

ANNUAL REPORT

Diocesan Advisory Committee
for the Care of Churches
2015



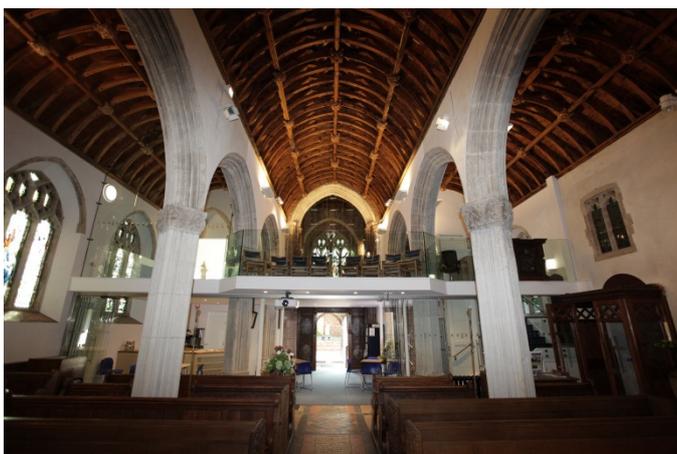
The Annual Report of the Exeter Diocesan Advisory Committee is inevitably seen as a record of performance, largely joining together a series of statistics. As the role of the DAC is to give advice to parishes seeking permission to carry out works of repair, improvement and alteration; and advising the Chancellor on the same, its role is sometimes seen as proscriptive, where in fact the opposite is often true.

When formally consulted in pursuance of a faculty, the committee can 'Recommend', 'Not Recommend' or 'Not Object To' a proposal – with reasons provided. This is however the tip of the iceberg of the work of the Committee, its staff and consultant advisers. On major proposals committee members, consultants to the committee and staff will have had a series of informal meetings with parish representatives and their advisers. They will have studied drawings and specifications in order to discuss the proposals and advise how they can be accomplished with the minimum of harm being caused to the church building.

Committees give. The Court of Arches in the St Alkmund, Duffield case (2012) stated that serious harm to buildings listed as grade I and II*; the highest categories of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. I remarked in my last Annual Report that of the 607 churches in the Diocese of Exeter, 436 are listed grade I and II*. Therefore, in giving advice to churches within these categories, the Church Buildings Advisers, committee members and consultants to the DAC, work extremely hard to identify what the exceptional circumstances might be, and negotiate changes to a church's proposals that would lessen their harmful impact.

In 2015 the DAC commended 102 schemes for churches listed grade I and II* after considerable discussion. This represented 72 % of all the projects which it considered during the year.

In 2015 the majority of the proposals for change that came before the committee involved the provision of toilets, the provision of catering facilities, the renewal or improvement of heating and lighting systems, and the removal and replacement of pews. The justification in many of these cases was mission and discipleship; that broadening the use of the church building by the community could increase revenues and bring more people to God, particularly young adults and children. These are worthy aspirations and



West end reordering at Alphington, St Michael and All Angels

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules and case law govern the approach which Chancellors should take in determining faculty applications. This in turn gives direction to the advice which Diocesan Advisory

the church as a building is a valuable resource. However, as the Bishop of Worcester wrote in his summary of the Report of the Church Buildings Review Group published in 2015:

“The primary purpose of churches is and should remain the worship of Almighty God, to be houses of prayer”.

The committee will continue to receive requests for advice in respect of projects of improvement, and it will continue to appraise these sympathetically and diligently within the rules set by statute and case law. Our portfolio of outstanding heritage buildings with special architectural and historic significance will not be diminished by the advice given by the DAC.

In 2015, the committee prepared a guidance note on church seating. This will be an important advisory document that should be read by all parishes thinking of changing their seating and will be available on the Diocesan website in due course.

The Online Faculty System, developed by the Church Buildings Council, was trialled in various Dioceses including Truro in 2015. It is being introduced in this Diocese from January 2016 and the Church Buildings Advisers will be assisting parishes as they start to use the new system. From January 2016 all applications will be processed online.

In July 2015 General Synod approved changes to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules, changes which come into effect on the 1st January 2016. The notable changes include the introduction of two national minor works lists. Works on the new List A can be carried out without any consent, subject to some standard conditions. Works on List B can be carried out without a faculty, but with written consent of the Archdeacon after consultation with the DAC. Most of these will be repairs and routine maintenance or small works identified in the QI report. These new lists replace the 2006 Minor Works list and applications for List B works should also be made via the new Online Faculty System.

