

Eco Church

Join our churchwardens on Facebook

Going with the adage that 'the best person to answer a churchwarden's questions is another churchwarden', one of ours has set up a Churchwardens page on Facebook to do just that.

When he isn't being Churchwarden at All Saints Wyke Regis, Gary Hepburn runs a training and consultancy business, specialising in Supporting NHS Primary Care Doctors Practices and Dental Surgeries.

He explained what prompted him to set up a virtual help desk for Churchwardens:

"As an established churchwarden of many years based in the South Dorset coastal Town of Weymouth, I am familiar with most issues that churchwardens have to face and what to do about them. However occasionally something comes up that I need to seek help or guidance on.

"It struck me that with around 16,000 churches within the Church of England alone there must be over 25,000 people similar to me fulfilling the role of churchwarden. Therefore whatever questions I have, there must be somebody out there with the right background, experience or knowledge who would be able to help or advise me.

"All I needed to do to get my questions answered was to be able to find and ask them. The only problem was - how?"

As we went into the Coronavirus lockdown Gary started to use Facebook more and heard how other people were using it to interact and get help and support from others on a whole range of things.

"Then by chance a question came up in our parish and our Rector, Brother Alasdair Kay said to me he was on a Facebook group for priests which he found very helpful for getting information and advice very quickly and would ask them. Within 30 minutes we had our answer.

"And this was how the idea to form the Churchwardens Facebook group came about," Gary explained.

"Churchwardens are a group of people who have a range of responsibilities and could really benefit from sharing problems, advice and good ideas and best practice. Often as a churchwarden you feel out of your depth and don't know where to turn, but everyone expects you to have all the answers.

"I run a training and consultancy business and am happy to provide support and advice to other churchwardens on my area of expertise, and there must be others out there with different skills and knowledge who feel the same."

Those who have joined the 'Churchwardens England' group want to encourage others to join them at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/churchwardens>.

Gary added:

"We also ask people to share this group with other churches and churchwardens so we can build a really valuable network to support each other."

Brother Alasdair Kay, Rector of Wyke Regis commenting on the new Churchwardens England group said:

"As a Rector of a 2-church parish, I have found enormous benefit from talking to other clergy through closed Facebook groups, a huge source of shared "hive" minds and support. Having a place to go to for advice and support is vital I find.

"My hope is that, in the difficult role of the churchwarden, a similar group might be an even greater help, especially in the early days in the role. I commend Gary and this group to you as a support."

Gary can be contacted at gary@parishofwykeregis.org.uk or 01305 778169.