

APCM MAILING JANUARY 2026

Welcome!

A warm welcome to this new APCM briefing. It contains up-to-date guidance, information, dates, and news about events. Please feel free to share this with anybody you feel this might be relevant to and who might benefit.

MESSAGE FROM ARCHDEACON CLIVE

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Genesis 1:31-2:3

At the very beginning of the Bible there was a formless, dark chaos over which the wind, or Spirit, of God hovered. The very first activity of God is to bring order from chaos through the act of speaking. Of all of the creatures of God's creative acts, it is only to humanity that He speaks directly, addressing them as "you", and it is hence clear from the outset that humanity has a unique and special role to play in the created order of things.

As we gather for our annual meetings, as we participate in bringing order in our parishes, we can be encouraged that we are joining in with the most fundamental activity of God and in the most fundamental calling of humanity, that of speaking things into being. Our annual meetings are hence a time both of Godly creation and also a time of seeing all that we have done and knowing that it is good, of celebrating our last year and

all that has occurred. It is so much more than an administrative task, it is an act of worship.

As we meet remember that even God had a rest day. My prayer for you all is that the diversity of ministries expressed through the decisions taken at your APMs and APCMs is one that brings each of you fulfilment and which is truly honouring to God, in both activity and in rest.

The Bible offers us wise advice, and this year we would do well to ensure that we take the time to really celebrate all that has gone well and to encourage one another.

THE VEN CLIVE HOGGER
ARCHDEACON OF CORNWALL



There are a number of links and email addresses in this document. If you do not have access to the internet please call us at Church House on 01872 274351 for more information or resources.

TELL US WHAT'S CHANGED

It is really important that we know who's who in terms of your parish officers to make sure the right information gets to the right people. This means that each year we ask PCC Secretaries to confirm the details of your parish officers by completing the Place Audit.

The Place Audit is sent out via email – so if you are the PCC Secretary and don't have an email address please let us know asap who we can send it to instead (name and email).

If you don't have a PCC Secretary (yet) let April Bullard know.

An email about the Place Audit is sent out in March by April Bullard who will include helpful instructions in her message and is always happy to help with queries. Contact her via email: april.bullard@truro.anglican.org or call 01872 247219.

PARISH RESOURCES WEB

This **website** is packed with relevant resources for PCCs and their officers. This includes PCC governance, finances, buildings, administration and managing life events (occasional offices).

PARISH FACING SUPPORT SERVICE

We know that there is so much that you all do in your parishes, and in order for us to be as responsive to your needs as possible we have allocated a Deanery Liaison Advocate (DLA) for each deanery – a named contact who can help you access information and support.

The DLAs are existing staff who also

have other roles, and are connected with their colleagues across Church House, so can get answers to your questions quickly, signposting where necessary to the right person. You might find that you already know your DLA, but if not, please do get in touch – there is no such thing as a silly question and they are there to help.



ARCHDEACONRY OF BODMIN	ARCHDEACONRY OF BODMIN	ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL	ARCHDEACONRY OF CORNWALL
East Wivelshire Sarah Welply	Trigg Major Rebecca Evans	Carnmarth North Mel Pomery	Penwith Sue Thorold
St Austell April Bullard	Trigg Major, Trigg Minor & Bodmin Rebecca Evans	Carnmarth South Sue Thorold	Powder Sue Thorold
Stratton Sarah Welply	West Wivelshire Mandy Wells	Kerrier Mel Pomery	Pydar Rebecca St Ledger-Renfree

FREE PARISH TRAINING AVAILABLE

Each year we offer a range of training for parishes. The programme can be found [here](#) on our website. Relevant sessions including:

- Being a PCC Secretary/Churchwarden/Treasurer
- Guide to electoral roll
- Cyber security (IT)
- Beginners guide to Microsoft

Outlook (emails)

- Using AI for administration and minute taking
- Working with children
- Caring for church buildings

We are always happy to receive requests for training and will offer what we can. There are resources from previous training for Secretaries available [here](#).

ELECTORAL ROLL NUMBERS 2026

A reminder that by law you need to inform the Diocesan Secretary of your electoral roll number no later than 1 July each year (CRR Part 1(10)).

Diocesan Synod elections are due to take place in 2027, and your electoral roll numbers for 2026 will be used to calculate how many representatives your deanery will be permitted to elect.

