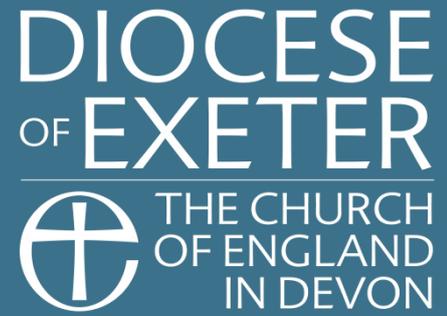


# ANNUAL REPORT

Diocesan Advisory Committee  
for the Care of Churches  
2016



The Exeter Diocesan Advisory Committee, like all DACs, is sometimes criticised for standing in the way of mission; by supporting old fashioned church layouts, preventing PCCs from modernising and creating better worship environments more fitting with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Sometimes in 2016 it has seemed that the mantra we are accused of is “old not new, conservation not mission, pews not chairs, hymn books not AV screens”. It is inevitable that incumbents and PCC’s enthusiastic about mission and wanting to make changes to facilitate this, feel disappointed that the DAC when giving its advice sometimes doesn’t appear so supportive or enthusiastic as are they.

The facts show that the truth is somewhat different. Of the 101 formal Notification of Advice requests received by the DAC in 2016 (the first stage in making a faculty application), 63 were granted at the first meeting considering the application. Another 23 were granted following more detailed discussion and consideration, and an outstanding 15 applications had not been resolved by the end of 2016, with discussions either yet to take place, or ongoing. Of the 86 Notifications of Advice issued, 21 of the applications were recommended by the DAC, 55 were recommended with provisos, 7 were not objected to, and only 3 were not recommended, the final decision on the application resting with the Chancellor. The value of formal applications being discussed was in excess of £2 million.

Unlike the secular Listed Buildings Consent system, the Faculty System could be said to be in “friendly hands” in that the committee is of the same organisation as those applying for permission to

do works. The committee often considers projects with less than fully detailed information and rather than refusing to accept the application, as would be the case in the secular system, the committee will make a decision on the principle of the proposal, and will engage in discussions and negotiations with the PCC.

In many ways, the DAC is at the cutting edge of change and the development of Mission in the Diocese. For example, we are working with the PCC at Torquay St Matthias to achieve transformational change to this beautiful Grade II\* listed Victorian church to facilitate the growth of a very vibrant and growing congregation.



*Interior of Torquay, St Matthias*

At Plymouth St Matthias, the Reverend Ollie Ryder who moved to Plymouth from Kensal Rise, London to set up a Holy Trinity Brompton

Resource Church at the request of Bishop Robert, has been granted a Faculty by the Chancellor of the Diocese, following advice from the DAC, to make major changes to the church in order to accommodate that very successful style of worship. Obviously there has been compromise on both sides but the DAC has been supportive of his efforts.



*Plymouth, St Matthias Launch Night 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2016*

In addition to formal applications, in 2016 the Church Buildings office handled 77 requests for informal advice which were then discussed by the DAC and a written response provided for the PCC. These requests normally involve a site visit which DAC committee members or consultants attend. In addition to 90 individual visits to churches in 2016, the Deputy Chairman and I attended and chaired 29 group visits, which along with DAC representatives and other statutory consultees, were also attended by the relevant Archdeacon and one of the Church Buildings Advisers. These meetings are invaluable in helping church representatives and their advisers understand the detail of the faculty process and the information that the committee, Historic England, Local Authority Conservation Officers, the national amenity societies (such as the Victorian Society), and the Church Buildings Council require, to consider an eventual application. The visits by the individual specialist consultants and members also give church

representatives informal, practical advice about matters such as heating, lighting, bells and organs.

Whilst most of the churches in Devon are very important as part of the architectural, historical and cultural heritage of the county, the committee recognise that their conservation can be enhanced in part by regular use. If this can be improved by the provision of toilets, kitchens and other community facilities to enable a greater use and involvement by the community, this is to be encouraged.

2016 saw the introduction of two changes relating to faculty applications; firstly on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 came into being, and the key change with this legislation was the introduction of Lists A & B. These lists replaced the previous Diocesan Minor Works list. Works on List A can be carried out without any consent, subject to some standard conditions. Works covered by List B can be carried out without a faculty but with written consent of the Archdeacon after consultation with the DAC.



*Re-ordering work at Plymouth, St Matthias*

Secondly, the Diocese signed up to the Church of England's Online Faculty System, which has been developed over the last two years by the Church Buildings Council. Faculty and List B applications are now made via this online portal, with all documentation including plans and photographs being uploaded by the parish or their professional advisers. This has certainly streamlined the system,

and made it far easier for the committee and all other consultees to view information on screen, along with making savings in the length of time that it takes to process an application.

In 2016 the Church Buildings office handled 157 requests to carry out List B works to a total value of £1,026,487. This compares to 57 requests costing £193,144 in 2015. This large increase in the number and value of applications reflects the fact that some works which would have previously required a faculty can now be authorised under List B.

In 2016 Gita Rae, our Local Authorities nominee, stood down from the committee after 12 years of service, and Church Buildings Adviser Eve Van der Steen took up a new role with Historic England in Bristol. Eve had been working in the Church Buildings Office for 7 years and we wish her well in this exciting new step in her career. Charlotte Vickers has recently taken over from Eve as our new Church Buildings Adviser.

August 2016 marked the start of a new committee term in accordance with Synod Rules, and members have been appointed for the next 6 years. We welcomed to the committee Dr Bridget Gillard who is the new Local Authorities nominee, the Reverend Jeremy Trew who is the Clergy Synod representative, and Keith Rushforth as the Lay Synod representative. Keith is also a member of the Truro DAC so brings with him a wealth of experience about DAC processes and procedures.

Frank Eul, DAC Chairman  
January 2017

I am very grateful to the members of the Committee who once again in 2016 gave of their time, experience and skill without payment, to the enormous benefit of the Diocese; and to the Archdeacons who support the technical members of the committee in their deliberations and give valuable guidance in matters of liturgy, churchmanship, and churches in their respective archdeaconries.

I am also grateful to Louise Bartlett, the Senior Church Buildings Adviser, for her support and guidance during what has been a very busy year. In addition to committee work, Louise has been involved in updating the relevant sections of the Diocesan website, made site visits to churches in connection with their proposals, handled telephone and email general enquiries from church representatives, liaised with conservation bodies regarding reordering proposals, and attended relevant conferences on church and conservation matters. This year both of the Church Buildings Advisers organised the first annual DAC tour of churches in Devon to view completed projects, arranged drop-in sessions in 5 locations in January to which representatives from 59 parishes attended, and in the Spring held 5 training events for PCC officers relating to looking after church buildings and churchyards. These events were very successful and attended by 157 people.

In conclusion, I would commend the work of the Exeter DAC in 2016 to Synod, and ask for the continued support of Synod as it continues this work in 2017.

Chairman: Frank Eul

Senior Church Buildings Adviser: Louise Bartlett

Church Buildings Adviser: Charlotte Vickers

<http://exeter.anglican.org/resources/church-buildings/>