here and we've celebrated baptisms as a new community.

We've also begun a stay-and-play group where we welcome children and carers which has also led to a number of baptisms.

We have built up a wonderful schools ministry, working last Christmas with 10 schools and delivered sessions to over 2,000 children. This included whole days working with every child in school as well as welcoming children into church.

I am excited by the new projects we are beginning in New Bentley and Arksey and the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with more and more members of the community I serve.

Melanie Pay



Racial Diversity – Our Journey So Far...

The journey towards racial equity has been a slow process in the Church of England, but the death of George Floyd in 2020 was a catalyst for change. The whole world was outraged. In the Diocese of Sheffield, we felt the pain, it was like watching our brother being murdered in front of our eyes. In part, this was the birth of *From Lament to Action*, published in 2021 by the Church of England.

Across our Diocese, parishes began to reflect on racism, by hosting events such as Salt & Light Network evenings, Zoom conversations and preaching opportunities to raise awareness about racism and inequality. We began facilitating Unconscious Bias Training, and guest speakers were invited to talk about race, such as Professor Willie James Jennings. Congregations were encouraged to read books like *Ghost Ship* by Father Azariah France-Williams and *We Need To Talk About Race* by Ben Lindsay.

In March 2023, our Diocesan Bishops, Pete and Sophie, with the Senior Leadership Team and the Diocesan Synod, endorsed the *Racial Justice Vision Statement*. This was the work of the Diversity Inclusion and Participation group (DIP), initiated by Bishop Sophie. DIP is formed of members representing different backgrounds/walks of life in terms of disability, education, income, sexuality, ethnicity and heritage.

The Diocese is committed to making our churches more diverse and inclusive, and we are improving representation across the Diocese. Currently, we have one Global Majority Heritage Curate, and four candidates in the discernment process. We have been awarded a grant from the CofE Racial Justice Unit to employ a Racial Justice Officer and an Assistant. They will help us to be more strategic, as we endeavour to grow more diverse communities representing the wide ethnic and cultural make-up of the Diocese.

We are the Body of Christ together, therefore we must do whatever we can to allow all people to flourish. We are responsible for one another, because addressing racism in the Church and society is the work of all God's people.

Revd Anesia Cook

Bishop's adviser on Global Majority Heritage/UK Majority Heritage

Miriam Cavanagh

Churchwarden St Mary's Bramall Lane

BREAKING NEWS: *Revd Anesia Cook has been appointed as the Racial Justice Officer for the Diocese.*

For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **X:** @churchmatters

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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Drones – What They Can Do for Your Church



Recently, a fellow Church Buildings Officer, Jo Edwards, a Resourcing Churches Officer, Zoe Kemp and I became qualified drone pilots. We believe that this training can provide some great benefits for our churches across the Diocese. Here are a couple reasons why:

Keep the Costs Down for Repairs

With many of our churches, due to high walls and parapets, it can be very hard to see the roof from the ground. So, it can be quite hard to detect defects until you get a leak. A leak can be from slipped roof tiles, blocked gutters or faulty flashing, and can require scaffolding to assess the problem. This can be costly, time consuming and intrusive. A pilot scheme with Goole last year where a leak was identified found that a drone can identify the problem quickly and efficiently with minimal intrusion. Due to high walls the scaffolding would have been very expensive to spot an otherwise easily identifiable problem. As seen from the image above, the problem at Goole was easy to find and took just five minutes with the drone. Drone work through us is free of charge as well, so it will save parishes a lot of money.

Help with Net Zero

Our drone can be a valuable source in working towards our 2030 net zero carbon goal. The drone we operate at the Diocese is equipped with thermal imagery technology. This means that we can measure heat loss in our churches and from this better inform how we can make churches more thermally efficient. We know every church is different and thermal imagery is one of the ways we can tailor a net zero programme to every specific church.

Get in Touch

If you would like us to come out and do a drone survey on your church we are more than happy to do so. It's completely free, all we ask is for you to explain why you would like one and to be on site with us. You contact us at cbo@sheffield.anglican.org and we will get back to you as soon as possible!

Josh Hunter

Church Buildings Officer