

# Building Volunteers

**Survey of church building  
volunteers, including PCC  
members and Churchwardens,  
in the Diocese of Ely.**

December 2021

Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, Diocese of Ely

*St Andrew's Church, Impington*



Volunteers attending a SPAB Faith in Maintenance workshop. Little Paxton, 2019.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Churchwardens are some of the most valuable volunteers in a church, bearing much of the responsibility for its upkeep and day-to-day running.”

(Ecclesiastical, 2020)

### CONTEXT OF THIS REPORT

In 2018 the Diocese of Ely appointed an Historic Church Buildings Support Officer (HCBSO) to join the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department. The post was joint funded by Historic England for three years, extended for another three years in 2021. Part of the remit of the role was to identify training needs in parishes and deliver support where possible. The HCBSO, therefore, reviewed feedback from the Diocese’s Articles of Enquiry and during 2019 - 2021, with the support of a grant from the HLF (now called National Lottery Heritage Fund), delivered two SPAB Faith In Maintenance workshops and two conservation cleaning workshops. Despite initial high interest in the workshops, bookings were slow and the HCBSO had to offer places to neighbouring Dioceses. At a similar time, officers from Historic England approached the HCBSO for content ideas regarding a national programme of training for Churchwardens. The HCBSO suggested that the first step was to ask the potential audience and thus carry out some audience development work. Whilst generally agreed to be a good idea, it wasn’t taken any further. When the HCBSO’s role was extended in 2021, the opportunity was taken to carry out this research in order to better inform the training and support provided by the Diocese of Ely.

### METHODOLOGY

The key aims of the survey were to:

- Gather baseline data on volunteers involved in the care of church buildings including role types, age, length of service etc...
- Capture the first-hand experience of volunteers
- Explore the nature and ‘health’ of local volunteering at churches within the Diocese of Ely
- Carry out a skills audit
- Identify support and training needs and preferences
- Highlight concerns and aspirations for the future

Due to the number of potential respondents, an online survey was deemed to be the best approach and Microsoft Forms was selected due to ease of access and low cost. The first draft of the survey was based on the experiences of the HCBSO and discussions with Support Officers from other Dioceses, as well as a few Churchwardens the HCBSO was assisting at the time. A paper version was then sent to the HCBSOs parents for a first read; they were selected due to their involvement with churches including being PCC Members in the past and their ability to be brutally honest with their criticism and feedback. The survey was revised accordingly. The first online draft was then sent to colleagues in the Church Buildings Team, the Archdeacons, one Incumbent, two Churchwardens, and one PCC Treasurer who was also the lead on a major repairs project. The survey was updated following feedback and a final version sent to the Archdeacons for approval.

The survey was advertised on the Diocese of Ely’s website with a link to the online form. Details were emailed directly to all First Churchwardens or Fabric Officers as listed on the Diocese of Ely’s database in June 2021 or, where posts were vacant, to other Churchwardens, the PCC Secretary or Incumbent. Additional contacts on the HCSBO’s newsletter mailing list were also emailed. The contact list was limited to these roles simply due to time. Individual rather than group emails were

sent to reduce the risk of messages being rejected or received as SPAM and to encourage participation.

A paper version was sent to people who were unable to access the online form; their responses were added to the online survey by the HCBSO in order to aid analysis.

The final question on the survey asked if people would be happy to take part in more detailed follow-up discussions. Questions for these discussions were prompted by a quick analysis of responses to the survey. The questions were used to help prompt conversation and address key points, but on the whole follow-up discussions, referred to as 'interviews' in this report, were informal.

The online survey was available from June 30<sup>th</sup> until July 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, with an extension until August 31<sup>st</sup>. A paper version was sent to 6 people. Follow-up discussions took place between August 10<sup>th</sup> and November 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

## Limitations

It is often not possible to fully explain or convey the context of some questions within a survey or recognise vocabulary requiring further clarity. This may have led to some elements of the survey not being fully understood.

A few people had issues with the online format, including an inability to navigate backwards and change answers; not being able to see a full list of questions before starting the form; and an inability to access a copy of the answers on completion. Some found that the survey took considerably longer to complete than the suggested 10 minutes, whilst others felt that more questions could have been included. A few people found some of the questions a bit repetitive.

On the online form people were required to give answers to questions in order to proceed through the survey; this was not possible to enforce on the paper version and thus some of the questions went unanswered.

Reasons for not participating included a lack of time; the email went to the SPAM folder; deadline was missed; and a lack of clarity as to who the survey was for. In terms of the latter, care had been taken to highlight that 'building volunteers' included PCC Members and Churchwardens, but it is possible that this was missed and potential participants did not think the survey was aimed at them.

## RESPONSES

The survey was received very positively:

“Actually, a very good survey which has raised questions for me”

“Thought provoking”

“grateful someone Diocesan is interested in hearing about what might be considered a very unfashionable area of church life. People slave away in this area and their hard work is very rarely acknowledged”

140 people took part, representing 113 parishes which is just over a third of parishes in the Diocese of Ely (37%) and just over a third of churches including ungraded buildings (34%). 41 people indicated that they would be happy to take part in follow-up discussions, of these 30 took place via zoom, over the phone or in face-to-face meetings.

### Condition of Buildings

There was a high proportion of responses from volunteers caring for church buildings listed on the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR), possibly due to a pre-existing relationship with the HCBSO for whom HARR churches are a priority (Fig.1).

Condition of Church Buildings	% of churches in a similar condition
Heritage at Risk	67
Vulnerable	41
Poor	13
Fair	24
Good	34

Figure 1. Table showing the % of church buildings from condition categories represented in the survey

### Geographical Spread

Overall the responses were spread fairly evenly across the Diocese. There were slightly less responses from central, southern and southwestern areas. This could be due to there being a higher proportion of church buildings in a good condition than in other areas, which could mean volunteers did not feel the survey was relevant to them or were not familiar with the role of the HCBSO. Location did not appear to significantly affect the type of responses; there was a slight difference between urban and rural churches, but on the whole responses were very similar.

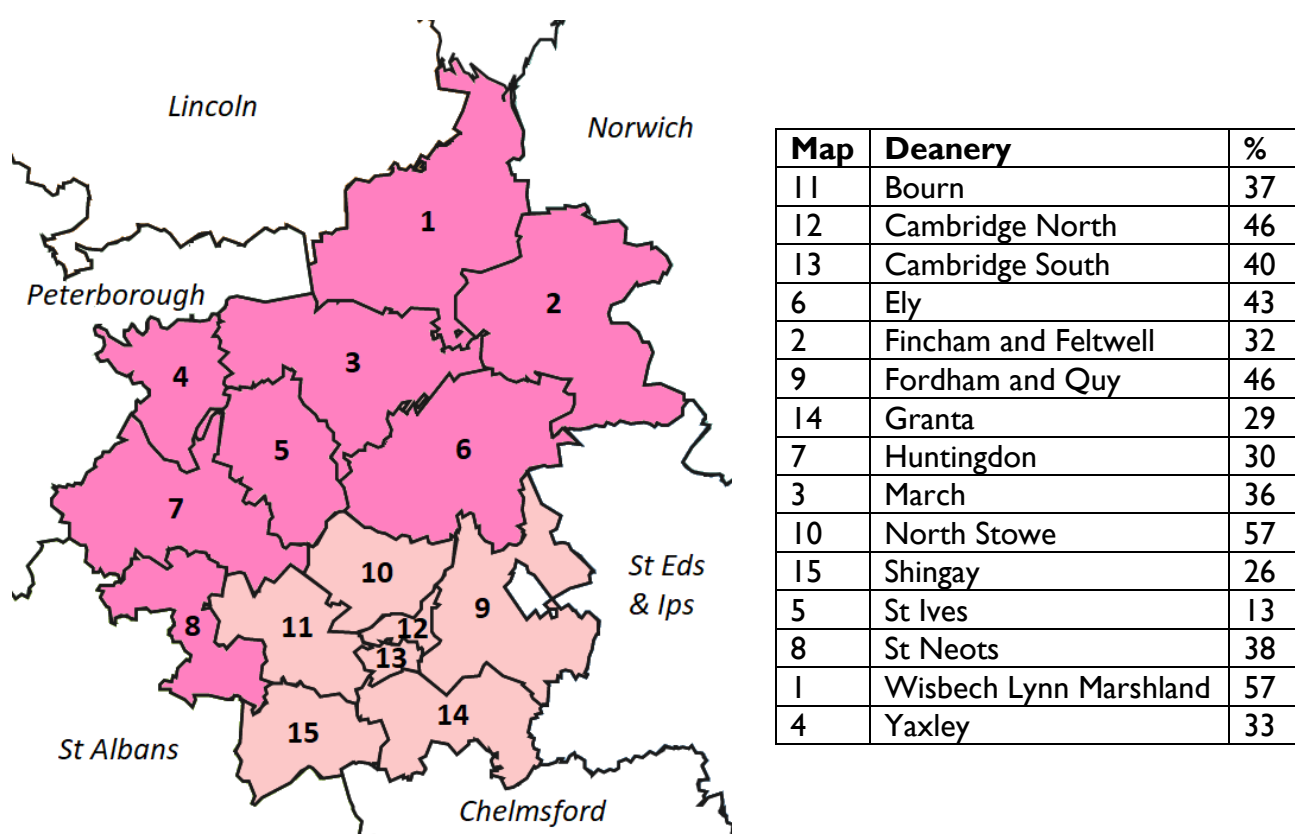


Figure 2. Table and Map showing the % of parishes from each Deanery represented in the survey.  
Map from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese\\_of\\_Ely](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese_of_Ely)

## KEY FINDINGS

Church buildings are predominately looked after by volunteers through the role of Churchwarden or Fabric Officer, although the latter doesn't appear to be fully recognised or supported. A significant number of parishes do not currently have more than one Churchwarden, whilst in some responsibilities have fallen to members of the clergy. Almost all those who took part in the survey had some concerns about the future recruitment of volunteers, particularly the main leadership roles like Churchwarden, but also with regards to those requiring a regular commitment such as cleaners.

One of the problems with recruitment was embedded in the very nature of volunteering at churches and the breadth of tasks that Churchwardens tend to cover. In essence, every church and every Churchwarden is different; roles can be shaped by personal interests and the need to cover other tasks due to lack of support elsewhere. People are often motivated by a strong sense of obligation that can be deeply personal and lead to a pressure to stay and even take on more tasks. Role profiles, codes of conduct etc... are rarely used and there is a lack of any overall responsibility for volunteers at a local, regional or national level with The Church of England. Churchwardens who are supported by a large PCC and/or wide network of local people are 'happiest' in their role and generally do not feel overburdened, but this seems to be the exception rather than the rule, with many parishes struggling to attract volunteers or support from the local community. This is due to a variety of reasons including: volunteering roles feeling outdated and not flexible enough for modern lifestyles; a focus on people giving to the role rather than what the role can give to an individual; the education and employment levels in a parish; the affluence, age and interests of the community; the 'presence' of the church locally and the perception of The Church nationally.

The majority of church building volunteers are aged over 65 and despite most being retired, almost all those interviewed had numerous other volunteering commitments as well as families (grandchildren) to look after. The survey highlighted how many communities rely on a relatively small number of people to carry out most of the local voluntary roles.

Volunteering within The Church was seen to be very different to other volunteer-led organisations, with a reliance on informal structures and people being gently 'coerced' into taking roles on. Whilst it was agreed that some more formal processes might be useful, on the whole people felt that anything too formal would likely put people off and be at odds with the feeling of there being an extended family where people just "muck in" when needed. The social aspects of volunteering were important motivating factors, but people also described a sense of pressure and accountability connected to their role; a feeling of not wanting the building to fail 'under their watch' and an inability to delegate tasks or step-down from their role, particularly after decades of service. In fact, it was suggested that in order to truly step-down from a role a person would probably have to move away from the area altogether.

Volunteering as a Churchwarden for more than 10 years was not seen to be uncommon. Whilst a few people felt 6 years was probably about enough time, others felt that the role required long-term investment to provide a sense of continuity, thus it was better suited to an individual who was settled in the area and in life. Whilst most of those interviewed welcomed support from the non-worshipping community, many felt the key leadership roles worked better when taken on by people from within the congregation or at least with some familiarity of the church. On the whole people felt that new Churchwardens should be eased into a role and "learn on the job" and that advertising the role more widely would attract very few people, particularly if everything involved

was listed. Whilst the role of Churchwarden is for people 'of faith', there was general agreement that a Fabric Officer could be a secular role, but it would still require sympathy towards the Christian ethos and understanding of some of the procedures within The Church. Some questioned what would be left for a Churchwarden to do if the building element was taken away, which emphasised how the role varies between churches and that there is a general lack of clarity. There was also a lack of clarity regarding some aspects of looking after a listed church building and whether or not they should be part of a Churchwarden's (or Fabric Officer's) role. In addition, there was a sense of confusion at times about which roles the word 'volunteer' relates to within a church - the key leadership roles like Churchwarden, or the people recruited to help those in the key roles? On the whole, it appeared to be the latter which was seen as a local and informal arrangement and thus, could explain why volunteering is not an area the National Church focuses any specific support on, except in terms of Safeguarding.

The key barriers to looking after and realising the potential of a church building were resources – financial and human. The additional burden of project management and bid writing, combined with the lengthy consent process and a lack of volunteer numbers, resulted in lack of time being one of the biggest issues for people. Without a wide network of support, a very understanding employer or flexible working hours, people felt the role of Churchwarden or Fabric Officer just wasn't possible for someone in full-time work and difficult for many currently in part-time work. There was also concern that the number of retired people with enough time to take on such roles was dwindling.

Time was the biggest reason why formal training, through either face-to-face or online workshops and conferences, was not popular among respondents. A need for high quality, relevant, concise training delivered at the point of need was identified, although attendance was not guaranteed. "Learning on the job" from others with experience was observed to be of greater benefit. As such the most popular form of training/support was identified as networking– sharing ideas and experiences with other Churchwardens. There was also a request made for more variety in the types of projects given as examples, particularly at conferences, where they tend to be weighted more towards churches in urban or tourist areas.

In terms of further support, conservation cleaning and heritage interpretation were highlighted as areas of need and/or interest. Some misunderstanding relating to community engagement and consultation were identified, including in the language used. On the subject of language, it was felt that people advising church volunteers often lacked a sense of empathy and even respect for the challenges faced, giving the impression that those 'outside the church' felt the basics were easy and buildings were purposefully being neglected.

There was a feeling that general support from the Diocese (not necessarily related to buildings) was not readily available when needed and that the National Church spent too much time telling people "what to do" rather than "how to do it". It was, however, highlighted that support from the Church Buildings Team had significantly improved and praise was given to current staff members.

Awards and celebrations proved to be relatively unpopular, although there was support for some form of recognition if only to highlight the contribution made by volunteers to the wider world.

Looking to the future, people highlighted funding for repairs as the main area urgently requiring change, including support for architects' fees, specifications and seed funding. Professional support with project management and the conservation of heritage items such as wall paintings were also highlighted as areas of need, along with the delivery of heritage and tourism activities.



## CONCLUSIONS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of many charities and the Church of England is no exception, yet for a national organisation, from a public perspective, its volunteers are largely unseen, working in the background. This survey has helped to give church building volunteers a voice, even if just momentarily, one that hopefully will be heard.

Many of the findings will likely come as no surprise to people familiar with church buildings and volunteers, but some aspects may help to give some insight and focus, particularly regarding training and support. It has confirmed much of what the HCBSO has experienced over the last few years - that The Church is over reliant on a small number of aging volunteers in roles that are proving more and more difficult to fill and that support needs to be better tailored to local needs, including grants. It has also challenged a few assumptions relating to training and processes and procedures. As such, it has already helped to shape the focus of the HCBSO's role over the next couple of years.

If people only take one thing away from this report, it is hoped that it is a need to improve the quality of volunteering in The Church of England. The HCBSO has previously worked for the National Trust and other heritage organisations where volunteers are essential to day-to-day operations. In each there has been a huge focus on the quality of the volunteering experience for individuals, relating to the role itself as well as within the organisation. If there have been problems, they were generally down to getting this wrong. Whilst many respondents to this survey highlighted positive attributes of volunteering for their church – friendship, community, a sense of fulfilment – there was also a powerful sense of obligation, personal accountability, pressure, of being stuck and not able to step-down; this doesn't speak very highly of the quality of their overall experience.

One Churchwarden highlighted that the survey had not asked people if they were happy. A good point - are our volunteers happy and whose job is it to find out and ensure they are? Who cares for those caring for our church buildings?

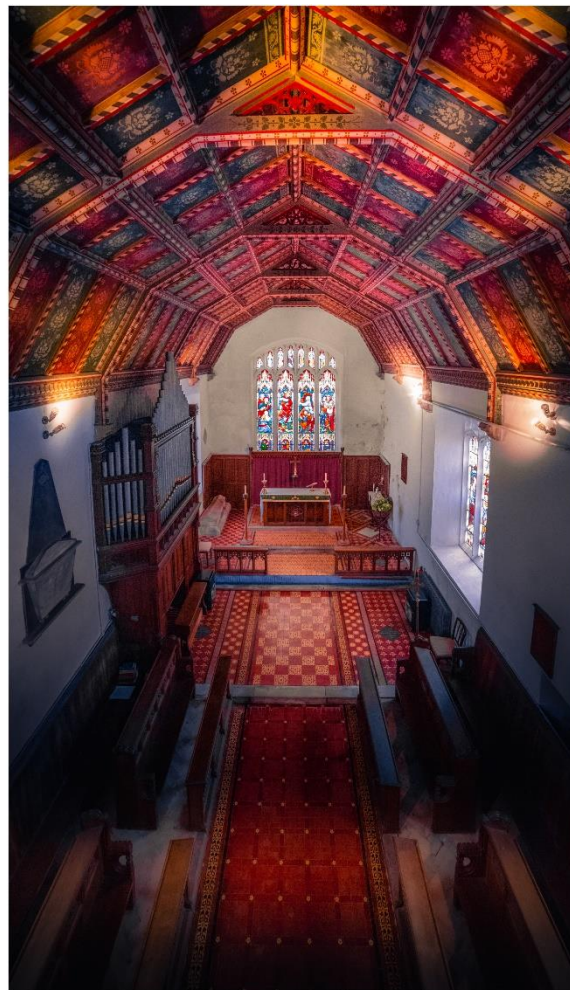
## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Supporting existing volunteers whilst looking for ways to recruit new people into key roles are vital for the continued care and management of our church buildings. The following is a summary of recommendations to be carried out regionally and nationally.