Please send this information to us as soon as possible after your APCM to Simon Cade, c/o april.bullard@trurodiocese.org.uk

HOW TO RUN YOUR APCM FROM START TO FINISH

We are running a session called 'How to run your APCM from start to finish' twice to help you.

To book please click on the date:

4 February 6.30pm-8.30pm (Zoom)

4 March 2pm - 4pm at the Old Cathedral School, Truro

DEADLINES FOR PARISH RETURNS

We contact the registered people for each parish in plenty of time to let them know when the relevant deadlines for the parish returns are – but in case it's you, or you need to nudge the person who does it, these are the deadlines:

31 January - Statistics for Mission

28 June - Return of Parish Finance

31 July - Energy Footprint tool

We are immensely grateful for each of you who assist us with the completion of these returns.

Please contact info@truro.anglican.org if you need any assistance with them.

ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD LAY REPS 2026

Please note that the triennial elections of the Lay Representatives of Deanery Synod are due in 2026. Those elected will serve for the period 2026 – 2029.

Please refer to the Information and Guidance document provided with this mailing for further details about the process.

Cyber Security Small Charity Guide

This advice has been produced to help charities protect themselves from the most common cyber attacks. The 5 topics covered are easy to understand and cost little to implement. Read our quick tips below, or find out more at www.ncsc.gov.uk/charity.

Backing up your data

Take **regular** backups of your important data, and **test** they can be restored. This will reduce the inconvenience of any data loss from theft, fire, other physical damage, or ransomware.



- Identify what needs to be backed up.** Normally this will comprise documents, emails, contacts, legal information, calendars, financial records and supporter or beneficiary databases.
- Ensure the device containing your backup is not permanently connected** to the device holding the original copy, neither physically nor over a local network.
- Consider backing up to the cloud.** This means your data is stored in a separate location (away from your offices/devices), and you'll also be able to access it quickly, from anywhere.

Keeping your smartphones (and tablets) safe

Smartphones and tablets (which are used outside the safety of the office and home) need even more protection than 'desktop' equipment.



- Switch on PIN/password protection/fingerprint recognition** for mobile devices.
- Configure devices** so that when lost or stolen they can be **tracked, remotely wiped or remotely locked**.
- Keep your devices (and all installed apps) up to date**, using the 'automatically update' option if available.
- When sending sensitive data**, don't connect to public Wi-Fi hotspots - **use 3G or 4G connections** (including tethering and wireless dongles) or **use VPNs**.
- Replace devices that are no longer supported by manufacturers** with up-to-date alternatives.

Preventing malware damage

You can protect your charity from the damage caused by 'malware' (malicious software, including viruses) by adopting some simple and low-cost techniques.



- Use antivirus software** on all computers and laptops. **Only install approved software** on tablets and smartphones, and prevent users from downloading third party apps from unknown sources.
- Patch all software and firmware** by promptly applying the latest software updates provided by manufacturers and vendors. Use the 'automatically update' option where available.
- Control access to removable media** such as SD cards and USB sticks. Consider disabling ports, or limiting access to sanctioned media. Encourage staff to transfer files via email or cloud storage instead.
- Switch on your firewall** (included with most operating systems) to create a buffer zone between your network and the Internet.

Avoiding phishing attacks

In phishing attacks, scammers send fake emails asking for sensitive information (such as bank details), or containing links to bad websites.



- Ensure staff don't browse the web or check emails** from an account with **Administrator privileges**. This will reduce the impact of successful phishing attacks.
- Scan for malware and change passwords** as soon as possible if you suspect a successful attack has occurred. **Don't punish staff** if they get caught out (it discourages people from reporting in the future).
- Check for obvious signs of phishing**, like **poor spelling and grammar**, or **low quality versions** of recognisable logos. Does the sender's email address look legitimate, or is it trying to mimic someone you know?

Using passwords to protect your data

Passwords - when implemented correctly - are a free, easy and effective way to prevent unauthorised people from accessing your devices and data.



