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General Information and Updates for Churches

2016/3

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The information supplied by CF and CFL is solely intended as an information sharing resource only and the content is of a general nature. Specific advice should be sought for specific situations. No liability is given for any errors or omissions in the information supplied.

1) Church Safety and Security – A reminder

National Churchwatch has published a guidance note on [Counter Terrorism Advice for Churches](#).

It should be stressed that this is *not* advice from the Home Office itself; but the Director of Churchwatch, Nick Tolson, does advise the Home Office on counter-terrorism.

The note suggests a series of practical measures:

- Every church should install good quality CCTV to cover both inside and outside the entrance.
- There should be one entrance through which people can enter and leave the building before, during and after services and when the building is open for visitors.
- The entrance door should be capable of being slammed shut should someone approach with obvious criminal intent.
- Every church should have a system that enables a church worker to call for assistance should someone come in and cause a disturbance (or worse).
- Everyone who attends the church regularly, whether to work or to worship, should be briefed on security awareness and what to do if they see something suspicious.
- There should be a robust system of reporting suspicious activity and suspicious items.
- Someone should be nominated to be responsible for security.
- People should be briefed to call 999 if they feel that there is an immediate risk to the church or to the people using it.

- People acting suspiciously should be challenged: this “does not have to be done in an aggressive way, it can be a genuine approach to see if they need any assistance.”
- Always have someone at the door welcoming people into the building during services who can close the front door in an emergency: the job of the doorkeeper is to delay any offenders (including those who are not terrorists) so that the police can arrive and deal with them.

The note also gives detailed advice on keeping safe during a terrorist or other violent incident.

The potential for disorderly conduct in places of worship is enormous; on the other hand, church services are normally public occasions rather than private ones and safeguards may run the risk of making the casual visitor feel unwelcome. There is an obvious issue of unprovoked violence against the doorkeeper – possibly from someone much younger and fitter. There is also a question-mark around means of escape in an emergency: one can see the reasoning behind “one entry and exit”; but that might not always be possible in a large building that is not equipped with secure, modern fire-doors that only open outwards.

Nevertheless, the advice is all very sensible.

[Source: National Churchwatch]

2) SCOTLAND – Water Charges and Sewage Exemption

In January 2015, the Scottish Government introduced a new scheme to assist charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs with the payment of water and sewerage charges. Full [details](#) about the scheme are available from the Scottish Government website and charities should be aware that certain eligibility criteria apply.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustryscot/watercharges/exemptionscheme>

The OSCR, though not involved in the administration of the scheme, has produced a helpful Briefing Note, [Scottish Government Water Charges and Sewerage Exemption Scheme](#), which sets out the answers to some of the questions they have been asked relating to the scheme.

Under the scheme, which is subject to certain conditions:

- Charities with an annual income below £200,000 no longer pay charges.
- Charities with an annual income between £200,000 and £300,000 pay a reduced charge.

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2321/2016-08-10-exemption-scheme-article-3.pdf>

[Source: OSCR]

3) Charity Commission – Accounting and Reporting Templates

The Charity Commission has published a series of templates to help non-company charities with incomes below £500,000 prepare their trustees' annual reports and accruals accounts in accordance with Charities SORP FRS 102:

- [Charity accounting templates: accruals accounts \(CC17\) - SORP FRS 102](#)
- [Trustees' annual report template \(SORP FRS 102\)](#)
- [Independent examiner's report template \(SORP FRS 102\)](#).

The packs are to be used for reporting periods beginning on or after **1 January 2015** and will be relevant to many previously-excepted church congregations that have registered on exceeding the £100,000 threshold

If you use the accounting template to complete your accounts, the Commission encourages you to convert the accounts to pdf and submit them via e-mail because it helps the Commission to provide a better and faster service.

[Source: Charity Commission]

4) Employment – National Minimum Wage

A reminder that National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates increased on 1 October by between 3% and 4.7% for workers under the age of 25 and apprentices, and employers need to make sure the new rates are implemented for all hours worked from that date:

Age/status	Current hourly rate	New rate	Increase
21 to 24	£6.70	£6.95	3.70%
18 to 20	£5.30	£5.55	4.70%
16 to 17	£3.87	£4.00	3.40%
Apprentices	£3.30	£3.40	3.00%

From 1 April 2016, employees over the age of 25 should have been paid the National Living Wage (NLW) of £7.20/hour.

