

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED

Guidance note

from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches

The DAC often hears that putting together the Statement of Significance and of Need is difficult, complicated and time consuming. Also it is sometimes said that each is a lot of effort.....and for what?

These notes are intended to explain how the Statements, essential when planning for the future of your church building, will be useful, and how to put them together.

WHY DO THEY HAVE TO BE PREPARED?



Since 2001 it has been necessary to have both a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need to accompany any Faculty application for changes to a listed church building. Although the legal requirement only applies to listed churches, it is good practice to prepare these documents for changes to non-listed churches as well.

Each is an important document for those involved in the Faculty process, who may not personally know your church. Therefore, in order to ensure that they do not come back to you with unnecessary questions, it is advisable to provide as much objective information and detail as possible – it could save you both time and expense. The Statements of Significance and of Need will also support any necessary applications for grant funding or for Planning Permission.

GETTING STARTED

The Statement of Significance and the Statement of Need are two different but important documents which are essential when planning for the future of your church building. They form the bedrock for current and future work to the building, and will help you and your consultants to make informed decisions on how to progress. They are a starting point to assist you in understanding your building in heritage and architectural terms, and to see what your parish needs to do to it to achieve its mission.

WHAT IS A STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE?

The Statement of Significance describes the history of your church and its setting within your parish, as well as what is most important and special about your particular church. It explains how your building is part of its



setting and explains why certain things are significant in both/ either a local and/ or national context.

Though it may take some time and effort to put together, a good Statement of Significance will become the core document for the building and will only need updating when new historical information about your church is uncovered, or when further changes or additions are being considered.

WHAT DOES THE STATEMENT OF NEED DO?

The Statement of Need should be objective and specific to your proposal for change, and is an opportunity for a PCC to explain what it is aiming to do and why. The DAC take into account both pastoral/missional needs and conservation principles when assessing faculty applications, so the Statement of Need is a key document in helping the DAC advisers to understand the need within your church for change. It is a real opportunity to put your case across, so make sure you explain your needs clearly and succinctly.

WHEN SHOULD WE START WORKING ON THEM?

You should start as soon as you have determined that works are required on the building. This may be following a Quinquennial Inspection, or when the needs of the parish are changing and it may be difficult to meet your church's mission without making alterations to the building.

WHERE AND HOW DO WE START?

Speak to the Advisers in the Church Buildings Office; an essential first step. The amount of work you may have to do will vary depending on your church and what you are seeking to do.

If your church is 'listed' ask for a copy of the listing from the Church Buildings Office as this is a good starting point.

Visit the 'Statements of Significance and Need' page in the Church Buildings section of the Diocese of Exeter website - <http://exeter.anglican.org/resources/church-buildings/statements-significance-need/>



WHO SHOULD WRITE THE STATEMENTS?

Anyone with an interest may write the documents, but you need to nominate someone to take the responsibility of overseeing the statements on behalf of the PCC. It need not be the same person who writes each of them. The Statement of Significance need not be written by a member of the church - is there a local history society or person who is keen on the history of the area who might be interested in helping?

HOW SHOULD THE STATEMENTS BE PRESENTED?

Aim to make your statements interesting, readable and factual. Try not to use lists or tables and don't copy large chunks of academic text – if you wish to include academic text which will be helpful in some cases, add it as an appendix at the back. Be concise and summarise the information that you collect, so that your statements do not become too long.

Within the text include good photographs both historic and current, historic plans and old drawings which support the text. This will assist the reader to understand your church.

ONCE WRITTEN, WHAT THEN?

Make sure that once written, your statements are formally agreed by the PCC. Save them electronically, and update as and when necessary.

You can submit your Statements on the online faculty system in the 'Supporting Documents' section or within the forms on the 'Details' tab, either is absolutely fine. If uploading the Statements into the 'Supporting Documents' section it is best to turn them into pdf's before uploading.

Remember the Advisers in the Church Buildings Office are available to support you and point you towards other churches which have completed similar projects, as well as good examples of recent Statements.