
Church resources

SIR – I live in a rural benefice that has five parishes (seven until two combined recently), eight churches and one congregation that meets and worships in a village hall ([Letters, September 17](#)).

The churches are cold with minimal heating and in most cases have neither lavatories nor cooking facilities. The village hall is warm and comfortable and has lavatories and a well-equipped kitchen. Yet a disproportionate amount of effort is made by our incumbents and largely elderly congregations to maintain the ancient churches – to the detriment of efforts to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19).

We are told that these churches are part of our national heritage. Surely it would be better if they were handed over to English Heritage to be maintained.

We are supposed to have a full-time, salaried rector with a house-for-duty priest. Both have just left, and we may face an interregnum of a year or so. When I challenged an archdeacon on this, referring to a nearby parish in an adjacent diocese that seems able to cut these waits to a couple of weeks, I was told rather sharply that “we don’t do that sort of thing in this diocese”.

Michael Bond

Corfe Castle, Dorset

SIR – Even if the vast majority of parish churches are unsustainable, as Chris Learmont-Hughes claims ([Letters, September 17](#)), many would become sustainable if they were relieved of the diocesan burden and their clergy paid enough to live on.

Donald R Clarke

Tunbridge Wells, Kent