### Training and Support

- Training and support must focus less on formal workshops and more on bespoke support as and when needed. Opportunities for Churchwardens to meet each other and share ideas and learning should be included wherever possible, with the possibility of including an annual celebratory event explored.
- Develop an informal mentoring scheme to help share best practice and provide a critical friend to parishes.
- Examples of projects should be more wide-ranging in order to be relevant to and inclusive of all parishes.
- More concise guides on key areas should be created, with a limit on the number of links to further information to avoid overwhelming people with potential sources of material.
- Continue with regular updates in the Church Heritage newsletter and grant lists, produced by the Church Buildings Team.

- Review the key leadership roles at local churches, how they are managed and supported and their relevance to modern attitudes to volunteering.
- Campaign to promote volunteering at churches.
- Greater recognition for the contribution that volunteers make, including a financial calculation of hours, donations of equipment and materials etc....
- Greater understanding of the difficulties faced by many volunteers leading to a change in attitudes and the style of support given.
- Continue to campaign for more funding tailored to the needs of church buildings and the volunteers caring for them.



*St James, Newton in the Isle. ©NeillRobinson*

## BUILDING VOLUNTEERS

### I. INTRODUCTION

“Churchwardens are vital to the health and wellbeing of our church communities.”

(Diocese of Ely, 2021)

The Diocese of Ely is blessed with 334 churches, 43% of which are Grade I listed and 40% Grade II\*. The buildings span over a thousand years from the Saxon period at Great Paxton, to the 1958 Stephen Dykes Bower church at Arbury in Cambridge and Christ the Servant King at Hampton completed in 2014.

Places of worship are integral to the landscape of Britain, representing centuries of belief, craftsmanship and design. The buildings and their churchyards are centres for discovering local history and will often be the bastion of local distinctiveness that give the surrounding settlement its sense of place. They are enduring centres of communities, with the potential to bring people together through a variety of activities (CHCT, 2019). But, like all older buildings, historic places of worship need careful maintenance to protect their fabric and assure their survival for the future. The care and maintenance of these extraordinary buildings is a challenge faced, on the whole, by volunteers.

There is a vast amount of advice and information available to Churchwardens provided by regional and national organisations, yet there is feeling often uncertainty amongst volunteers and a of “drowning in information but starving for knowledge”. Rather than taking a step back to ask what Churchwardens need and want in terms of support and training, there is a tendency instead to try to ‘re-invent the wheel’ and ultimately offer more of the same. This survey seeks to take that step-back and look closer at the people caring for our church buildings in order to improve the support and recognition for work, which is essential for the future of these valuable religious, community and heritage spaces.

### 2. WHO CARES FOR OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS?

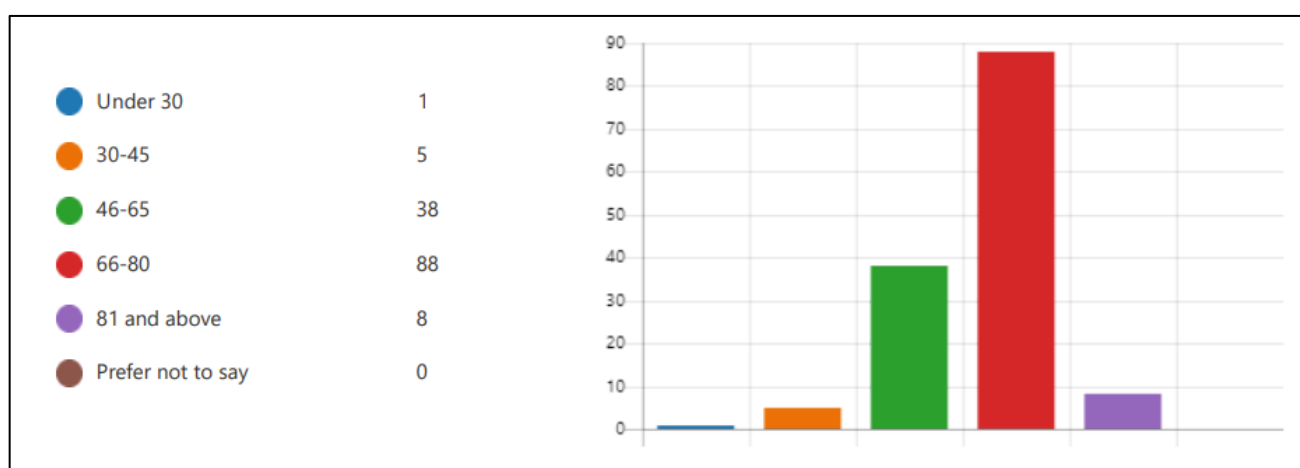


Figure 3. Age of survey respondents.

2.1. The majority of respondents were aged over 65 (Fig.3), which to anyone familiar with parish churches will not come as a surprise. Age did not appear to significantly affect the type of responses, however, there were more people over aged over 65 who had been in the role for

more than 6 years, as well as a greater proportion of people who described their role as being full time for most of the year. A few people commented - "I am too old for training".

**2.2.** Not unexpectedly, the survey revealed that the care of church buildings relies almost entirely on volunteers. 14 of the 113 parishes (12%) did have paid staff connected to the maintenance of the church building or churchyard, the majority being cleaners and grass-cutters. A few churches based in urban and semi-urban areas and/or known to have large congregations, had either an Operational or Estates Manager, whilst one parish had an externally funded Heritage Project Officer. One respondent commented that the parish did have a paid person prior to the pandemic.

"We had a paid person for the buildings and this is my preference but the pandemic meant that we couldn't keep this on due to loss of income from the buildings. Hopefully this role will return soon in some form."

**2.3.** 98% of respondents who were interviewed had additional volunteering commitments with other organisations, these included charities, local grant-making Trusts, schools and hospitals. Those that did not, explained that they had volunteered for other organisations in the past but that their church duties now took up most of their spare time. This supports the view that many places, particularly more rural villages, rely on a small group of people to fulfil a variety of local voluntary roles (some of those interviewed were married/related to the other key church volunteers such as PCC Treasurer, PCC Secretary). It also highlights the fact that many people in the key, leadership roles at churches have other commitments and while most are retired, they may not have as much time available as is often assumed.

**2.4.** Friends Groups can bring huge benefits to Churchwardens and PCCs. They have the potential to reach out and include people beyond the congregation, often increasing the pool of skills and experience. Yet only a relatively small proportion of churches in the Diocese of Ely seem to be supported by one. Of the people interviewed, only 33% stated they had an active Friends Group; 15% either had a group in the past or one that was currently in decline, whilst 37% explained that they had tried to set one up/had discussed it but it "never got going". The main reason for this was the belief that it would attract the same people who were already volunteering for the church. This was particularly the case in smaller parishes and supports the point made earlier that many areas are reliant on a relatively small pool of volunteers.

"We loosely talked about starting one but realised that most of the potential Friends were already on the PCC. "

"We are such a small community; it would be the same people that already raise money and support events."

**2.5.** As Figure 4 shows, most of the survey respondents were Churchwardens and/or Fabric Officers. There were, however, instances where these roles were either vacant or the Churchwarden was focused more on the ministry and missional side of the role, leaving building related matters to fall to others including incumbents, vergers, and at one church the Chair of the Friends Group.

"I have hinted at stepping down... I do think the (Friends) group would continue despite this, but only with fundraising and running events, they would not manage repairs, maintenance and grants as I do... Our new incumbent has commented that they have never known a Friends Group to do as much as we do."

In interviews, one Incumbent voiced concern at a possible future without Churchwardens in the Benefice and the inevitability that responsibilities would fall to her.

"A Vicar shouldn't be/can't be Churchwarden, it's not the role they signed up for"

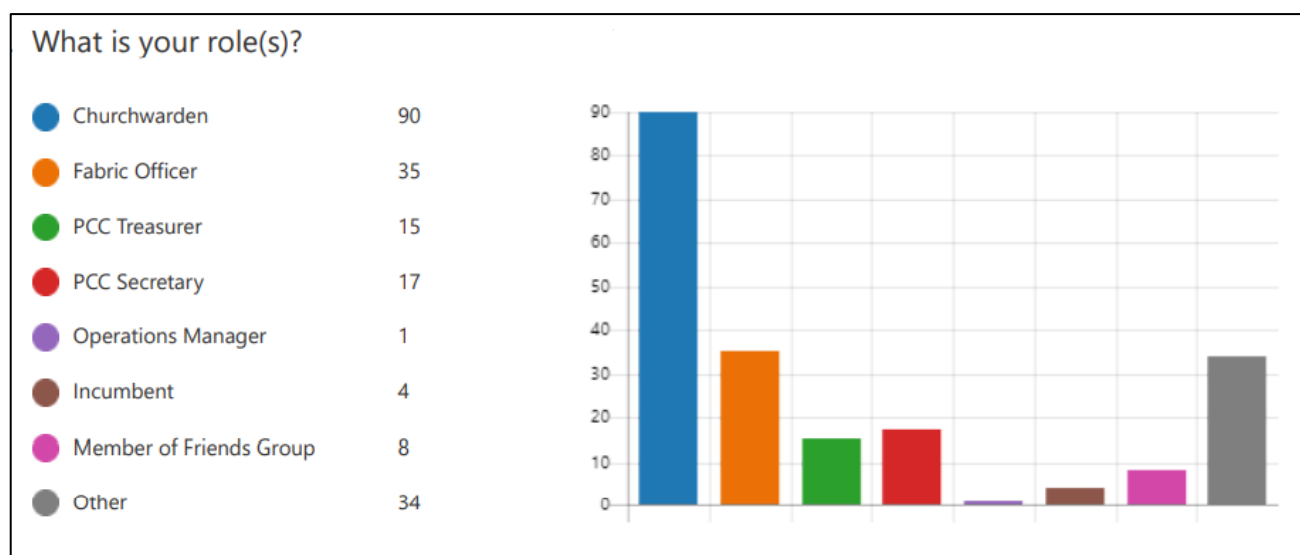


Figure 4. Role(s) within parish of survey respondents

Most of the survey respondents indicated that they carried out more than one role at their church/within the Benefice. It was, however, highlighted during one of the follow-up interviews that the survey still might not have captured the full scale of the ‘jobs’ people carry out at churches.

“Churchwarden is only part of what I do at the church, I have about 26 other jobs.”

Other roles included:

- Grounds Keeper/maintenance of churchyard
- Safeguarding Officer
- Organist
- ALM Worship Leader
- Cleaning Rota Manager
- Electoral Role Officer
- PCC Member
- General church volunteer
- Odd Job Man
- Tower Captain
- Lead on grant applications
- Gift Aid Officer
- Reader
- Sound Engineer
- Lead on working parties
- Parish Magazine Editor
- Member of Fabric Committee
- Parish Administrator
- Clerk of Works
- Lead on development projects
- Key Holder – open the church up for visitors

Reasons why people take on additional roles vary from there being a sense of pressure because no-one else will do it, to a spirit of everyone just ‘mucking in’ and people genuinely wanting to help wherever they can and are able to. As discussed later there is a strong sense that people can,

sometimes inadvertently, volunteer themselves into taking on more than perhaps they should and feeling unable to say “no” or delegate.

“You get into jobs, stumble in and then it’s ‘sticky’, you can’t get out of them”

**2.6.** The role of Fabric Officer appears to be relatively new and in some parishes it has proved easier to recruit than the role of Churchwarden due to its more secular nature. It is used on the Diocese of Ely’s database, yet it does not appear to be universally recognised, in fact some of the people listed as a Fabric Officer on the database were completely unaware of this role title or that it had been assigned to them.

“I am not officially a Fabric Officer (surprised to find I am listed as that on the Diocese’s database). The PCC would not recognise that role; they would say that I do all the fabric stuff, but that role title would not be recognised or used. I don’t really think it is one recognised elsewhere, even at the Diocese.”

In addition, despite carrying out a key part of what are usually Churchwardens’ duties, Fabric Officers are not invited to the Diocese’s annual Churchwardens’ Training Day. This is surprising as the training includes presentations from the Church Buildings Team, the Registry and in the past Historic England.

“Churchwardens do get some training, but not Fabric Officers”

### 3. WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

**3.1.** As Figure 5 illustrates the key motivating factor to volunteer was “To do my bit to help the church”. In interviews people were asked what ‘the church’ meant to them in the context of this sentence and overwhelmingly the answer was everything: the building, the congregation, the wider mission and ministry and support for the local community. A few people highlighted that their main motivation had been the building owing to a personal interest in heritage and architecture or a strong personal connection with the church; for some it was even more specific.

“...the church might have closed if someone hadn’t volunteered to be churchwarden, so the future of the building was a key factor at the time.”

“I want to hand it on in a better condition than I started”

“The building first and foremost. Grade II\*. I would hate the building to become derelict during my lifetime.”

This does fit with the sense of obligation that came through from other responses. In the top five reasons to volunteer the third, with 39% of respondents selecting it, was “There was no-one else to do it and someone had to”, whilst the fifth (34%) was “I have a long connection with the church and felt it was my turn”. A number of those interviewed mentioned having their “arms twisted” to take on roles or volunteering on the specific understanding that it would be for a short, temporary period only to find themselves still in the role years later. Reassuringly, the other two most popular motivating factors were more positive with people highlighting the “social aspect – friendship and sense of community” and that volunteering made them “feel happier and more fulfilled”. About half of people who selected “There was no-one else to do it and someone had to” did also select positive attributes, whilst the other half described being “persuaded” and/or “encouraged” into the role(s).

**3.2.** Only a few people answered “nothing” or “essential chore” to the question “What are the best bits about volunteering for the church?” The full list of responses is in Appendix I but to summarise, most people described:

- Making a difference and feeling appreciated
- Knowing the building will be kept in a good condition
- Serving God and the community
- Being part of a team
- Seeing the building being used and kept open and welcoming
- Community and fellowship
- Being in a peaceful, quiet place
- The privilege of working with an historic listed building
- Meeting a range of people
- Sense of purpose and structure (particularly during Covid)
- Continuity – being part of history and continuing the life of the church

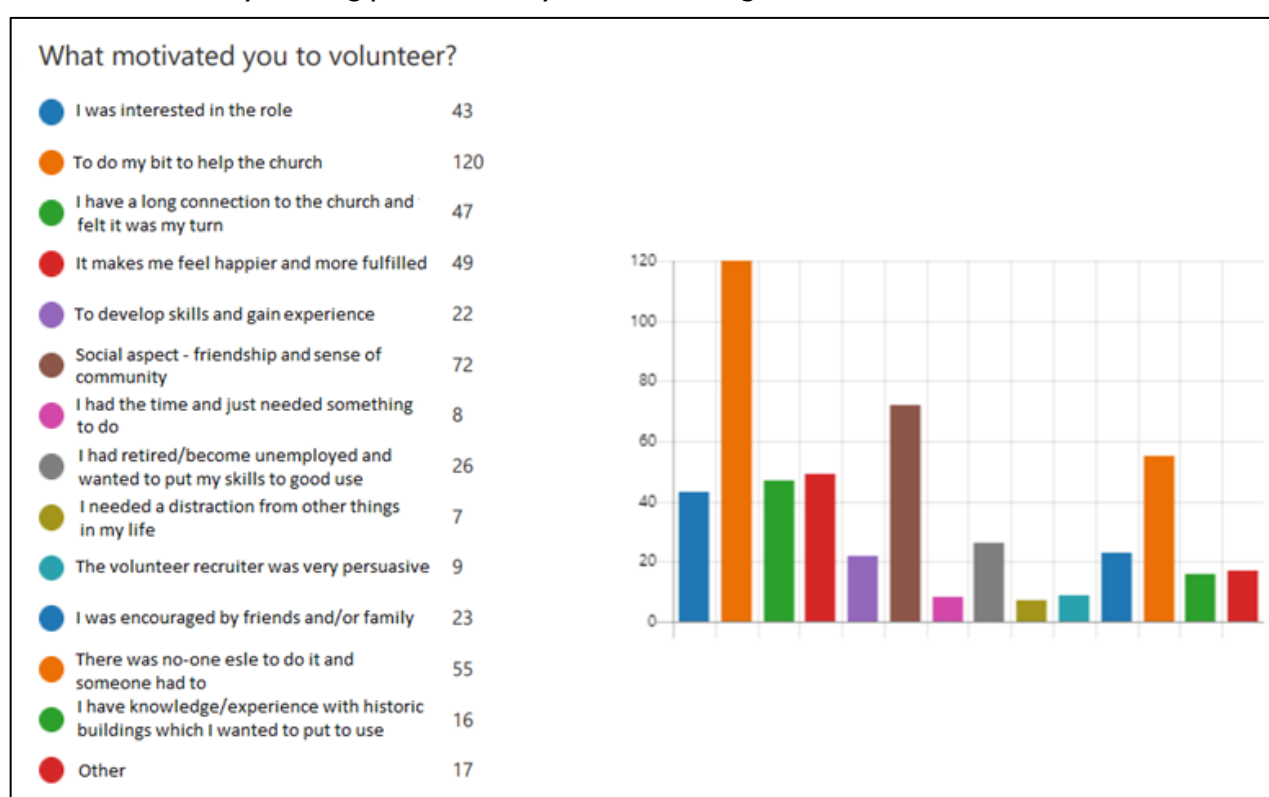


Figure 5. Reasons people were motivated to volunteer

**3.3.** The social aspects were a particularly important motivating factor for people. Many people do not view volunteering for their local church in the same way as they do for other organisations.

“It is like being part of an extended family, you just do it, just help each other”

This informality of volunteering can be a mixed blessing and probably explains why most of the top tips given by interviewees for anyone interested in taking on these roles, relate to interpersonal skills (section 14).

**3.4.** Another strong motivating factor was the sense of pride and fulfillment in getting work done/completing projects. If things become more difficult, if there are more barriers to success such as consent, time, fees, fundraising, focus from the National Church, people may start to feel demotivated and question if it is all worthwhile.

“I’m afraid there is little rewarding about looking after a 1000 years old building with no funds.”