- Make sure all laptops, MACs and PCs use encryption products** that require a password to boot. Switch on **password/PIN protection or fingerprint recognition** for mobile devices.
- Use two factor authentication (2FA)** for important websites like banking and email, if you're given the option.
- Avoid using predictable passwords** (such as family and pet names). Avoid the most common passwords that criminals can guess (like *password*).
- Do not enforce regular password changes**; they only need to be changed when you suspect a compromise.
- Change the manufacturers' default passwords** that devices are issued with, before they are distributed to staff.
- Provide secure storage** so staff can write down passwords and keep them safe (but not with the device). Ensure staff can reset their own passwords, easily.
- Consider using a password manager**. If you do use one, make sure that the 'master' password (that provides access to all your other passwords) is a strong one.

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For more information go to www.ncsc.gov.uk @ncsc



PAROCHIAL FEES AND OCCASIONAL OFFICES

There is a helpful section on the Church of England website [here](#) which covers many related matters including what the fees are for; clergy expenses, grave spaces and monuments.

The 2025 fees table can be found [here](#),

the 2026 one will be uploaded onto our website in this [area](#) in the new year.

You may receive queries about occasional offices, for example about how to reserve a grave space. More information about these is available [here](#).

CYBER SECURITY

Most of us use computers now and we know the threat of viruses and other dangers but do you know how to minimise the risks to you and your PCC?

The National Cyber Security Centre has a small charity guide ([here](#)) which explains how to do the most important things: back up your data; protect from viruses and criminals trying to get your data; and using good passwords.

DEANERY PLANS & THE DIOCESAN PLAN

The Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal is about how we plan to lead change. The plan allows leaders and partners to understand what we intend to do, it has a role in communicating and supporting decision-making, and it can help us to understand what is and is not effective over time.

You can find the plan [here](#) along with some FAQs.

The plan was built from the deanery plans. You can find the deanery plans [here](#).

PAPERWORK AND PERSONAL DATA

We know that PCC Secretaries may end up with a lot of paperwork and hold a lot of information, some of it sensitive personal data. There are resources and guidance available on our website [here](#). The Church of England also has a handy guide covering what to do with the paperwork you hold; it is called Keep or Bin and can be found [here](#) (an updated version of this will be

shared with you in 2026). If you have a specific query Kate Cortez may be able to advise: kate.cortez@truodiocese.org.uk

Your PCC needs to be able to demonstrate it has considered data protection and you should have a privacy notice as a minimum. The above resources include a checklist and useful templates to ease the process.

BEING ON A PCC MAKES YOU A TRUSTEE

PCCs are legally charities and therefore its members are charity trustees. This role comes with specific responsibilities:

YOUR LEGAL DUTY	IT'S VITAL THAT YOU
Act in your charity's best interests	Deal with conflicts of interest
Manage your charity's resources responsibly	Implement appropriate financial controls Manage risks
Act with reasonable care and skill	Take appropriate advice when you need to, for example when buying or selling land, or investing (in some cases this is a legal requirement)

This [booklet](#) explains more about this, and there is also a Charity Commission general [guide](#) for trustees. The APCM would be a good time to make sure people joining the PCC understand this.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

Church House offers a range of newsletters offering relevant information for a range of groups. Example newsletters:

- Our News (General diocesan news)
- Churchwardens
- Social responsibility
- Giving/stewardship
- [Prayer diary](#)
- Worship matters
- and more.

To sign up to any of these click [here](#).

HEAT THE PERSON KIT TO BORROW

Here at Church House (at the Old Cathedral School) we have a range of 'heat the person' items which you can book to trial in your church. We have small and large cushions, gilets and handwarmers, as well as portable infrared heaters. Please contact [Rosey.sanders@truodiocese.org.uk](#) or 01872 274351.

LEGAL NEWS

LEGAL CHANGES AND NEW/UPDATED GUIDANCE FROM THE DIOCESAN REGISTRAR

Ex-gratia Payments: What's Changing and What PCCs Need to Know

An ex-gratia payment is one a charity may choose to make because its trustees feel a moral, but not a legal, obligation to do so. For example, returning a legacy when a donor's true wishes become clear, or waiving a right to receive a legacy, or making a small one-off payment to someone in recognition of service (e.g. a long-serving treasurer or PCC secretary).

The current position

At present, PCCs must get the Charity Commission's consent before making an ex-gratia payment. This is because trustees may only spend charity funds on activities that further the PCC's purposes. Although the Commission has sometimes taken a relaxed view on very small payments (e.g. small and inexpensive gifts), that is a policy decision and not a legal right.

What is due to change?