To avoid falling foul of legislation, employers should also be aware of particular circumstances which may make their calculation more complicated. For example, where an employer requires an employee to provide their own uniform or piece of equipment the cost should be taken into account when considering whether NMW has been paid. Even where the error is simply one of poor

administration, with no intent to short-change the employee, employers leave themselves open to substantial penalties, with very few grounds for appeal. The likelihood of being named and shamed for failing to pay the NMW also presents a real reputational risk to any organisation.

[Source: HM Treasury]

5) SCOTLAND – OSCR New Incorporation Process and Updated Trustee Declaration Form

OSCR has [announced](#) that, given various complications in the process of becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation – both for charities and for OSCR itself – it will be getting rid of one of the incorporation processes. This is an attempt to make the process simpler by only offering one possible pathway for charities for which incorporation will be beneficial.

From **early November 2016**, charities who want to incorporate will need to apply for status as a new charity and seek consent to wind up the existing charity. This will mean that a charity will be required to change its name and number in the process; however, OSCR does not consider that this will create too onerous a burden. Guidance may be found below.

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/managing-your-charity/making-changes-to-your-charity/changing-your-charitys-legal-form>

OSCR has also published an updated version of its trustee declaration form available via the link below.

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/hot-topics/weve-updated-our-trustee-declaration-form-for-new-charities>

The registration form is the means by which charity trustees can assure OSCR that they are aware of their responsibilities and are not disqualified. The new form also collects the necessary details to enable OSCR e-mail all the charity trustees details of registration and charity trustee duties should the organisation be granted charitable status.

[Source: OSCR]

6) Fundraising Guide for Trustees

The Institute of Fundraising (IoF), in collaboration with the Charity Finance Group and the National Council of Voluntary Organisation, has published a free [guide](#) to help trustees understand fundraising. Designed to complement the Charity Commission's existing [guidance](#) on fundraising, it includes a number of case studies and explains how different regulators are involved in fundraising. The aim of the guide, as described by the Chief Executive of the IoF, is to help trustees to understand the rules, think strategically about fundraising and understand what they can do to embed good practice.

<http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/research/trustees-and-fundraising/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-fundraising-cc20>

[Source: Institute of Fundraising]

7) What Difference a Faith Makes –Insights on faith-based charities

Churches may be interested to read a research paper titled 'What Difference a Faith Makes' which may be useful as a discussion document in understanding the role of Churches and faith based charities in society today.

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/what-a-difference-faith-makes/>

(source NPC)

8) Shrinking the Footprint – the Winter newsletter

Shrinking the Footprint, the Church of England's, the environmental campaign of the Church of England have just produced their Winter newsletter

There are items on Gloucester Cathedral who have now installed their solar panels as part of their Pilgrim project and information on Church land research which is looking for examples of church land being used for gardening or tree planting projects and/or food production of any kind.

There is a reminder about the Big Church Switch which is calling on churches and individual Christians of all denominations to switch their energy supply from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

There is information on Light up Britain which is a campaign to re-light some of Britain's most iconic landmarks and buildings with LEDs which could be of interest to cathedrals and larger churches who are looking to renew their existing lighting schemes. There is also advance notice of the Church Times Environmental Awards and the Tree Charter. There are also updates on the Bats in Churches Research Project and the Virtuous Circles project which is being piloted in St Michael's Church, Dulas, Herefordshire where the aim is to place a sympathetic, free-standing and reversible structure within the church to provide short stay accommodation.

There is much else besides not forgetting the purple Keep Cups branded with the C of E logo which are intended to try and reduce for 2017 the estimated that 2.5 billion "paper" coffee cups that are being thrown away in the UK every year.

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/E-news_winter_2016.pdf

(Source HRBA)

9) Dickensian Churches

Just in time for Christmas, ChurchDays has published a new feature on churches that appear in the life and works of Charles Dickens. They include the originals of locations such as the churchyard in which the convict Magwitch first meets Pip in *Great Expectations*.

Also featured are the churches in which Dickens was himself baptised, married, and buried.

God bless us, every one!"

http://www.churchdays.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=31&Itemid=382

(Source HRBA)

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