“I am far too old and tired to take on large projects...especially when I know there is no money to achieve success and I do not have the energy to be constantly applying for grants”

**3.5.** Relatively low down the list was “To develop skills and gain experience”, which is perhaps not surprising given the age of most of those who took part in the survey, but it could also be one of many reasons why the roles are not attractive to younger people and those looking for routes back into work - a key area of growth in volunteering.

#### 4. NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

“I struggle to see the motivation to serve the parish as a volunteer matter. Is the outworking of one's faith in any parish responsibility a volunteer matter? I would be more comfortable with another description. How about Self- Supporting Parish Worker?”

**4.1.** Quite early on in the survey a Churchwarden made the above comment, which led the writer to consider whether the word ‘volunteer’ was appropriate to use for certain church roles. As a result, in the interviews participants were asked how volunteering within the church compared to that within other organisations. Whilst no-one else had an issue with the word ‘volunteer’, it was agreed that the nature of volunteering in the church was very different and that the word ‘volunteer’ wasn’t sufficient. A sense of obligation came through strongly, of wanting to give back to the community; a Christian duty and being moved to volunteer on more of an emotional level that being inspired by a specific role or activity.

“Committing on an emotional and religious level. It’s more of a service than just volunteering to do a specific role/thing.

“I don’t really see it as volunteering though. It is part of my duty as a Christian and as part of the community.”

“I joined out of community guilt...There weren’t any churchwardens (hadn’t been for two years)...It is clearly difficult to run a church without a churchwarden.”

“I feel I am working without requesting payment. Sense of obligation for living in this community ‘you get what you give’. Not everyone can do it though. Not all obligation, I enjoy some elements.”

Many people also noted a certain level of “coercion” to take on roles and a “sense of pressure tied to the job”. One of the benefits of volunteering is often the flexibility and the ability to step down at relatively short notice, but many of the respondents described a feeling of being stuck in their role. It appears that for most, this comes from the knowledge that there is simply no-one to replace them and, in some cases, from other volunteers stating, ‘if you go I go’. There is a great sense of accountability and pride that stays with volunteers even when they do leave. For some this can also be a barrier to stepping down and a few of the respondents did admit that they, or their predecessor, had to have their “arm twisted” to let someone else take over, often as a result of health concerns. A few people also admitted to feeling rather protective of the building or churchyard which motivated them to take on more responsibilities, feeling that others would not do as good a job. When people finally do step-down, it is perhaps not as ‘clean-cut’ as with other organisations, unless, as one interviewee explained, you move away from the area.



“I have definitely been busier since I retired and my wife would desperately love me to give up. When you leave a role in the church people still have your contact details and you still know and see everyone, so you still end up helping. It is very hard to just give up unless you move away.”

“when I said I might do this (step back) next year it didn’t go down well...You don’t really leave though, not completely as the church is part of your life/your family.”

**4.2.** A greater level of commitment, responsibility and increasing personal accountability than with other types of volunteering were also highlighted.

“No. We don’t train all our volunteers, unlike other organisations where there is some sort of training for almost every role...Churchwarden is a voluntary role but it is different to other types of volunteering, a churchwarden has to be voted in each year and has to be sworn in by the Archdeacon, so there is a greater sense of responsibility and commitment.”

A few people noted that there was a certain level of professionalism required, of experience, knowledge and skills that many Churchwardens and Fabric Officers don’t possess. On the whole, respondents who were part of the worshipping community didn’t quite seem to appreciate the scope of what it was they were expected to do or were just simply “used to it” and saw no point in complaining. Respondents who were not part of the congregation or had worked in the heritage/conservation industry previously, tended to feel that expectations placed on Churchwardens and Fabric Officers were too high.

“it is not fair for PCCs to do it all. It’s very sophisticated stuff. Professional help with grant applications would make a huge difference as well as community engagement/development. Support with heritage/tourism activities would also be beneficial — people have much higher expectations of interpretation and engagement which we cannot deliver or keep updated.”

“...the hierarchy, or rather the approvals etc... it is unnecessarily complex...”

“The challenge of being an Anglican today is that you also have to be a listed buildings property expert.”

“All amateurs really. Things just turn out to be my job, don’t know why really. Some people, particularly older Churchwardens, don’t always understand what it is that needs doing, for instance PAT testing.”

“We are volunteers but many of us are amateurs as well. We are dealing with contractors etc... but we aren’t experts. Nor do I want to be”

It was also noted that church volunteers (particularly people over the age of 65) do things that possibly wouldn’t be allowed in other organisations relating to Health and Safety and potentially job substitution during an interregnum.

“I do quite a bit, climb the tower and other spiral staircases, no Health and Safety, precarious access, ladders etc... but you can’t do much about that. Another thing Churchwardens have to face.”

“We are facing an interregnum soon which I know will lead me to taking on more tasks. I was going to retire, but the church can’t lose a churchwarden and Vicar at the same time, so I will hang on a bit longer...”

**4.3.** It is not uncommon in many volunteer-led organisations for people to be making in-kind contributions which go largely unnoticed/undocumented. Parish churches are similar in that

respect but there is a sense that it happens on a much larger scale than in other organisations and is a contribution that is largely taken for granted elsewhere in The Church.

“Being a churchwarden is not a cheap job, you give a lot to the church, but you do it because you want to.”

“I have a large house, but I couldn’t downsize because of all the stuff I store for the church – props, equipment, paperwork, archives etc... I pay for the ink and paper for the church magazine, create it and it is available to people for free. Do all the leaflets.

We also produce a calendar (pictures from events etc...) which goes out to the congregation and other contacts – about 150 sent out - people love it.”

“When you factor in all the money that we put into churches – this is often forgotten by people - the volunteer hours; expenses not claimed (or donated to the church) including equipment bought or loaned, fees that are paid on donation sites, food and drink provided; the support given to members of the congregation such as travel, wellbeing etc.... It is the same people all the time giving that time and money. We are happy to do it but it does give a false perspective of the situation of the church and makes it seem we are better off/coping better than we are, we keep bailing it out.

How much would it cost if staff did it all and would paid staff do it all?”

**4.4.** Volunteering at a parish church can be far more personal than roles within other organisations; “it is different because it is *your* parish church”. As one interviewee explained, with other organisations you do not tend to be volunteering where you live or spend a lot of time, “no-one outside sees it”. At a church it is a more public position “my church, our church, your community that you could be letting down so people do feel more tied to it”. Despite some of the drawbacks, many people expressed a greater sense of freedom and control volunteering for their church than they did with other organisations, as well as a greater sense of feeling truly valued and needed, with the chance to shape roles to suit personal interests.

“In other organisations though, it can seem more like a job because of the formal structures (hierarchy and job descriptions). I know people who are unhappy in their role due to the individual volunteer manager they have. I do it because I like it and have the freedom to change things, make the role my own in some ways, though it is very difficult to lose roles and tasks once you take them on. We have more control though than in other more structured volunteer settings. People tend to dip in and out of things.”

“Treatment by other organisations is not so good - seem to treat volunteers more like staff or of little value, has led to people leaving. You can’t be ‘told’ what to do, that’s not what volunteering is about.”

## 5. EXPECTATIONS

**5.1.** Most of the respondents who had been volunteering in a specific role at their church for more than 10 years (Figure 6) were aged over 65. A few of those interviewed had actually taken on the role long before retirement, clocking up over 30 years of service. There is a balance to be had between people “staying in a role for too long” and becoming a bit set in their ways, to being able to provide a sense of continuity for the building and community. One interviewee felt that the role of Churchwarden needed to be taken on by someone who was somewhat settled in life, “age

doesn't really matter, but you do need someone who will have pride and joy in what they are doing locally" someone looking to commit for more than a just few years.

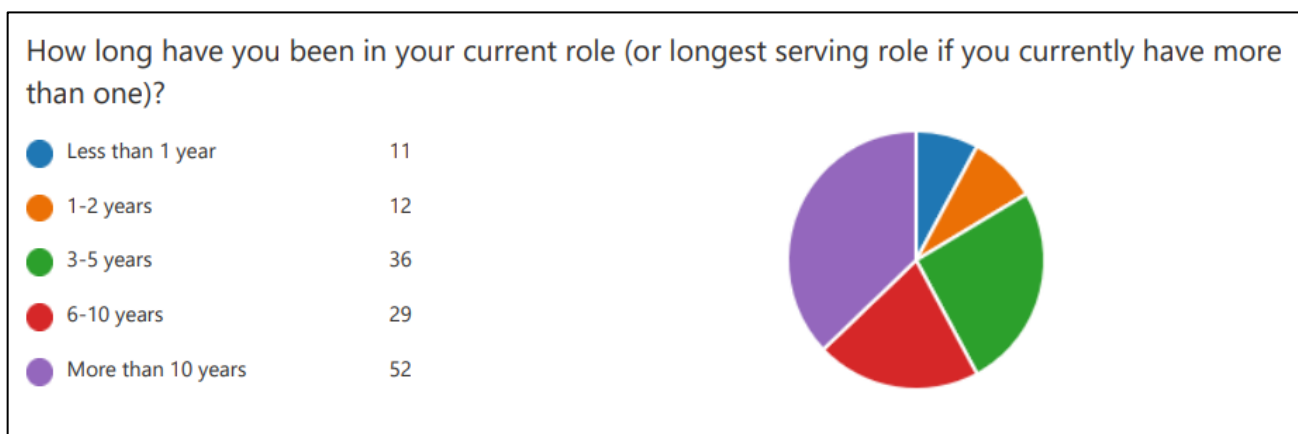


Figure 6. Length of time in role

**5.2.** 54% of respondents described their role as meeting their expectations, but a significant 34% described there being either a bit more to do or lot more involved (Figure 7). In some cases, this is due to a lack of knowledge about the full breadth of the role, but more commonly this seems to relate to the demands placed on many Churchwardens to manage major building projects and complete grant applications.

“it has become noticeably harder with the demise of English Heritage as a prime grant provider”

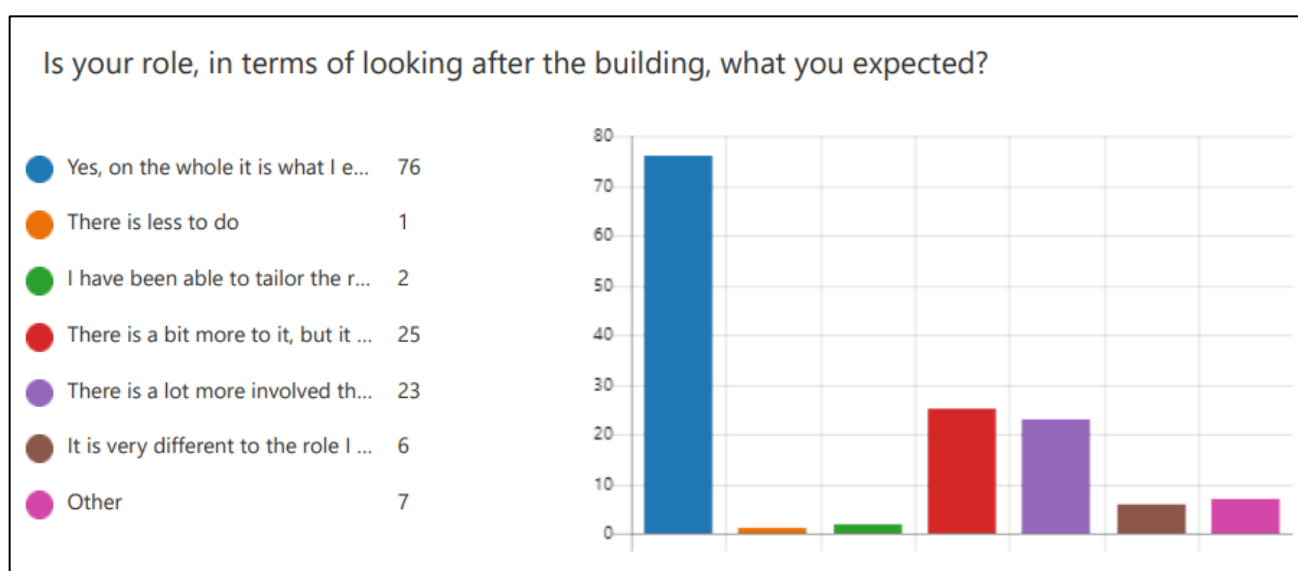


Figure 7. How volunteering role has met expectations

**5.3.** The majority of people described their role as being part-time for all or most of the year (Fig.8). 15% described it as being variable generally depending on what projects were being undertaken or activities taking place. The majority of people who described the role as being full-time were aged over 65, quite possibly as a result of being in the role for a considerable amount of

time and taking on more and more tasks. Whilst only 8% of people described the role as being full-time, a majority of people described having a lack of time to carry out all their duties.

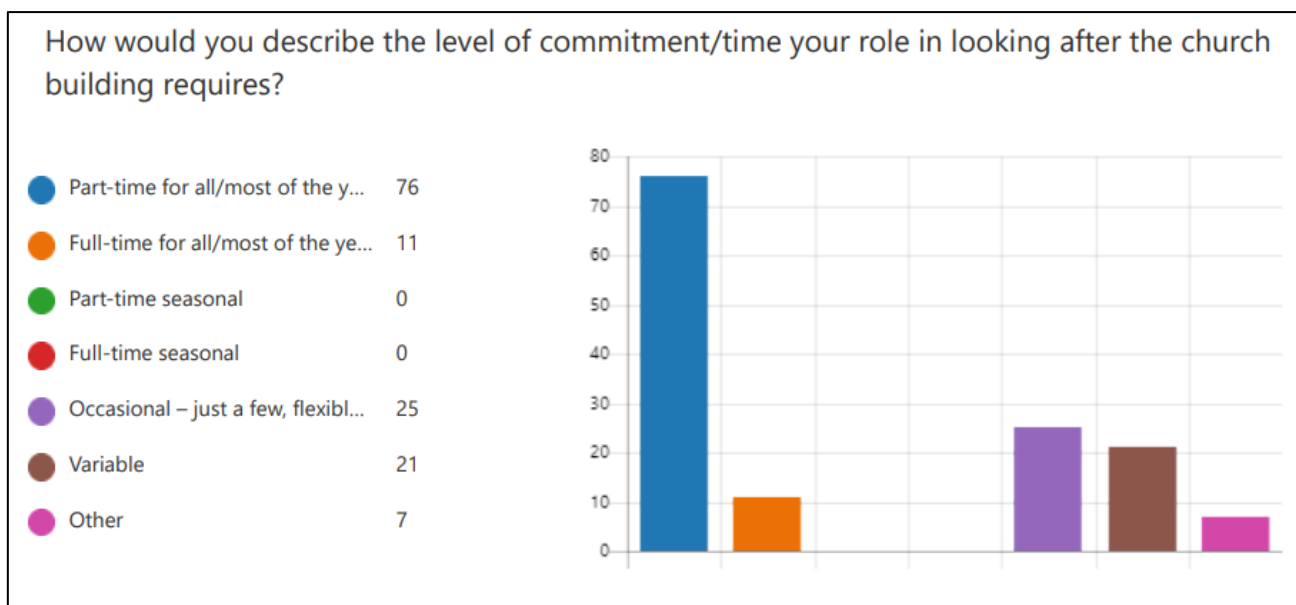


Figure 8. Level of commitment experienced by respondents

In follow-up interviews, people were asked if they thought the role of Churchwarden or Fabric Officer could be carried out by someone in full time employment. The response was overwhelmingly no. Many of those who did confidently state yes also highlighted that they had done so in the past, but explained that it relied on employment being somewhat flexible (an understanding boss, flexible working hours or the ability to work at home) or that you would need a network of people you could draw on for support. For one interviewee, having a Churchwarden that worked full-time resulted in all PCC meetings being timetabled to suit them and not necessarily anyone else.

“You can do it fulltime, I did for many years, but it is more difficult. I didn’t always know about things going on at/in the church because I wasn’t there as much.”

“I spend 5-6 hours a day working for the church. it does dominate and I have less time to spend with my family.”

“Churchwarden role would be very difficult to do if you had a full-time job. If the second Churchwarden didn’t work, it might be possible.”

“I think it would be very difficult for someone who isn’t retired. A lot of stuff is in working hours, particularly dealing with the architect and contractors. You have to be flexible as things are unpredictable, alarms go off etc...”

“We have had younger people on the PCC, but work commitments often get in the way”

“Yes, I did although I look back and wonder how I did. My employers were a little bit flexible. It is difficult because you have to be at the church to let contractors in etc... so part-time or retired is easier.”

## 6. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

“In the past, many organisations involving volunteers relied on informal structures, systems and relationships. Although this often worked well and a certain understanding and culture evolved, more recently many organisations involving volunteers have put in place more formal structures which help both the organisation and volunteer understand their relationship better.”

(Citizens Information Board, 2008)

**6.1.** The Church of England, on the whole, still relies heavily on an informal style of volunteering which could be something of a mixed blessing. As Figure 9 shows, few of the respondents received any formal information, induction or training relating to their role. Some of the people interviewed nearly recoiled in horror at the thought of adopting more formal processes, whilst others felt that some procedures, such as having basic job descriptions and codes of conduct could help deal with difficult situations. Most people agreed that in bigger, busier churches formal processes would not only be a benefit but a necessity, but they questioned what benefit they would bring to smaller groups of people. There was a feeling that formality could actually deter people from volunteering altogether, or from going beyond the parameters of a role description when needed.

“We know each other so well, we know what we all do and can step in to help each other and cover when people are away.”