IN SUMMARY, VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE DAC IN 2015 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- In 2015, 267 (305) items of casework were discussed during the 8 meetings and 8 subcommittee meetings held. This covered formal applications, where parishes had applied for the DAC's Notification of Advice, requests for Informal Advice on outline proposals, variations of faculties already issued, discharging provisos attached to faculties issued, and discussions involving the issuing of an Archdeacon's Permission for Temporary Reordering.
- The Church Buildings Office received 141 (123) applications for a Notification of Advice (formally a DAC Certificate, and the first stage in making a faculty application). Following discussion at a committee meeting, the Church Buildings Advisers were then able to issue 118 (112) Notifications, allowing the applicants to petition the Chancellor for the faculty. 34 (38) of these applications were recommended by the DAC, 79 (65) were recommended with provisos, 4 (8) were not objected to, and 1(1) was not recommended, the final decision on the application resting with the Chancellor.
- Of the 141 (123) formal Notification requests, 104 (94) were granted at the first meeting considering the application, which represents 74% of all applications. Another 15 (17) were discussed two or more times before the DAC were in a position to be able to issue their Advice. The outstanding 22 had not yet been resolved to a point where the DAC were able to issue a Notification of Advice, and discussions are still ongoing.
- 15 (24) of the 141 (123) applications were from private individuals requesting items such as memorials or benches in churchyards, headstones which fell outside of the Churchyard Regulations, or applications from Local Authorities carrying out works within closed churchyards.

- In 2015, the Church Buildings Office handled 56 (87) requests for Informal Advice which were then discussed by the DAC and a written response provided for the PCC. The DAC encourages parishes to apply for Informal Advice prior to making a formal application for any works to change/adapt their building, and of the 141 (123) formal applications received during 2015, 38 (27) had previously received Informal Advice from the committee.
- In 2015, 57 (66) requests for permission to carry out work to a total value of approximately £193,144 (£133,434) under the Minor Works process were granted, although specific costings for some applications were not provided.
- In 2015, formal applications to a value in excess of £5,725,465.49 (£1,676,000) were being discussed. Of this, £1,259,000 was offered to parishes under the Government Roof Repair Fund. Significant grants were also obtained by parishes through the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders.
- In 2015, the Diocesan Registry issued 128 (122) faculties, 24 (32) of which were authorised by the relevant archdeacon and 104 (90) by the Chancellor and his Deputy. Some of those issued in 2015 would have related to a DAC Notification of Advice from 2014 or earlier, and conversely faculties may not have been granted in 2015 for those faculty applications submitted to the Registry late in the year.
- During the year, the Church Buildings Advisers have dealt with over 1270 (1100) telephone enquiries.
- During the year the Church Buildings Advisers have responded to requests to visit and advise 8 (17) churches. In addition the Church Buildings Advisers have been on 25 (32) DAC site visits. DAC members and consultants have also made 76 individual visits to church in connection with their proposals.

In 2015 we welcomed the Venerable Mark Butchers, Archdeacon of Barnstaple and the Venerable Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes to the committee. We also welcomed Sasha Chapman, who is Diocesan Archaeological Adviser designate who will take over from the Reverend Martin Fletcher, who stands down in February 2016 after 25 years on the committee. Dr Fern Clarke and Reverend David Fletcher, Synod lay and clergy representatives respectively,

stood down from the committee in December. Philip Mann and Christine Dunford also retired during the year. We are grateful for the support and dedication they gave to the committee during their terms.

I am grateful to all members of the committee who give their time, energy and professional skills voluntarily and particularly to the Church Buildings Advisers for their support and guidance during 2015.



Conserved wood screen at Buckland-in-the-Moor, St Peter © Eddie Sinclair

Looking forward to 2016 and beyond, the committee will continue to serve as before; with integrity and professionalism to give advice to the Chancellor in respect of faculty applications, but more particularly to churches considering repairs, maintenance, and improvements. The informal advice that is given by committee members and consultants is of the highest order and I believe one of the core roles of the committee in serving Diocesan objectives. The new Faculty Jurisdiction Rules in relation to minor works will enable churches to do more without the necessity of obtaining a faculty. I hope that the committee can continue to play its part in protecting the heritage that the churches in Devon offer to the worshipping community and the public at large. The bells ringing out from the church towers in the village and towns represent one of the greatest symbols of Christianity that we have and should continue to cherish.



New servery at Sampford Peverell, St John the Baptist

Chairman: Frank Eul

Senior Church Buildings Adviser: Louise Bartlett
Church Buildings Adviser: Eve Van der Steen

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