Changes to charity law to be brought

in by the Charities Act 2022 will make it easier for charities to deal with small ex-gratia payments. Once the relevant sections take effect, PCC members, as charity trustees, will be able to make modest payments without prior Charity Commission approval, provided they could "reasonably be regarded as being under a moral obligation" to do so.

The new provisions set maximum payment limits based on a charity's annual income. For example, a charity with a gross income in its last financial year of between £25,001 and £250,000 may make payments up to £2,500. The maximum payment amount applies per payment and not per year. Proposed payments above the maximum limits will still require Commission consent.

It is not yet known when these changes will come into effect. There has been a delay due to unintended issues being identified for national museums and galleries and also the power being used to make ex-gratia payments to recipients overseas without appropriate oversight.

What PCCs should do now

For now, if a PCC proposes to make an ex-gratia payment, it will need to apply to the Charity Commission for authority to make the payment. If a PCC wishes to make a particularly large ex-gratia payment or the recipient is based overseas, the PCC should take legal advice.

PCCs should keep clear records setting out the decision-making process followed and explaining why the PCC feels morally obliged to make a payment in the relevant circumstances.

When the new provisions do take effect, PCCs will have greater flexibility to make small ex-gratia payments without the need to expend resources on obtaining the Charity Commission's authority. That said, following the Charity Commission's guidance on trustee decision-making and demonstrating this through a clear audit trail will be essential.

LEGAL NEWS

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUESTS: KEY ISSUES FOR PCCs

Subject access requests (SARs) continue to pose significant challenges for those that receive them. They are often time-consuming, resource intensive and frequently linked to wider complaints or disputes. Below we share some practical tips to help you to manage SARs effectively.

The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (DUAA) became law in June, although most of its provisions are not yet in force. It introduces several changes to UK data protection law, including putting some of the ICO's existing SAR guidance on a statutory footing. This is a welcome development. Many of the new SAR provisions are controller-friendly and will help you to resist unreasonable or disproportionate requests. Some key examples are discussed below.

MANAGING SARs, SOME KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER

1. Searches

The obligation is to complete a reasonable and proportionate search for personal data. In practice, we often see searches extending far beyond what is legally required leading to unnecessary work. For example, if keyword searches reveal vast amounts of information, it may indicate that the search terms have been set too widely. Requesters sometimes

attempt to dictate how the SAR should be handled, for example, by specifying search terms or locations. There is no legal obligation to use the criteria provided by the requester (or even, in some cases, to do key word searches at all), provided that you have done enough to satisfy the "reasonable and proportionate" search threshold.

2. Safeguarding information

Requests made for personal data can often be problematic, particularly where there is a safeguarding angle. For example, a request may relate to an incident involving a vulnerable individual. Such requests will often engage multiple issues, such as whether it would be appropriate to seek the views of third parties whose personal data is mixed with the requester's (such as PCC members) and wider strategic considerations around managing the incident and any associated complaints. There is no blanket "safeguarding" exemption, but there are exemptions that often allow information to be withheld for safeguarding reasons. In our experience, often the most effective approach is to begin by considering what degree of disclosure would be in the individual's best interests and then identify any applicable exemptions to see if the preferred position can be supported.

3. Personal data rather than documents

A SAR gives the requester a right to their personal data, not to specific documents. It is lawful to extract the relevant data and present it in a schedule or table, rather than disclosing the documents themselves. Whilst providing originals may sometimes be appropriate if there are minimal redactions, it is often clearer to provide the data in an alternative format to avoid further queries if a lot of redactions will be required.

4. Extending the response timeframe

You should normally respond to a SAR within one month, but the period can be extended by a further two months if the request is complex. In our experience, organisations often underutilise the right to extend. The threshold for complexity is relatively low and we are not aware of the ICO criticising an organisation for relying on the extension where it was justifiable to do so.

5. Managing complaints

The DUAA will require you to have a formal process for handling data protection complaints for the first time.

We often find that it is possible to get caught up in prolonged correspondence with a requester and having a clear complaints pathway provides requesters with clarity while giving you a defined point at which escalation to the ICO is appropriate. This should help reduce the protracted correspondence we often see in relation to SAR complaints.



CHURCH REPRESENTATION RULES UPDATED

There is now a 2025 edition of the Church Representation Rules. You can access a free online version [here](#). Paper versions are available from the Church House Bookshop [here](#) and other places.