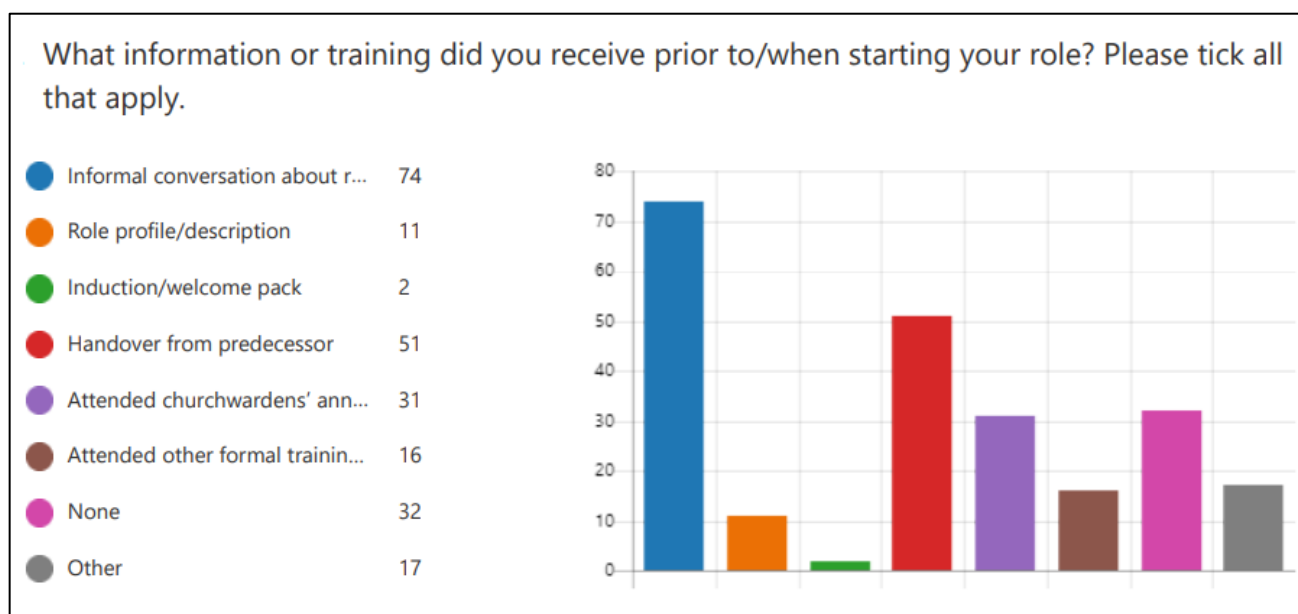


Figure 9. Information or training respondents received

The informality may well suit the sense of a parish church being part of an extended family where people can help as and when required, but it does have some drawbacks, particularly in an environment where personal interests and personalities may clash. Having a strong sense of leadership is important, however, the survey highlighted the fact that there is no, one person ultimately responsible for volunteers at a church. Many respondents answered that they ‘imagined’ it was the Vicar or ‘guessed’ it was up to them, the Churchwarden, either way no-one felt anyone was actually trained to take on that role.

“No, we don’t have a specific role for that. We all do our bit when we think we could do with more help.”

Very few of the people interviewed were aware of their church having any role profiles, a code of conduct or any formal procedures relating to recruitment, interviewing or induction (with the exception of Safeguarding). Where role profiles were in existence, it seems they were largely unpopular, unused or simply didn’t reflect the reality of the roles they covered.

“Our Vicar did want to bring in role descriptions but no-one else was really interested; they never read them or signed them off, so the Vicar just gave up as a lost cause.”

Whilst many people agreed that role profiles could help where certain skills and experience were beneficial, particularly relating to project management, other roles like Churchwarden were far more difficult to define and an attempt to do so could backfire if not done sensitively.

“You can’t have a set Job Description, every church is different. The core functions are the same, but all the other tasks and responsibilities will differ.”

“Role profiles can be limiting; people tend to see that something needs doing and do it, if you had a job description you might be less likely to. Formalising things can backfire e.g., fellow churchwarden and I had both been doing role for many years when a new Vicar arrived in our parish, he sent details to us about what the role of churchwarden entailed which made the other churchwarden really cross (it took a lot to get him cross) as he had been in the role for so long.”

**6.2.** The difficulty to define the role of Churchwarden has been touched upon before in this report. Whilst it is a clearly defined role in title and overall responsibility, the detail of the role and what it actually entails on a day-to-day basis seems open to much more interpretation. It is, of course, not uncommon for roles to differ between locations and organisations, but this survey has highlighted a general lack of certainty about the role of Churchwarden; a role that can be shaped by personal interests, varies considerably between churches, and which despite requiring no set level of skills or experience and has no mandatory training (in relation to buildings), requires people to navigate a broad range of professional fields.

“The Church of England is very structured. Volunteering ought to be as people don’t really seem to understand the role and responsibilities of a Churchwarden. Every church does things differently though....Need to know the scope of a role..”

Some parishes have or are considering separating out the buildings side of the Churchwarden’s role to create a Fabric Officer, but this promoted the question from one interviewee of what that would leave a Churchwarden to do.

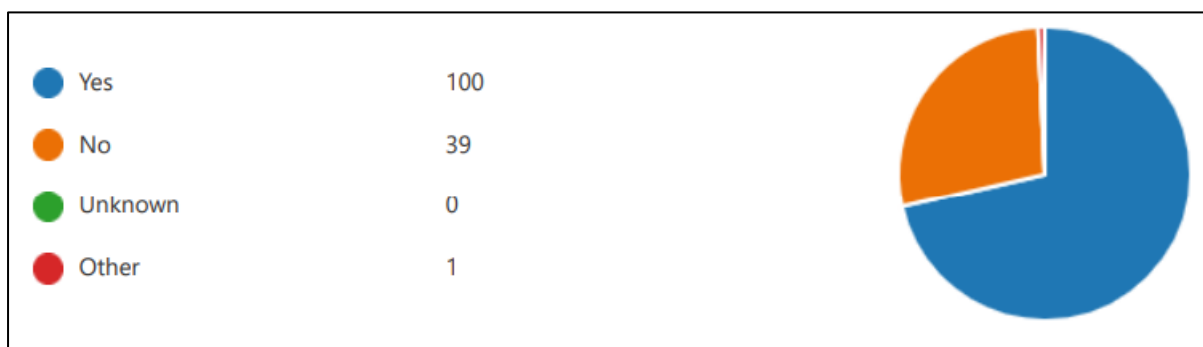
“I would have to ask what the Churchwarden would then do? Once you take out the building, there isn’t that much left to the ‘official’ role. Other Churchwardens are probably doing far more than the role actually entails.”

Succession planning and recruitment of volunteers can be difficult at the best of times, but without a clear role description, whether on paper or in one’s head, it does seem almost impossible.

“If I were to sit down with someone and just tell them all about what I do they would probably run a mile.”

## 7. RECRUITMENT

**7.1.** Most of the parishes surveyed had both churchwarden positions filled, some even had Deputy Churchwardens. However, a significant 36% were without two churchwardens and in some cases any churchwardens at all. In one parish that role had been fulfilled in name only in order to prevent the church from closing, whilst in another parish, the Churchwarden refused to be officially sworn in due to the amount of “things” he would be committed to as a result.



**Figure 10.** Are both churchwarden positions filled?

**7.2.** 77% of respondents stated that they were not confident that a replacement could be found if they were to step down, with an additional 11% indicating that they would like to step down but had been unable to find a replacement. There was no correlation between location or condition of church buildings to suggest the lack of Churchwardens could be attributed to one particular thing in any given place. The only common theme appeared to be age, that of the congregation and surrounding community.



**Figure 11.** Confidence amongst respondents about recruiting future volunteers

For one church, despite being blessed with both Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwardens, there were still concerns about the future. The church is located in a very affluent area and is well supported by local residents, effectively meaning money is no problem. The issue is that too few of the residents attend church and the high house prices have resulted in a lack of young families living in the village. As a result, the aging congregation is slowly shrinking and there are concerns that in 10-15 years’ time there will be no congregation or volunteers. In contrast, in two other very different churches, one suburban and one rural, the opposite has happened. At both churches,

about a decade ago the PCCs recognised that they had an aging and declining congregation and realised that the key to their viability was in attracting young families and young people. Both parishes were lucky to have potential new people on the doorstep and the PCCs worked hard to attract them. Both churches now have larger, more varied congregations and a network of support which includes contractors who are willing to do odd jobs for free and businesses happy to donate items. The rural parish is, perhaps, a little less confident than the suburban one of being able to replace their dynamic Churchwardens and Youth Workers when the time comes, but they are actively trying to identify and ease people into the roles.

**7.3.** It is not the purview of this report to look into why churches are struggling to attract younger people to them in general, but to focus more specifically on recruiting a new generation into key church roles. Are these roles simply outdated and just not appealing to younger people? A big motivating factor for people of working age is often “to develop skills and gain experience”, but this came relatively low on the list of motivating factors in the survey (section 3). Is this simply due to the age of the respondents or is it because the role of Churchwarden is too heavily focused on what a person can give to the role than vice versa? In the past, perhaps it was perfectly acceptable to expect people to volunteer purely out of a sense of obligation and duty, but things have changed. The lack of new, younger people may also be due to more wider issues – a reliance on the ‘golden generation’ of people who were able to retire between 50-60 years old and had less commitments and more time than many retirees today; or an issue with the organisation people would be volunteering for.

“The roles are just not appealing to younger people. The word ‘church’ really puts people off, it just doesn’t appeal to people. Doesn’t help that National Church has a lot of negative press. “

Whatever the reason, it is not just the key leadership roles that many PCCs are concerned about, it is any role which requires a regular commitment of time including cleaners and those involved in churchyard maintenance. The pandemic did lead to an increase in volunteering within some organisations, but it was predominately for specific, short-term activities. This has prompted many volunteer-led organisations to review their roles and ways of volunteering.

“We are not limited by a lack of volunteers as we get lots of support to help with events, particularly irregular activities. Regular things might be trickier for volunteers, very tricky to commit far ahead and for regular things.”

“It is easier to recruit for tasks, not roles with responsibility. I think it is because there is so much more personal accountability now, it worries people. Expectations are much higher and there is too much paperwork. As Safeguarding Officer the amount of paperwork is huge and off-putting to people.”

**7.4.** Planning for the succession of key roles is important, but churches do, on the whole, still rely on recruitment from within the church community; a gentle coercion or “pricking of conscience” of people who already know what to expect.

“You can’t plan for succession of roles; the person who will take over from me might not even be attending this church yet...They need to be ‘settled’ into this community and looking to commit for the long-term; giving 1-5 years doesn’t really help in the long-run...Recruiting a Churchwarden is one thing, how long they will last is the key question.”



As Figure 12 illustrates, the majority of volunteers who took part in this survey were already members of the congregation before taking on their voluntary role. 39% were already volunteering in a different role at their church, whilst 35% indicated that they had been approached directly and asked to apply.

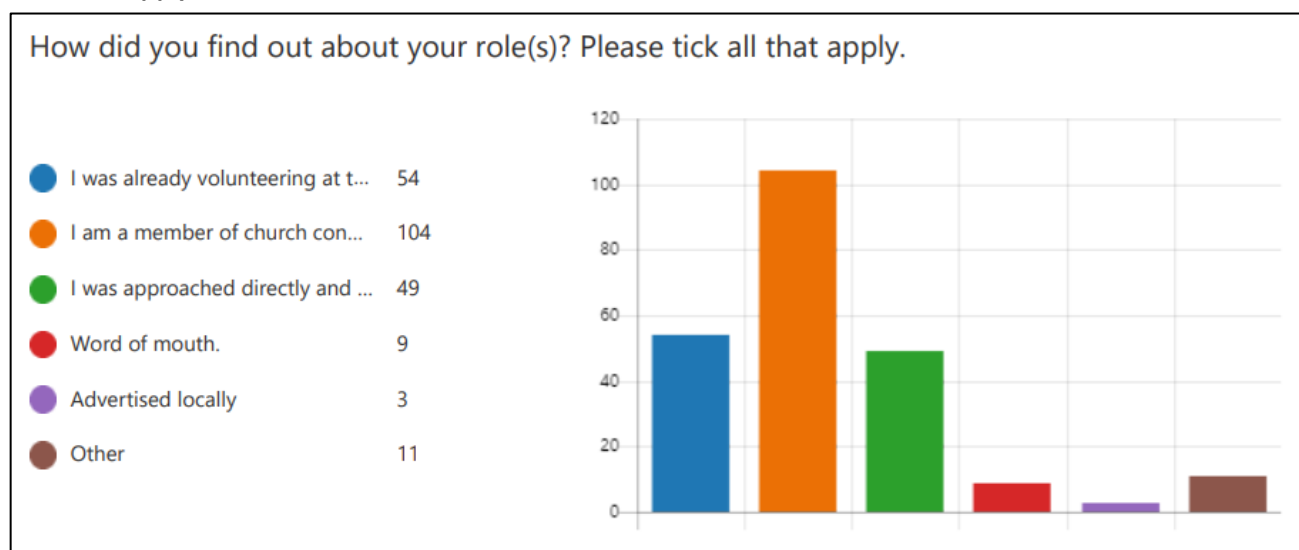


Figure 12. How respondents came to volunteer in a buildings related role

In the follow-up interviews few people had any objections to advertising more widely, but none advertised beyond the Parish or Village magazine and social media. There was a strong preference to use existing contacts and a sense of “comfort in dealing with people you know”. Whilst people would not turn down a willing volunteer who was new to the church, it was felt of greater benefit (to the individual and church) to ease someone into a role, thus being a part of the church community was preferable. Few people really saw much to be gained in advertising the role of Churchwarden more widely, particularly if one tried to describe it in its fullest sense.

“Stick to people who know the church. Motivated by people who know the job. Travel more than 5-10 miles is not really appropriate. Regular member of the congregation is best.”

“it is particularly important to match people to a role, not everyone can be a churchwarden. My handover from the previous churchwarden wasn’t the best for a variety of reasons. He was relatively new to the church when he took on the role and just wasn’t used to things; he got upset and upset other people. It was a bit like being a PM when you haven’t even been an MP, you need some experience of the church (people, politics) first.”

The best form of advertising can often come from the church building itself and the messages it conveys about the vision and activities of the people using it. This means that some churches could be at a distinct disadvantage to others:

“I can see why churches in some areas struggle, particularly when part of a large benefice. We are lucky as this is the only church. In other areas you see that a church only has one service a month, whilst others have more, I’m not surprised that it is difficult to attract congregations or volunteers to such churches – does send a message.”

**7.5.** A solution that is often presented to PCCs when faced with recruitment issues is to ask the wider community, but this is by no means an easy task. Like many areas facing Churchwardens, community engagement and consultation is one requiring a certain level of skills and confidence as

discussed further in section 10. The reason most PCCs prefer to recruit within existing networks is because they know people have a genuine interest in the role and/or the organisation they are volunteering for. It's not that people of a different faith or of no faith are not welcome, but one must ask if they really want to help and are they the right person for the role? The role of Churchwarden must be carried out by someone of faith, but other roles such as Fabric Officer could be taken on by people from the non-worshipping community.

“You can't just pluck people out of the community to help if they are not interested in religion.”

“A Churchwarden has to be a communicant of the church as does a PCC Secretary (Treasurer doesn't have to be), so you do have to be 'of faith' to do the role. You could split the role up and have a Fabric Officer, but that person does need to have some understanding of Church. People are surprised that things cost so much more than they do in secular buildings, and the time things take and the lack of specialist support (without paying fees).”

“A churchwarden has to be in contact with the church as he has certain duties that relate to the pattern of worship. It is quite an onerous role at times. I don't see why anyone else (non-worshipping community) would want to take on the role. You could have someone from the non-worshipping community looking after the fabric of the building. They would need to have an interest in the building and a knowledge of how things work in The Church. A Fabric Officer cannot simply come along and just get on with things, the legal responsibility still lies with the PCC; it is the Churchwarden that has to sign a faculty, PCC must give consent. The Fabric Officer would have to attend PCC meetings, so it would be easier if it was done by someone who was already involved in the church.”

No-one interviewed raised any objection to a Fabric Officer being a secular role, in fact a few people who had never considered it before, could see potential benefit for their church. In addition, some of those interviewed felt that people from the non-worshipping community could bring a positive new perspective to things. It was, however, pointed out that even a secular role would still involve volunteering for an organisation with religion as a primary purpose and as such sympathy/respect for the Christian ethos would be required. A Fabric Officer would most likely need to attend PCC meetings and would benefit from an understanding of how the church works from local 'politics' to faculties.

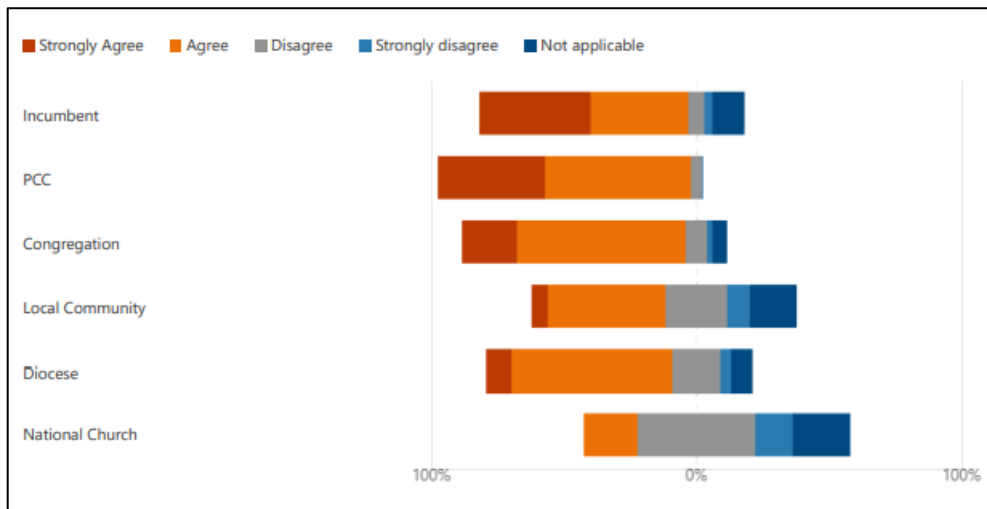
“In our village a lot of people just turn up to look after the churchyard, but they don't go to church. They love the church though, feel 'it's ours'. They don't want the commitment though that comes with church, or the religious element of PCC meetings (prayers throughout).”

“I am not a member of the church and had no knowledge of the church when I started, so it is possible for a Fabric Officer to be someone who is not part of the worshipping community. You do still have to attend PCC meetings; you also have to get used to the language. I could save people a lot of time explaining things - the actual guidance and advice is far too long-winded, overly complicated and uses specific language; it's like the medical profession – difficult for anyone outside to understand! It could be made so much easier; a short list of 10 key points would be great.”

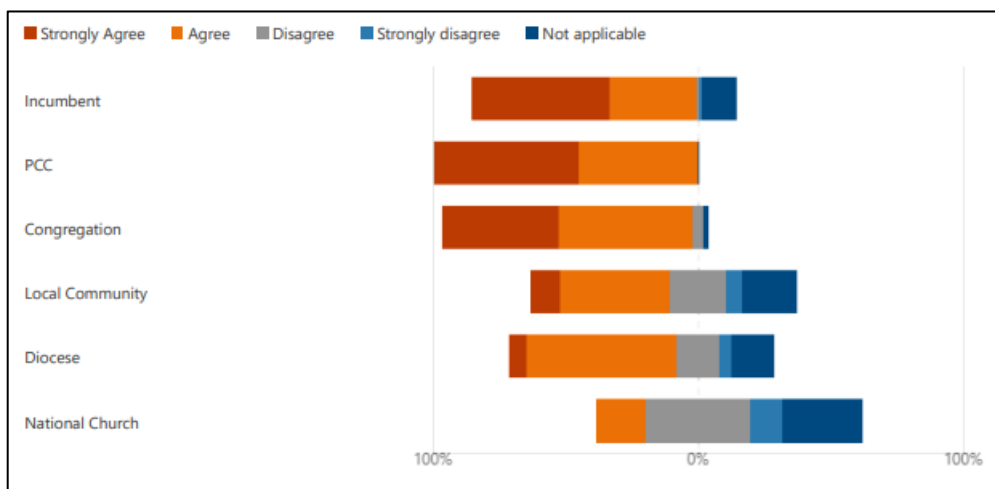
Some of the respondents did highlight success in recruiting some roles from the non-worshipping community, these included Project Managers, Fundraising Officers and a Fabric Committee Chair, but this success did seem to be connected to the levels of employment, income and education within an area.

“it does greatly depend upon the wider interests of the community, which are influenced by things like levels of education and income. Levels are low here, you don’t get the sort of people who are passionate about the architecture and history as you do in other areas.”

## 8. SUPPORT



**Figure 13.** How strongly do you agree with following statement: *I receive support to carry out my role from the...*



**Figure 14.** How strongly do you agree with following statement: *I feel appreciated and valued for the contribution I make by the...*

**8.1.** Due to the breadth of work that Churchwardens do, it wasn’t always possible to clearly separate out the buildings side of the role from other duties. Questions regarding support tended to be answered more generally rather than with a specific focus on support for buildings. The majority of respondents to the survey felt well supported and valued for the contribution they made by their Incumbent and the congregation, beyond that the picture was more mixed (Figures 13 & 14). A few of those interviewed did highlight a sense of favoritism creeping into some benefices where a Vicar is “stretched” with more than one parish and church building.

“There is only one base though, one Rectory and inevitably people will accuse incumbents of favouritism, usually to the parish they live in .”

“The National Church has to start making tough decisions and not focus on just keeping their ‘cushy’ jobs safe. It is not sustainable and is not helping with the public’s perception of it. It is an inverted pyramid, too many people at the top and nowhere near enough at the bottom.”

In terms of the local community, responses were split almost equally between those feeling there was a positive relationship, to those feeling either the opposite or believing the question was not applicable to their role. In interviews it appeared that churches were generally well supported by the wider community through attendance at community events and festival services such as Christmas, but whether people actually ‘supported the church’ or simply liked the event was less clear. Almost all those interviewed felt that their local community wanted the church building to remain and were very “quick to complain” if things weren’t being done properly, but less reluctant to help. Most of those interviewed felt that people from the non-worshipping community (and some within the congregation) still lacked understanding about the governance and care of church buildings, often becoming frustrated with the lack of financial support from the National Church.

“Events are generally well supported, but people don’t come to support their local church, they come because of the event (wouldn’t matter where it was held).”

“Wider community don’t really understand the position of the PCC and money. When we ask for funds, most people assume it is going to the building and are “disgusted” when they find it is to help cover Parish Share. They think the clergy are paid centrally by The Church. Some people don’t understand what happens in a church, who can go and even that it is free to attend!”

“The relationship can be damaged so easily, and often by people’s misunderstanding of what the local church is and isn’t responsible for. The Diocese as a whole doesn’t always seem to have joined up thinking and advice, which can cause friction.”

**8.2.** In terms of the National Church, the majority of respondents indicated they felt unsupported, underappreciated and undervalued, but a large proportion also felt the question wasn’t applicable to them. In fact, several people interviewed felt that it simply wasn’t the role of the National Church to support people on a local level and that when they did, there was too much focus on ‘what’ should be done and not enough on ‘how’ particularly in terms of funding.

“...Need more ‘how can we do’ from The Church, not just ‘you have got to/can’t. Take people with us rather than just get people’s backs up.”

“The Covid rules and dictates that came from the Diocese were not at all helpful in supporting and engaging people.”

There was also a sense that the public perception of the National Church was “putting people off going to church” locally and that this was because “nationally the Church of England has lost its way. It no longer knows what it is or who it serves.” Linked to this was a feeling that The Church needed to start making some tough decisions locally, particularly regarding struggling parishes.

“Some churches are just not viable, but it is very difficult to say this as PCCs are usually elderly and absolutely devoted to the church, you can’t just say it is time to close. A Vicar can end up spending as much time on a church with 8 in the congregation as they do with 88!”

**8.3.** Support from the Diocese was a very mixed picture with a number of people in the north of the Diocese feeling largely unsupported, however, there were some notable exceptions. There was

a general sense that help wasn't very forthcoming; that you have to ask for it and the louder you shout the better. A sense of 'favoritism' came through again, that some churches are just "easier" to work with.

"We get great support from the Archdeacon, but then we are not shy at approaching him. The new Bishop not so much and our Vicar is rarely here and is unreliable – the Diocese doesn't do anything about that."

"There is resentment in the congregation towards Ely Diocese – "them and us" - it goes back a few years but is still very sensitive."

Many respondents did, however, describe receiving positive support from the Church Buildings Team, despite the many frustrations and objections raised regarding the faculty process.

"Under the old regime, the Diocesan Secretary and Bishops said they did the Church stuff and left Churchwardens to do the fabric stuff. New (current Diocesan Secretary) had meetings and was told it was the fabric stuff that took all the energy and diverted people away from Church stuff, and the Church Buildings section at the Diocese was transformed."

A few respondents commented that they felt church building volunteers were generally taken for granted and not given the respect that they deserved – "we are not experts, but we're expected to do expert roles". There was a feeling that people, both within The Church and from external organisations such as Historic England, felt that volunteers were 'choosing' not to look after church buildings and that tasks, maintenance in particular, were easy, inexpensive and thereby inexcusable not to be on top of. The reality is often very different.

"There is an assumption that all volunteers are likely to be vandals...Volunteers are what they are and should be given a degree of respect rather than a condescending pat on the head when one of too many Bishops appears very rarely."

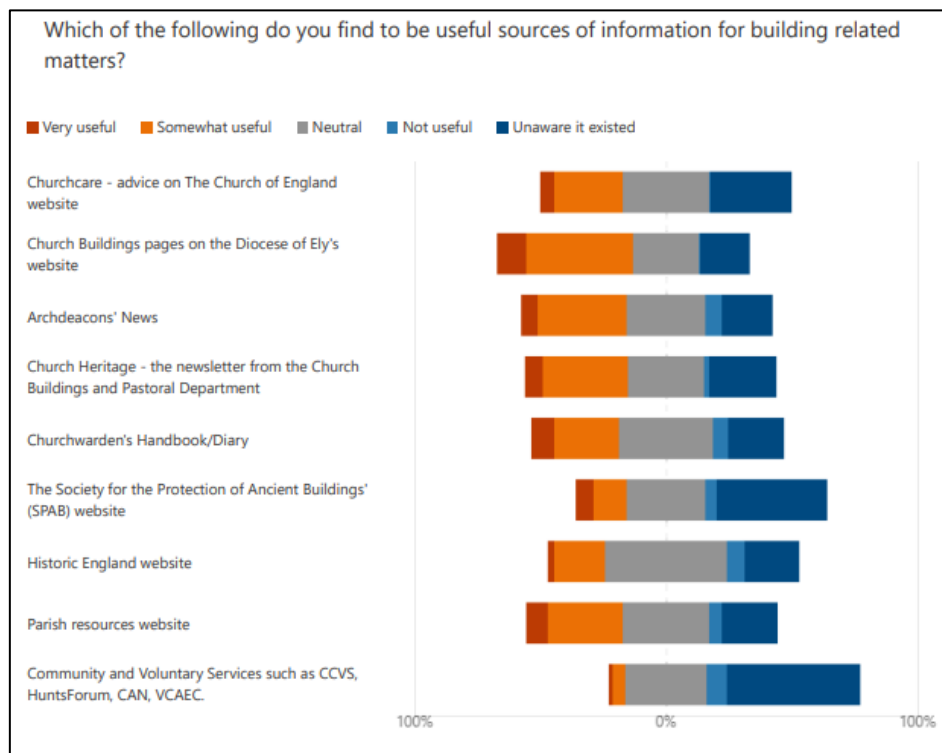


Figure 15. Reach and usefulness of key sources of information

**8.4.** In terms of where to go for additional information and support relating to buildings, the Church Buildings pages on the Diocese of Ely’s website was found to be the most useful as Figure 15 illustrates. The newsletter produced by the Church Buildings Team was considered useful by just over a third of respondents with a significant number unaware of its existence. This is not surprising considering Churchwardens and Fabric Officer are sent notifications when it has been published and there is, as yet no easy way to keep the contact list updated with new volunteers. There was a very similar response to the Archdeacons’ News, the Churchwardens’ Handbook/Diary and the Parish Resources website. The Churchcare website was less popular with almost a third being unaware of its existence, whilst familiarity with Historic England’s website was perhaps higher than expected, although responses were generally neutral on its usefulness. A high proportion of people were unaware of the SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) website and of support offered via regional voluntary and community websites. More needs to be done to highlight sources of information available to people without overwhelming them with too many options.

## 9. TRAINING - GENERAL

“I just don’t have time to attend training or read all the lengthy documents/books.”

**9.1.** Overall training proved to be quite unpopular, even regarding subjects which people indicated they lacked confidence in (Figures 16, 17&18). A lack of time repeatedly came up as the biggest barrier to attending training, closely followed by the relevance of the subject. Many people felt that training didn’t add anything to what they already knew or focused on areas that ‘other’ people felt were necessary, rather than what was actually needed.

“Need training in what we will actually be doing as well. Vicars are expected to deliver school assemblies and engage with very young children, but this isn’t easy and there is no training.”

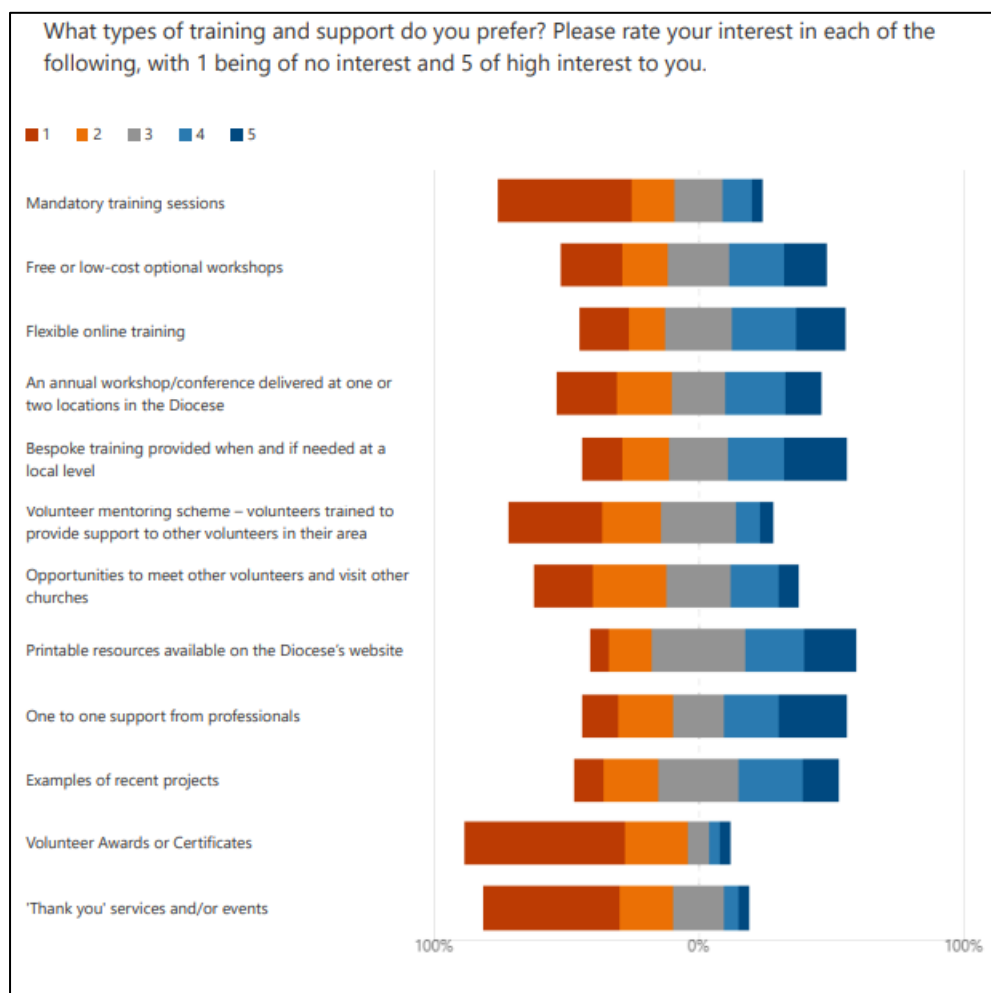
It does make sense that if you have limited time training must be worth attending, so alongside being relevant, “concise”, “accurate” and of “high quality” were also highlighted as being important.

“The problem with more formal training is that it tends to be longer than it needs to be; often a full day’s training could be delivered just as effectively in half the time.”

Other common points raised included:

- Need to know what resources are out there and who is available to help
- Training isn’t a one size fits all
- Provide good tea and cake
- Low cost
- Avoid over repetition
- Avoid Death by PowerPoint
- No small group working which doesn’t add anything to the presentation.
- Need ideas
- Accessible to all, to the point (not get too deep in theology).
- Realism – praying for God to fix the building isn’t realistic, we have to act.
- Travel not a problem, but zoom would be better in winter months

**9.2.** Many of the respondents reflected on negative experiences with mandatory training sessions within the Diocese (not building related), which then deterred a number of people from Diocesan training altogether. That likely explains why mandatory training sessions on church buildings was rated as being of very little interest to most respondents (Figure 16). A key problem with mandatory training can come from the fact that the audience is captive, so there is less incentive for the trainer to work at engaging people; this matched the experiences of most of the respondents. A few people felt they were too old to be trained anymore or had been in the role too long to really benefit.



**Figure 16.** Training and support preferences

**9.3.** A key problem highlighted with the training currently on offer, be it from the Diocese or external organisations, was that it wasn't available when needed; churches are at different points on their journey and don't all need bid writing support, for instance, at the same time. More regular workshops, based at different locations across the Diocese might be more effective, but those interviewed felt that there was no guarantee to attendance; past experiences of the HCBSO suggest that even when a session is popular on paper it doesn't necessarily translate into high attendance. More frequent, face-to-face training would increase costs and interviewees were surprised to discover that this would rely on external funding due to the lack of a dedicated training budget for the care of church buildings. Flexible online training was of relatively high interest compared to other areas (Figure 16), however, a number of people did highlight lack of internet or poor connectivity as a barrier to this.

**9.4.** No type of training or support came out as more popular than any others in the survey. In interviews almost everyone highlighted networking opportunities – the chance to speak to and learn from other Churchwardens - as a particularly high priority, along with more examples of projects from around the country. It was felt that many conferences and workshops weighted examples towards urban churches or those in tourist hotspots, in essence, great ideas but ones that didn't translate locally to predominately rural Dioceses like Ely. This emphasises the need for more help with 'how to do things' rather than just being told 'what to do'.

**9.5.** Bespoke, one-to-one (face-to-face) support and printed materials were identified as being of greater interest than other types of support (Figure 16). A majority of people felt that "training on the job was best" and that workshops were perhaps better suited to people new in post who didn't have the support of another/previous Churchwarden, which further emphasises the benefit of sharing ideas and experiences with others. As Figure 9 shows, most of the respondents had not received any formal training or induction.

"No induction training myself. I learnt on the job. It helps to talk with people. Events are good to share ideas and experiences.

"I had a fab mentor, it would have been really difficult without the other churchwardens."

"For me there is enough information elsewhere and I know who to ask when I need help, so formal training really doesn't add anything. I can see how it could be useful for people new to role."

**9.6.** The Diocese of Ely holds an annual Churchwardens' Training Day, usually in September (due to Covid the training was cancelled in 2020 and was delivered online in 2021). 38% of those interviewed had never been to one and 17% couldn't recall if they had. 28% had attended at least one training day, which was close to the total figure of 22% of all those surveyed (Figure 9). There appeared to be two main reasons for the lack of attendance, the first that people felt the training was more beneficial to new Churchwardens (for many it simply didn't exist when they started in the role); the second was the inflexible scheduling of the training.

"Churchwardens' training is not necessarily what you need to know to do the job. It can also take 12-18 months before a session is available and by then it is a bit late."

"I haven't been able to attend the churchwardens' training this year as they are all on Thursday evenings and I have commitments elsewhere then. There aren't any alternatives – I have been sent information, but it would be better if there were more opportunities (flexibility) to attend".

Those who had attended found it of some use, but felt it could be significantly improved. It was felt that there was just too much to cover in one day and that it tended to be dominated by Safeguarding, for which there were other mandatory training sessions. A lack of networking opportunities was again raised.

"I have attended a Churchwardens' training day. The problem was that it was delivered by people who lacked (any) experience as a Churchwarden. It would be good to have real Churchwardens talking about their role."

"I knew a year before that I would be taking on the role of Churchwarden, so I went on a Churchwardens' training day well in advance of starting. I got a flavour of things but would have been completely cold without it. The role is really wide ranging, conservation to project management of large capital projects."



“The Churchwarden’s training day is very important, but it doesn’t seem to be brilliantly supported (low attendance). I went two years on the trot, but spending that much time on safeguarding when we have officers at the church and safeguarding training! Safeguarding is important, but it took up a lot of the day. The registry speakers were very helpful, that was very important. I would have liked an open session so we could ask questions and also more time to chat to others.”

“It does all seem to be about safeguarding.”

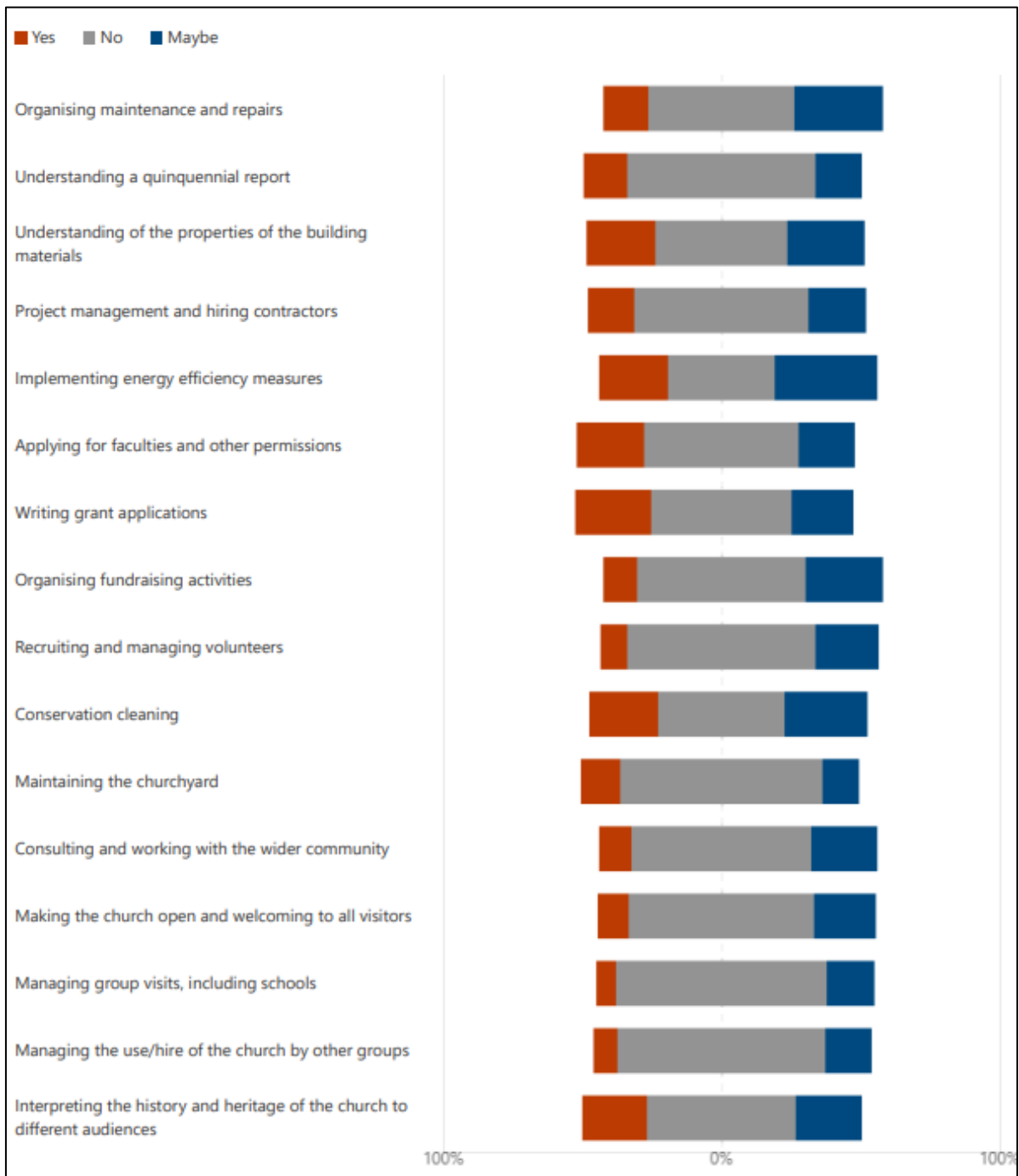


Figure 17. Interest in future training in key areas

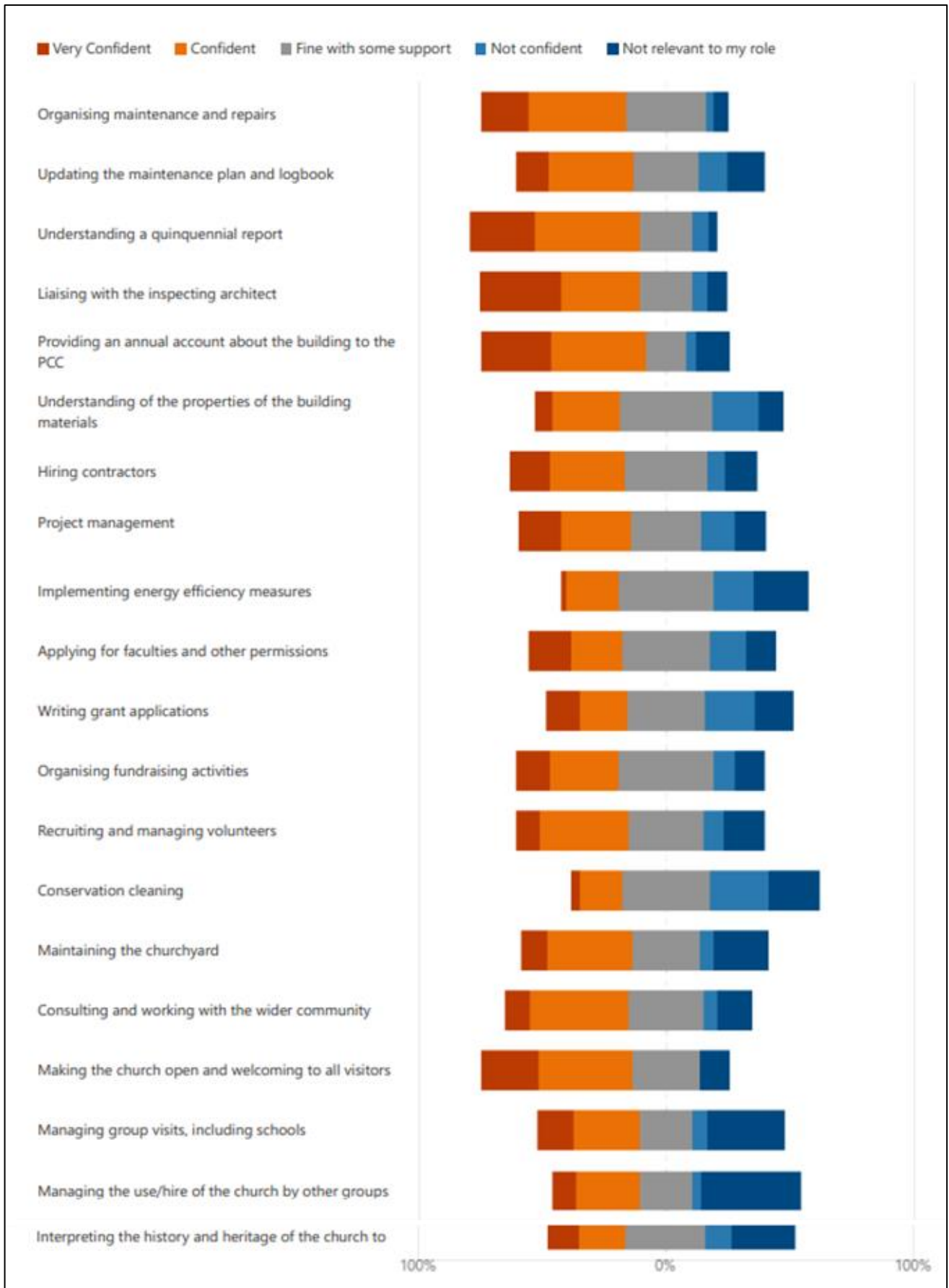


Figure 18. Level of confidence in key areas

## 10. TRAINING – SPECIFIC AREAS

### 10.1. Maintenance and Repairs

As Figures 17&18 highlight, a majority of the respondents indicated that they were confident with organising maintenance and repairs including hiring contractors, however, less people felt confident in understanding the properties of the building and materials. Whilst training generally wasn't popular at all, this area did show a slightly higher indication of interest than others. Interestingly, updating a maintenance plan and logbook were highlighted as areas of confidence and low training need, yet these documents are often reported as being 'unavailable' during quinquennial inspections. In the interviews it was revealed that only 25% of the churches had formal maintenance plans, whilst 42% has something informal but not written down and 25% used the Quinquennial Inspection Report. Most people felt that a formal plan of some kind was important, but that it had either, fallen down the list of priorities simply due to a lack of time or they had been 'put off' by some of the lengthy forms/templates. As previously mentioned, succession planning isn't an area of focus at most churches, but succession planning isn't just about finding people to take on roles it is also about ensuing continuity in what is being done and handing over important information, like maintenance plans and logbooks.

“Yes, but it isn't written down. We know when things like gutter clearance needs doing, but I suppose we should probably write it down.”

“Yes. It's mainly about coping the best we can. It's all quite intuitive. We did have a written one, but how well we stick to it is more questionable.”

“Formal plans, if too big, can be frightening to people. A list of key tasks is generally better than splitting the building up into areas. Things that need access arrangements and planning require more thought, but most other things are done as and when.”

### 10.2. Quinquennial Reports

Survey respondents generally felt confident in being able to understand quinquennial reports, liaise with their architect and provide an annual account to the PCC. There was lower confidence in managing projects, particularly for major repairs. Interviews revealed that whilst people on the whole had good relationships with their architects, not everyone understood the calculation of fees and lacked the confidence or experience to know what and when to ask or to challenge things.

“Uncertain about how to project manage, asking about architect's fees (had to pay £1000 when I thought architect had kindly offered to help with filling in faculty form).”

### 10.3. Energy efficiency

This was highlighted as an area of uncertainty. Many respondents felt confused or overwhelmed by the information coming from the National Church and weren't certain if they should be focusing on light bulbs or installing solar panels. More training was highlighted as a need here, but with a note of hesitancy.

“The National Church feels less supportive. Focus on telling people what they have to do and not explaining how or why. Carbon neutral for instance, what does that actually mean for a church? Where are the examples of churches that have achieved this, church buildings like ours? ...there is a lot that is starting to feel just like 'tick boxing' exercises...You have to take people on a journey with you, not just tell people what to do.”

### 10.4. Faculties

Facilities (and other consents) was highlighted as an area of mixed confidence with some training needs identified. Perhaps not surprising in light of some recent changes and the move to the online

faculty system. As one interview highlighted, it's not so much formal training that we need "what would be more useful is to be kept up-to-date with changing legislations."

### **10.5. Grants and Fundraising**

This was another area of mixed confidence, which is perhaps not surprising as grants and online giving have been subject to many changes over recent years. In addition, bid writing can often be a one-time task for a Churchwarden, particularly for major works. Writing grant applications was rated slightly higher for training needs than other areas, but like faculty training it is often more useful at the moment of need rather than just a fixed regular training workshop.

### **10.6. Recruiting and Managing Volunteers**

This area was not highlighted as requiring training and most respondents indicated that they were either confident or fine with some support. This is somewhat surprising considering the challenges described in section 7. Perhaps this comes from the experiences of many that there simply isn't anyone interested in volunteering. It could also be due to an assumption that when we talk about managing volunteers in The Church, we are referring to the more casual roles that PCC Members and Churchwardens recruit to help them, and not the recruitment of the key, leadership roles. This is certainly the experience of the HCBSO when speaking to people at all levels in The Church. As a result, there is very little support given centrally or regionally to help churches to recruit, train, manage and retain volunteers as it appears to be considered a fairly local, informal thing.

### **10.7. Conservation Cleaning**

Cleaning is often seen as a traditional form of volunteering in a church and is not an activity considered to require training. Church buildings, however, often contain historic objects, fixtures and fittings that require a different approach to those usually used in domestic and commercial cleaning. As Figures 17 and 18 illustrate, conservation cleaning was identified as an area of relatively low confidence compared to others and of some training interest. In interviews, many people highlighted it as a subject that they would like to know more about, although admitted that implementing measures might take time as they weren't sure their stalwart cleaner could be encouraged to give up *Brasso*.

### **10.8. Churchyard Maintenance**

The maintenance of churchyards was highlighted as an area of relatively high confidence with little training need. In interviews people did mention an interest in managing the churchyard for wildlife, thus more support in this area might be useful.

### **10.9. Community Engagement**

One of the limitations of this survey was the inability to explain some of the questions/options in more detail, which might have led to misunderstandings. On first reflection, this was thought to be the reason for some of the mixed responses to questions relating to community engagement, however, follow-up interviews suggest it could equally be the result of a more general sense of confusion on the subject. As discussed in section 8, many respondents indicated feeling relatively unsupported and unappreciated by the local community and yet confidence in consulting and working with the wider community scored quite high and was not highlighted as a training need. Furthermore, managing group visits, including schools as well as the use/hire of the church by other groups were seen as not applicable to a high proportion of respondents.

Comments in the survey and discussion in interviews supported much of what the HCBSO has also encountered, that there is great deal of uncertainty around working with wider communities, including in the language used. In particular, people were unclear of:

- What is meant by the 'wider' community as opposed to the 'local' community
- The difference between consultation and engagement
- The difference between support and use
- What is meant by church development

Respondents tended to focus on ‘use’ and ‘development’, often highlighting competition from other community buildings as a barrier. As with energy efficiency, there is a tendency to focus straight on the big changes, such as installing solar panels or with community use, reordering, facilities and use as a community centre or café.

“Not certain how community could use it as there is also a church hall.”

“ At the other end of our village, we have a warm, community centre. It is hard to see how the church can be used more as a result; there isn’t enough need for use on a daily basis.”

“We have big community hall in the village, so the church isn’t needed by the community as much as we’d like.”

People generally seem to overlook the smaller things i.e. having conversations with people and identifying who they are not currently talking to; working out what is missing in the village and then seeing if the church could help; challenging misconceptions and trying to address what stops people from attending or supporting the church. This could be because people are simply not encouraged to focus here or perhaps because community engagement has been tied up with meeting grant criteria for too long. Many of the comments made by respondents did highlight a need for better engagement and communication.

“People just don’t understand what is meant by ‘parish church’. We want to encourage people to use the building for a variety of reasons. The building can be imposing to people who are not used to walking into such places; they don’t know what to do in a church, how to behave, where they can sit etc...”

“Okay, there is no animosity in the village, just lethargy.”

“Concerts are well supported. Christmas is full, but not packed; the Children’s service is always popular. The Rector is well regarded. But a lot of people in the wider community think it is all a bit of a waste.”

“I am generally frustrated by how church services are generally really boring; no-one wants to go anymore.”

“It’s just another building. People really value the church for things like funerals and weddings - for being there when they need it. ...People come if you put the right things on, but they don’t come with ideas, unlike the village hall which gets solidly booked.”

In contrast, the two parishes mentioned in section 7 which have a focus on engaging young people and families, did talk about ongoing engagement.

“We very much try to respond to what the community wants. It is a family church and a church family.”

“We work with all the local schools, we have groups for people who don’t come to church that are delivered in the community but often lead to people then attending church.”

As with everything though, community engagement and consultation takes time and does require a certain level of skills and experience.

“...It is just not as easy as it was, now when I walk down the street everyone has earphones in, in the past you could engage just by chatting to people...”

“There is a limit to what the PCC can do. Even if we hire it out to other groups to use, someone from the PCC still has lock up, often late at night, check the building has been

tidied and also set-up for the next service. We don't have a paid caretaker so it is all down to volunteers; it is a lot of work which is manageable now but we cannot take on more, even though we would like to see the building used more."

"You do need people who have the time, enthusiasm and knowledge to develop things like that (and support of PCC)."

Many of those interviewed expressed a clear belief that the wider village wanted the church building to remain and would "rally round" if needed. It is interesting, therefore, that thoughts about use and development seem to heavily focus on making changes to/reinventing the building and why one person was almost reluctant to ask, "why can't churches just be churches if that is what the community wants?"

### **10.10. Open and Welcome Churches**

Many of those interviewed reported that their church was finally returning to some level of 'normality' after Covid, but not all buildings were being kept open during the day. For a few, despite support from their insurers to begin with, the presence of expensive audio-visual equipment, instruments and other church property, soon led to the realisation that it was just impractical to keep locking all the equipment away and setting it up again in order to keep the main door unlocked.

In general, most people felt confident about making their building open and welcoming to all visitors and that training wasn't necessary, however, in interviews, it was not clear if people truly understood what was meant by this or how it differed from heritage interpretation. More respondents indicated that they felt interpreting the history and heritage of the church not to be applicable to their role, but interest in training was slightly higher than with open and welcome churches.

## **11. AMBASSADORS**

The Diocese of Norwich have an established group of volunteers called Church Ambassadors, made up of current or former Churchwardens, PCC Members etc... who have experience with repair projects and grant applications. They give advice and act as a critical friend and mentor to other parishes. Consideration has been given to setting up something similar in the Diocese of Ely. Survey responses indicated a low level of interest in a volunteer mentoring scheme (Figure 16), however, this was probably down to the inability to fully explain the initiative in the format of the survey. Follow-up interviews were, therefore, particularly helpful in establishing that there would in fact be support for such a scheme and that a number of people would be willing to act as mentors. Perhaps in the context of survey, the mentoring scheme sounded too formal; in interviews an informal scheme was preferable, but it was noted that it would need careful management to ensure the right support was given by more than one person.

"Mentoring scheme works well in a formal office, but possibly not for church volunteers. Need answers to questions when you need it...A list of contact names rather than a formal mentoring scheme could work. A network of contacts and expertise would be useful."

"An informal approach sounds better, but you have to be careful – mentor got to be sensitive to people trying to help. "

"Needs some management but informal would be better. Keep it on a personal basis rather than formal – building relationships – 'phone a friend'."

## 12. RECOGNITION

I am thanked by PCC and from the pulpit - that's enough embarrassment”.

Church building volunteers are often thought to be among the unsung heroes of heritage, working quietly in the background. There are many who feel that the work of such volunteers should be more readily highlighted and celebrated. As such, Historic England tasked the HCBSO with organising a celebratory event such as an award giving event, a luncheon or online recognition. As Figure 16 illustrates volunteer awards and certificates proved very unpopular in the survey, as did any sort of ‘thank you’ or recognition event. Whilst most people interviewed said that it was nice to be thanked, they were keen to highlight that it wasn't the motivating or driving factor behind what they did; local thanks was preferable to regional or national recognition. There was also a feeling that whilst awards can sometimes give people a goal to work towards, they can also have a negative effect by introducing an unhealthy element of competition or resentment.

“Awards can be a waste of money; they can build resentment if people don't get them (or certain people do) and also put people off who don't want the fuss.”

“...but awards do tend to create a sense of competition, which isn't that helpful.”

“Rewards are nice, but it is not why people do it...Danger is it becomes the driver rather than a bonus. Something special not just for doing your job.”

A few people positively recalled an award scheme called the Engage Awards which ran for a few years in the past in the Diocese of Ely, but only a handful of people were familiar with it. The importance of continuity and ‘fairness’ in award schemes was emphasised. There was greater interest among those interviewed in a more informal celebration event, but that it would still have to be “worthwhile attending” due to the time and travel needed. It was noted that whilst many volunteers preferred to work in the background and did not need praise, a lack of recognition “doesn't help in getting people to understand what we do.”

## 13. ADVICE FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

“If I was told at the beginning all of what I would be doing I would have said you are joking”

**13.1.** Despite all the challenges faced, on the whole people would recommend their role to others. There were notable hesitations and people did stress a need to be genuinely interested in the role and possess the passion and commitment for the building. Key advice for Churchwardens and Fabric Officers tended to focus on time, interpersonal skills and patience.

### Top Tips for Building Volunteers

- Learn to delegate. Don't take on too much.
- Don't panic. Realise you're not on your own, even though it might feel it in your parish.
- If you come up with an idea, you will have to do it, no-one else will run with it.
- Church politics – very important.
- Learn about the church, what's involved, speak to others first, get to know the people.
- Learn to smile when people are unhappy about how things are (or are not) being done at the church.
- You have got to know how the Church of England operates, about church life.

- Have the patience of a saint.
- Set down conditions before you accept the role - make it clear what you do and don't want to do.
- Listen.
- Challenge Diocesan policies.
- Understand the breadth of the role, identify areas where you haven't got knowledge or skills.
- Don't come with preconceived ideas; learn how to serve and make things better.
- Help is available from all sorts of places.
- You have got to be able to work with the Vicar.
- You have got to have the time, the right attitude and the energy.
- You would be surprised at what you can achieve once you know how the system works and know people within it e.g. grant officers, registry staff.
- Try it out first. Work yourself in slowly.
- Do it when you are retired. You need time!
- You are not going to be paid so you must enjoy it.

**13.2.** When asked about the sustainability and viability of church buildings, people agreed that they had to be managed as community spaces and heritage attractions as well as places of worship. Many added that a careful balance must be found in order to ensure churches remained primary as places of worship. There was general agreement that in theory a PCC could do all this, but that it would need a large PCC supported by a network of people which many parishes do not have. There was also a recognition that the direction and vision of a church can be shaped by the interests/influence of just one individual, for better or worse.

“It does depend on individuals though, including the incumbent. It is also about who you know, people will help if they know the church or the person asking for help.”

“There are guidebooks, text panels, labels etc.... it is more like a museum though, I don't want to go that far, fundamentally it is a place of worship...”

## 14. THE FUTURE

**14.1.** In interviews people were asked to imagine what, in a perfect world, would help them to look after and realise the potential of their church building. Unsurprisingly, top of the list was money, followed by more professional support (without the cost) in areas such as project management, heritage conservation and interpretation.

**14.2.** In the real world, people recognised that budgets were tight and grants oversubscribed, but voiced frustration at the impact of having to spend so much time and energy on building maintenance and repairs.

“Money. We need to repair the building first, then we can deliver our vision – community space, better heating facilities and all the activities. We have people and we have uses, but we need money to get the building in a place to do everything else.”

“Church is about more than the building, but most of the money raised goes on it repairs or modifying it (in last 15 years about 70% on repairs, 30% on modifying it). We spend too much on the building and not enough on pastoral care and people related things. Most of the money raised does come from grants that are specifically for building works, but most of our time and energy goes into raising funds for the building rather than other things.”

Frustration was also voiced at the lack of understanding or sympathy most grant giving



organisations have for churches; the lack of grants tailored towards the multifaceted nature of church buildings, which at the same time recognise and support the primary purpose of the building and the organisation, the volunteers, managing it. Some people felt grants would be better administered by the Diocese or that the way church buildings were managed, where the responsibility lay, needed to completely change.

In the absence of any major funding, many people felt that support with fees, project development costs and seed funding would be helpful; these are areas often not supported by grants and 'invisible' to the public making them difficult to fundraise for.

“Money that is easier to obtain for urgent works. In the absence of major funding, a focus on architects' fees and project development costs would be so helpful alongside a minor repairs grant. We have been given donations where the donor has explicitly said that it is not to be used on fees; people like to see the impact of their money and project development simply doesn't offer this.”

**I 4.3.** Whilst most people interviewed described having no issues with the need for consent and the process itself, many did feel it was unnecessarily complex and long-winded.

“We can't do many things without 'this and that'. In some things the Diocese/DAC are slow to respond. I have no problem with the process itself, but it is just slow and frustrating at times.”

“Process can be so longwinded – from architect getting back to you, to DAC and consent process.”

**I 4.4.** Several people felt that Quinquennial Inspection Reports need to be improved as they seemed to vary widely from architect to architect. It was also felt that more support was needed to help Churchwardens prioritise work and revise maintenance plans.

“QI inspection from different architects can be very wide ranging and suggest very different things, even down to the historical significance of things.”

**I 4.5.** A Diocesan staff member to take the lead on developing and delivering heritage and tourism activities was suggested by a few people, as well as a team of specialists to focus on conserving the 'purely' heritage elements of a building.

“Could we have someone to lead on the heritage aspects from the Diocese. Person who organises engagement activities, like a Heritage Officer, who markets, funds and organise things, does outreach etc...”

“Communities can look after buildings/heritage from a practical sense – roofs, windows, gutters, toilets, heating etc... but things that are predominately just heritage, like wallpaintings these require more professional support. Ours don't feature in the QIR so we couldn't get grants to help conserve.”

**I 4.6.** Other suggestions included:

- A comprehensive guide to being a churchwarden
- How to keep a church secure
- Disability access
- Another roof repair fund.
- Lots more priests needed. Diocese is saying it needs the laity to take on more responsibilities, but this is not sustainable.
- How to spend your limited resources to maintain a building.
- Offers of help from the village to do stuff in the church, rather than expect us to run everything.

- Help understanding the legal responsibilities that come with our roles – Churchwardens and PCC members in general, particularly regarding personal liability.
- More support and understanding – “when we suggested to the Archdeacon that we might not be able to pay our full parish share, it was suggested that we save costs elsewhere by looking for cheaper insurance, maybe from a non-church specialist.”

## **DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **HCBSO and Church Buildings Team**

- Develop training and support which focuses less on formal workshops and more on bespoke support as and when needed. A key part of this will be to continue site visits, wherever possible, in order to maintain and develop good links with parishes and build a wider network of support.
- Provide opportunities for Churchwardens to meet each other and share ideas and learning, with the possibility of including an annual celebratory event.
- Research the past Engage Awards scheme to see if there is potential to revise it or create something similar.
- Develop short webinars and/or face-to-face workshops for some key areas such as conservation cleaning; understanding the materials and properties of buildings; heritage tourism and interpretation; and community engagement and consultation. Deliver in partnership with other organisations and Dioceses where appropriate to reduce costs and maximise attendance.
- Help to promote the contribution made by church building volunteers more widely.
- Develop an informal mentoring scheme to help share best practice and provide a ‘critical friend’ to parishes.
- Review existing guidance documents and create more concise versions where appropriate, with a limit on the number of links to further information to avoid overwhelming people with potential sources of material.
- Create case studies of recent projects to provide examples (and sources of inspiration) for other parishes.
- Continue with regular updates in the Church Heritage newsletter and grant lists, produced by the Church Buildings Team.
- Create a pocket guide to looking after a listed building – a very brief list of headings and where to go for information when needed.
- Pilot a short annual volunteer satisfaction survey.
- Work with QI Architects to improve the accessibility of reports for parish volunteers.

### **Diocese of Ely and the National Church**

- Review key volunteer leadership roles, possibly with support of a professional Volunteer Consultant, to see how they can be adapted to suit modern volunteering needs and preferences.
- Provide clarity on the role of Churchwardens and day-to-day tasks.
- Support parishes to recruit, train, manage and retain volunteers.
- Give greater recognition to the role of Fabric Officer and invite individuals to relevant training sessions - consider a separate day as part of the annual Churchwardens’ Training Day, to focus on the care and management of church buildings.
- Deliver a national campaign to promote volunteering at churches.

- Provide greater recognition for the contribution that volunteers make, including a financial calculation of hours, donations of equipment and materials etc....
- Remove banded costs from QI report templates.
- Increase the contribution the Diocese gives towards QIs (Architects used to view this as a loss leader in the context of larger repair projects, however, the lack of funding and the need to regularly re-tender architects among other things, means many are having to increase the costs for QIs – costs can be over £1500). Diocese to consider including the cost of a follow-up meeting with the architect to go through the report with the PCC, identify a programme of repairs and revise maintenance plan.

## All

- Continue to campaign for more funding tailored to the needs of church buildings and the volunteers caring for them.
- Look for ways to provide greater practical and financial support to parishes including areas such as maintenance, project management and heritage and tourism.
- Greater understanding of the difficulties faced by many volunteers leading to a change in attitudes and the style of support given.
- Highlight the importance of the quality of volunteering and provide greater support to parishes.

## REFLECTION

This has been a valuable opportunity to hear first-hand experiences of people looking after church buildings. It was also a fantastic opportunity for the HCSBO to visit different churches, rather than just buildings facing considerable challenges, many of which are listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. It was interesting to see how responses compared and occasionally, contrasted. What was evident is that a lot is expected from too few people, often in complex and/or professional disciplines.

“one thing you didn't ask is if churchwardens were happy”

The above was highlighted by one of the Churchwardens interviewed and it led to the question of who has a duty of care for Churchwardens. Churchwardens have a duty of care to the Incumbent, but they are Officers of the Bishop who are sworn in by an Archdeacon. Their care appears to “probably” be the role of the Incumbent or “maybe” the Rural Dean if there is no Incumbent. For volunteers which “are vital to the health and wellbeing of our church communities” we really ought to be doing better.

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who helped to create this survey, who took part and to those who were unable to participate but made contact to express support.

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## APPENDIX I

### Response to survey question: What are the best bits about volunteering/working at the church?

I am afraid there is little that is rewarding about looking after a 1000 years old building with no funds. Keeping it clean and tidy and doing the best we can for the church and the community is all that keeps us going.
Seeing the building restored and maintained for use in the future
Helping keep the church and churchyard beautiful
Not the fabric
Companionship
For the church to be a visible witness to the love of God/Jesus in our community.
I like things to be well organised and to run smoothly. Volunteering is all part of my Christian faith
Feeling useful. Ability to share my blessings. Growing friendship.
I have a huge love of church buildings. Through my role of Churchwarden for 11 years and then, in the absence of anyone to take over from me, as Fabric Officer, I have learned so much about church history and its role in worship
Preserving an historic building.
Serving God and the community
The enormous satisfaction from taking part in a long improvement programme for an historic building.
Doing my bit to keep this rural church going
Knowing the church will be kept in good condition
N/a
Seeing God's kingdom come
Offering my time to the glory of God and witnessing to the local community Being a part of the team involved in all aspects of church life The privilege of helping to maintain a grade 2 listed building for future generations
Seeing people come to faith Seeing a community centred around Christ Seeing people forgive one another, care for each other, seeking to look out for those in the Parish Great services of worship Giving the body of Christ good work to do Seeing the word go out in a number of different ways Seeing children taught the bible from an early age
I see what I do (for my church) as part of my contribution to the body of Christ.
satisfaction in keeping church and garden beautiful. Working with vicar, churchwardens, treasurer, other volunteers from the congregation and contractors..
It is good to share competences to the benefit of all. In the case of the building, it also reduces overall running costs if some work can be carried out by a volunteer.
I love being part of the history of a lovely building in a lovely community.
Getting to know people in the congregation
Creating community
Worship and Fellowship
I get to know what is going on
Making sure everything is in order and the building and churchyard are safe and pleasant places for the congregation and wider community. Being involved in the decision making of the church life
Not sure

The satisfaction of keeping the church and grounds in good repair. The camaraderie of those working together.
Probably the feeling that you are helping with conservation of a valued building.
Helping to make it possible for church building to be developed to match changing times and to make necessary repairs/maintenance without diverting PCC funds away from ministry needs.
Doing God's work in our community.
Parts (of the church) are 800 years old and it is rewarding (though not at all easy) to be one of many dedicated people who have helped to keep a church presence in this village over the many centuries. There is a feeling of being connected with this long line of people who no doubt also faced significant challenges at times.
Serving those who come to the church. Social interaction and working as a team with friends.
Helping the church and village community and supporting the clergy
The church is an important and visible part of the community. It is also a very old building so to continue to serve worship and other activities it needs attention and I am very willing to help with this. From an architectural and cultural heritage perspectives, maintaining our churches is of vital national importance.
Not many. I have an historic family connection to this church and would like to see it kept in good condition as long as it is used for services.
I like the feeling of community that the church gives and I want to see this encouraged and expanded providing a service to the local community
Helping others. The feeling I am doing something worthwhile.
Satisfaction at getting things done, presenting financial info in an understandable form.
Working with others
A sense of achievement in working to keep the church in good order, fit for the future.
A sense of achievement in knowing that the church will be in a fit state to hand on to future generations.
Working as part of a team for the benefit of the local community
I'm motivated to look after the historic fabric of the church and to do my best to stop it decaying further. It is rewarding when any progress is made, however little.
Maintaining the locally most historic building. Spreading the Gospel
None. It is an essential chore.
The people I work with.
Being a part of the Christian community where I live. Being able to contribute to the upkeep of an ancient Grade I listed church building. Working with a small group of like-minded people to ensure that the building continues to be well maintained.
Being part of the community and helping to keep the church open
Team membership.
Very satisfying
Peace and time to think
Being able to give something back to support both church and community
The church has had services here for 800 years. My involvement means the village can attend 4 services per month and the church is part of the village life with its fundraising activities open to all and the availability of the building for village activities.
Generally a great sense of belonging, friendship and serving the local community
Fellowship and making an active contribution to one's community.
Knowing that I am helping to keep alive something which is of value to the community
Working for the greater glory of God, with a good benefice team, in a lovely, unique building, in a supportive community.
A sense of purpose and structure to my life especially during the pandemic
Being useful and helping other people and I enjoy repairing things.

Contributing
Attachment to the historic building. Being part of a caring team of people.
Visitors always make very favorable comments about how ell loved the church is.
Working with others to help preserve a very special ancient building (1080 and some earlier parts
Meeting people
Working with such nice people Working in a place with so much history
Friendly and helpful environment within a historic village, people are willing to help in all aspects of looking after our church and associated buildings.
Helping to ensure the smooth running of the church
Satisfaction on a job completed
Sense of community linked with wish to attend regular worship
The church is still central to community life and so caring for the church fosters community spirit. Always more to learn about the building's history. Learning about craft skills. Fellowship with other volunteers. Seeing the results of work.
Helping to keep church open and welcoming
Caring for an historic building, and continuing to use it for worship and the community
Getting to know the building better
Supporting and caring for the congregation. 'Working' in a beautiful historic building.
Sense of community Helping others
Makes me feel useful.
Being part of a team who have the same or similar aim
I love being in the church when it is empty, and enjoying the space and calm, especially after a frantic day at work
N/a
Satisfaction of a job well done
Being able to do something to help preserve the fabric of the oldest building in the village and I enjoy bell ringing.
being in the house of God
Being part of our church family and the privilege of caring for our beautiful parish church.
People, getting things done, having the buildings to share
Get to meet a variety of different people
Working parties meet at Wetherspoons for breakfast then make a start in the Church grounds, being part of a team, working in God's House and in the grounds
So I can more easily direct the way the local church operates
Feeling valued .
Working as part of a team to enable the Church to grow.
Feeling of working for the Parish to preserve the Church for future generations
Helping to keep the church building in good repair and getting to know the congregation more and also the involved work as a new church warden.
It keeps me busy and makes me feel useful
Volunteer for cleaning duties. Church has undergone a deep clean so wish to keep it up. Get really lovely comments in our visitors book
Helping to raise funds to repair and restore this lovely building
After 48 years on the PCC I am still enjoying everything I have to do in the church, being able to be in a very peaceful place when I want to and encouraging others to take up the opportunity of making use of

our building to find the same peace. During that time I have held all positions and hope to continue to do so in the future.
Being a part of a committed enthusiastic team, supporting an ancient building that means a lot to the parishioners and visitors
Ringling and maintaining the bells, and generally helping with all aspects of the medieval church's fabric.
Contact with the Church Buildings team :- ) (and a few other things as well....)
Satisfaction that one is contributing to the life of the Church and the wonder community.
Feeling that you are making a positive material benefit to the maintenance of our historic building and supporting the Rector.
It's a way of giving back
serving God and serving the Community
Feeling that I am serving God
Being part of the church community
Looking after our church as part of a team of people with the same desire to care for the building, fit to be used and fit for the future.
Maintaining an historic building, social aspects, giving back to the community.
When work has been done, the church has been cleaned, flowers are in place and the church is generally welcoming to all
Satisfaction of knowing that I have set up for services before the vicar arrives, in winter that the heat is on; helping with funeral and wedding services.
Being part of a team. Knowing that I'm doing something important for a beautiful building. Knowing that I'm doing something for God.
Having the privilege of working on such an historic building and contributing to the life of the church
A sense of belonging
Being Front of House to greet a congregation and support the Vicar
Maintaining the Church for the small congregation and as a focal point for the village
Doing what you can for the Church and its community, a good sense of belonging.
Involvement with Contractors
I enjoy volunteering in a magnificent Grade One Listed building. I enjoy my contact with fellow church members.
When a task is completed satisfactorily I get a sense of pleasure and achievement.
Being of service for the church and community
Helping to look after an ancient church building and therefore supporting the local community
Interaction with other church members, giving support and friendship
Interested in old buildings
None sometimes
Supporting the community and looking after the fabric of an historic building.
Giving something back to the community and helping to secure the medium term future of our church
Bring involved.
Being able to help
Seeing the Church Family each week and in the village
I enjoy interacting with the team and being part of the process of maintaining our heritage for future generations.
Seeing the finished result when a project has been successfully completed
Knowing that the work undertaken is of benefit to and appreciated by villagers
I feel that I'm doing my bit for the church and I know that I'm appreciated
Helping to care for the communities centre of interest
Being able to help



The feeling of working for a large family - with plenty of people willing to help when the going gets tough.
Helping to maintain the fabric in good order to pass onto future generations. Liaison with the architect and our contractors is rewarding, especially when projects are completed and the congregation can see the results. It is important that people can see that the building is cared for and is in regular use.
Blank
Keeping a Grade I listed church in good condition
To use my God given talents
Mixing with other people and keeping the church active
Moving improvements forward for the long term good of the community

## APPENDIX 2

### Additional Comments from Survey

I have the job of maintaining the building by default. I am far too old and tired to take on large projects, full on training and constant reading of instructions, especially when I know there is no money to achieve success, and I do not have the energy to be constantly applying for grants.

Most work and cost comes from statutory requirements, which leaves less time for routine maintenance which would cut down problems later.

So much of this is inapplicable to our small village church.

Thought provoking

Nothing I have achieved was possible without major support from a semi volunteer builder and kind advisor.

I was deputy c/w for 18 years and became c/w this year. We have an excellent treasurer who was a civil engineer and he does a major part of the liaising with architects and building contractors, along with the Vicar.

My responses may seem negative but I have been working on maintenance for about 30 years

We had a paid person for the buildings and this is my preference but the pandemic meant that we couldn't keep this on due to loss of income from the buildings. Hopefully this role will return in some form.

Any training sessions/events would be very difficult as I have no free time

AS the lone Churchwarden going into an inter-regnum I rely upon being able to call on other PCC members and an emeritus Churchwarden to fulfil all the required functions of parish life but we are all volunteers primarily motivated by faith.

There is an assumption at diocesan and national level that all volunteers are likely to be vandals quite capable of wrecking an historic building unless constrained by endless regulation and red tape. The absurd level for which one requires a faculty is a prime example when a competent officer could sign off many instances by a simple letter. The time and cost required to seek a faculty deters much work ever being done which is to the detriment of the church building and its congregation. The arrogance shown by those in London and to a lesser extent at diocesan level deters one from continuing indefinitely and certainly from seeking a replacement. The church authorities must realize that if the buildings cannot evolve to suit the changing needs of a parish, the church will close. When cattle were housed in this church many years ago, was a faculty granted in advance? Volunteers are what they are and should be given a degree of respect rather than a condescending pat on the head when one of too many bishops appears very rarely.

Above answers dependent on what the training subject was

We are carrying out a voluntary project in association with The SPAB to repair the retaining churchyard wall. In addition to volunteers we also needed to seek funding from The Heritage Lottery. We are in the throes of applying for grant support from a variety of funding bodies to complete a project to provide toilets and kitchen. Without the help of Holly Isted, Sue Dickinson and Geoffrey Hunter from the Diocese we would probably not have secured funding for the wall project or had the confidence to move forward on the reordering. Before their appointments we were floundering in the depths of grant applications, not knowing where to go for advice. Holly in particular brought clarity to us and supported our applications by proof reading and rewriting where necessary. She also sign posted us to other help e.g. suggesting we contact The SPAB. Sue's expertise was extremely useful in showing us how to capture funding bodies attention in our letters. For this we thank them, unreservedly.

I have to praise Holly Isted, Sue Dickinson and Geoffrey Hunter for their invaluable help and support offered and given over recent years. We are in the throes of a huge volunteer project to repair a flint retaining wall.

Thanks to suggestions from Holly we were able to obtain a grant towards the more serious repairs, beyond the scope of volunteers, and a huge amount of help and support from SPAB, again it was Holly's suggestion that we contact them. We are also in the throes of a project to install a loo and kitchen. Again Sue and Holly have been of enormous help with the project to date, pointing us in the right direction to grant bodies and checking and giving advice on the grant applications. Sue Dickinson has given us invaluable information in how to succinctly and dynamically present our projects in letters of application to Grant funding bodies.

The burden of looking after a decaying mediaeval building in a small village is too great. This is an opportunity to build a critical mass of engaged people and to spread the load. However, there is a long hill to climb and I'm not getting any younger.

Actually a very good survey which raised questions for me.

I am probably resigning as Churchwarden at the end of this year.

As I continue to be the only churchwarden I feel there is an overload of important training and expertise that I don't have the time to learn or keep up to date with.

Small villages, close to larger towns often find that there is a lot of local support, but filling day to day roles is hard, because many people go to churches in town, or have sports/other commitments.

The main frustration is the slow pace for permissions and the many hoops that have to be jumped through for any work however urgent. Delay waiting for grants before work can start is dreadful.

I am very lucky to have a lot of support from our Architects and builders. I also don't have to fund raise as that is done by the village who raise a lot of money for the maintenance of the church.

Self help. Diocese not amazingly proactive or helpful. Sometimes specific help available but not often

Our last joint benefice service (3 churches) attracted only 20+ worshippers, only one was under 60 years old. So the talent pool is diminishing and will eventually evaporate. I feel that we need new approaches to attracting people into the building more than maintenance training.

The scoring above is coloured by my wish to retire as Churchwarden. The culmination of the work to the church has been full-on for many years. Being Churchwarden appears to imply that all is left to you. Not always the case.

Very little spare time for any training

A major bugbear for me is that I so often have to invent the wheel rather than having a resource from which I could learn from such as an online churchwarden's forum. It wastes a lot of my time which then leads me to feel undervalued and that I am not respected.

I go around the church doing general maintenance to the best of my ability

With the increasing age of our congregation, three quarters over 70, it makes finding someone willing to give time to buildings very hard. I think more support should be coming from The Church of England, they do have assets which we do not. Maybe they should supply teams to go round and help maintain the historic churches they are so proud of.

Now retired and with a background of engineering and being of a practical nature, I am happy to do my bit toward preserving the building and looking after it to prevent fabric decay. I have to say, on the negative side, I did feel pressured into completing an online course on guardianship when my time could have been better used. I am a PCC member, but only to mainly mend things like the organ, the bells, bell ringing sometimes. I don't go to church services neither do I mix with vulnerable people in my dealings with the church. I was close to quitting the PCC as I felt so strongly that I didn't want to waste my time doing this ridiculously simple online course. All that stopped me quitting was that I felt that if I quit, I was letting down the project manager of our currently guttering replacement project as he would be left on his own. During the project I have been supporting the project manager in many ways, including twice daily visits to the church with him, since late February.

Over the many years I've been helping here it does seem that the amount of legislation and resultant study and work to implement requirements has vastly increased. I would rather spend my time promoting the use of the building by our congregation, community and visitors.

Thanks for all you do, as a Team Rector with four churches it is part of my role, but I am very grateful; to the many people who fulfil roles in these three churches. I have little to do with the maintenance for several reasons, but mainly as it is Grade 1 listed we are limited as to what we can do.

I am all for training but with working full time and also in charge of all the music and the running of our Church Choir I have very little spare time

If I could deal with just one thing, project then I would devote my time and effort to that. But Churchwardens have varied duties and I cannot be on top of everything. We need more helpers to spread the load. I have not the time for training and I am unwilling to travel or go to meetings.

Want to see church upkept so we can stay open

I think the training sessions you have suggested would be useful to a person new to the church

Nothing further that I can add. Very best wishes.

I have just completed 6 years as a Churchwarden which is an accepted maximum time in the role. My answers to this survey are based on my experience as a Churchwarden. I am pleased to be taking on a new role as PCC Secretary.

As a churchwarden, you are responsible for the building with ongoing problems and very limited funds.

It is important that courses are offered on more than one occasion. We couldn't attend the Churchwardens' training in our first year because it was on the same day as an important church event.

I am a C.Eng who used to be works engineer of a very large factory.

Good service now being given by the staff in your office

I find the help and advice offered by the Diocesan Buildings Support Officer very useful and encouraging

I am happy to help with church and churchyard maintenance but without the formal management responsibility which the churchwardens assume.

The level of Diocesan support is variable and very much dependent on the individual tasked to the role. Some support shows no real appreciation of the difficulties faced by rural parishes with limited resources and limited local support.

Building repairs. First port of call is our church architect.

I don't have time to do additional training - we have no support from the Diocese at all and never have despite the massive expectation we will pay our share!

As a retired architect with specialist knowledge of historic buildings I feel my responses may not be typical!

I would rely on advice and information from the Architect in many situations.

We are only a very small church and try to do the best we can. We have carried out a lot of work in the last 10 years but there is still an awful lot to do.

I consider that we are very lucky to receive strong support from Ely Diocesan team

You can only maintain a building because you want to...not for the praise.

As I am not 'online' it is important that information/training is offered by other media (paper survey completed, uploaded by HCBSO)

At the church we are all part of the team

I am too old for training

## APPENDIX 3

### Building Volunteers Survey Questions



# Building Volunteers

This survey has been created by the Church Buildings Team at the Diocese of Ely; it will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

We know that the care and management of our historic church buildings relies on volunteers, including PCC members, churchwardens and members of Friends groups. We want to make sure we are providing the right training and support for people, but to do this we need a better understanding of what it means to be a church building volunteer, particularly in light of the pandemic. This survey has been designed to capture some of the key information, but there is space to add any additional information you feel will help.

Who should complete this survey?

The main volunteer(s) responsible for the maintenance, repair and management of the church building, or the incumbent if this is more appropriate. Please complete one survey per person.

The information collected will be kept anonymous; there is no need to add any personal detail unless you wish to be contacted as a follow-up to the survey. Contact details will be separated from the rest of the survey information. All your responses will be treated as confidential, and data will be processed in accordance with the Diocese of Ely Data Privacy Policy, which can be viewed on the Diocesan website.

\* Required

## SECTION ONE

All personal information, including information in this section, will be separated from the rest of the survey to ensure your answers are anonymous.

1. Parish Name \*

2. Your Age \*

- Under 30
- 30-45
- 46-65
- 66-80
- 81 and above
- Prefer not to say

3. Are both churchwarden positions in your church filled? \*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Other

4. If you have any paid members of staff (not clergy) who are responsible for the care of the church building, please list their job title below.

## SECTION TWO - About your role or roles

We appreciate that church volunteers often have more than one role or area of responsibility. Please complete this section thinking about all the roles you fulfill at your church.

5. What is your role(s)? Please tick all that apply. \*

- Churchwarden
- Fabric Officer
- PCC Treasurer
- PCC Secretary
- Operations Manager
- Incumbent
- Member of Friends Group

Other

6. How long have you been in your current role (or longest serving role if you currently have more than one)? \*

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

7. How did you find out about your role(s)? Please tick all that apply. \*

- I was already volunteering at the church.
- I am a member of church congregation.
- I was approached directly and invited to apply.
- Word of mouth.
- Advertised locally

Other

8. What are the best bits about volunteering/working at the church? \*

### SECTION THREE - Building Volunteers

Please answer the following questions thinking just about the role you play in looking after the church building (i.e. overseeing maintenance, organising repairs, project planning, writing grant applications, fundraising, cleaning historic objects or fixtures inside the church, organising other volunteers etc...)

9. What motivated you to volunteer? Please tick all that apply. \*

- I was really interested in the role.
- To do my bit to help the church.
- I have a long connection to the church and felt it was my turn.
- It makes me feel happier and more fulfilled.
- To develop skills and gain experience.
- Social aspect – friendship and sense of community
- I had the time and just needed something to do.
- I had retired/become unemployed and wanted to put my skills to good use.
- I needed a distraction from other things in my life.
- The volunteer recruiter was very persuasive.
- I was encouraged by friends and/or family.
- There was no-one else to do it and someone had to.
- I have knowledge experience with historic buildings which I wanted to put to use.
- 

Other



10. What information or training did you receive prior to/when starting your role? Please tick all that apply. \*

- Informal conversation about role
  - Role profile/description
  - Induction/welcome pack
  - Handover from predecessor
  - Attended churchwardens' annual training day
  - Attended other formal training sessions
  - None
  -
- Other

11. How would you describe the level of commitment/time your role in looking after the church building requires? \*

- Part-time for all/most of the year
  - Full-time for all/most of the year
  - Part-time seasonal
  - Full-time seasonal
  - Occasional – just a few, flexible hours a week
  - Variable
  -
- Other

12. Is your role, in terms of looking after the building, what you expected? \*

- Yes, on the whole it is what I expected.
  - There is less to do
  - I have been able to tailor the role to meet my needs.
  - There is a bit more to it, but it is fine.
  - There is a lot more involved than I expected.
  - It is very different to the role I expected to take on
  -
- Other

## 13. How confident are you at carrying out the following? \*

	Very Confident	Confident	Fine with some support	Not confident	Not relevant to my role
Organising maintenance and repairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Updating the maintenance plan and logbook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding a quinquennial report	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liaising with the inspecting architect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing an annual account about the building to the PCC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding of the properties of the building materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring contractors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing energy efficiency measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Applying for faculties and other permissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing grant applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organising fundraising activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting and managing volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation cleaning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining the churchyard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very Confident	Confident	Fine with some support	Not confident	Not relevant to my role
Consulting and working with the wider community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making the church open and welcoming to all visitors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing group visits, including schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing the use/hire of the church by other groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpreting the history and heritage of the church to different audiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 14. Would you like training in any of the following areas? \*

	Yes	No	Maybe
Organising maintenance and repairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding a quinquennial report	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding of the properties of the building materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project management and hiring contractors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing energy efficiency measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Applying for faculties and other permissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing grant applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organising fundraising activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting and managing volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation cleaning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining the churchyard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consulting and working with the wider community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making the church open and welcoming to all visitors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing group visits, including schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing the use/hire of the church by other groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. How strongly do you agree with the following statement? \*

*I receive support to carry out my role from the:*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
Incumbent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PCC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Congregation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diocese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. How strongly do you agree with the following statement? \*

*I feel appreciated and valued for the contribution I make by the:*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
Incumbent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PCC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Congregation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diocese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. If you were to step down from your role, how confident are you that a replacement could be found within a couple of months? \*

- Very confident
- Confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not at all confident
- I would like to step down, but we have been unable to find a replacement.

Other

18. Which of the following do you find to be useful sources of information for building related matters? \*

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Neutral	Not useful	Unaware it existed
Churchcare - advice on The Church of England website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church Buildings pages on the Diocese of Ely's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Archdeacons' News	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church Heritage - the newsletter from the Church Buildings and Pastoral Department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churchwarden's Handbook/Diary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' (SPAB) website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historic England website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parish resources website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community and Voluntary Services such as CCVS, HuntsForum, CAN, VCAEC.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. What types of training and support do you prefer? Please rate your interest in each of the following, with 1 being of no interest and 5 of high interest to you. \*

	1	2	3	4	5
Mandatory training sessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Free or low-cost optional workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible online training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An annual workshop/conference delivered at one or two locations in the Diocese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bespoke training provided when and if needed at a local level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteer mentoring scheme – volunteers trained to provide support to other volunteers in their area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to meet other volunteers and visit other churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Printable resources available on the Diocese's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One to one support from professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Examples of recent projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteer Awards or Certificates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
'Thank you' services and/or events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Additional Comments

21. If you would be happy to take part in more detailed discussions about volunteering, please leave your contact details below.

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## Appendix 4

### Follow-up Discussions (Interview) Questions

1. Do you currently volunteer with any other organisations? *Have you, in the past, volunteered with any other organisations?*
2. Do you see yourself as a volunteer in the same sense as a volunteer with other charities? Do you think the nature of volunteering is the same in the Church as it is in other organisations?
3. Who is ultimately responsible for recruiting and managing volunteers/PCC members etc.. at your church?
4. Do you know if your church has any of the following?
  - Volunteer policy
  - Volunteer role profiles
  - Volunteer code of conduct
  - Volunteer induction training
  - Volunteer handbook
  - Volunteer recruitment plan
  - Volunteer interview procedure
5. When you need new PCC members, other volunteers, how do you go about finding people?
6. Does the church have a maintenance plan? Who is responsible for it?
7. Question 9 in the survey - What motivated you to volunteer? The most popular answer was "To do my bit to help the church." In the context of that sentence what does 'the church' mean to you....
8. At your church, who is responsible for...
  - conservation cleaning?
  - churchyard maintenance?
  - implementing energy efficiency measures?
9. It has been said that the sustainability of church buildings relies on more than just repairs that only serve the congregation. PCCs must manage buildings as community centres, heritage attractions and places of worship. What are your thoughts on this?
10. Do you have a Friend's Group?
11. Do you think your church has a good relationship with the wider community?
12. In terms of all the things needed to care for and manage a listed building, do you think enough is done to prepare new churchwardens/fabric officers and even clergy?
13. What, if anything, deters you from attending training sessions?
14. In the Diocese of Norwich they have a group of volunteers called Church Ambassadors. These are either current or former churchwardens, PCC members who have experience with repair projects and grant applications. They give advice, acting as a critical friend and mentor to other parishes. I have been asked to set something similar up in this Diocese, but the survey has suggested that it might not be particularly popular. What are your thoughts?
15. My role is part funded by Historic England, so I have certain targets they want me to meet. One is to "organise an annual celebratory event to highlight the work of volunteers who have supported the preservation and protection of historic places of worship within the Diocese. This could include (but not limited to) an award giving event, a luncheon or an online recognition." What are your thoughts on these?
16. Would you recommend your role to anyone else?
17. What key advice would you give?
18. Imagine I have limitless resources and power to deliver change. What would help you look after and realise the potential of your church building?