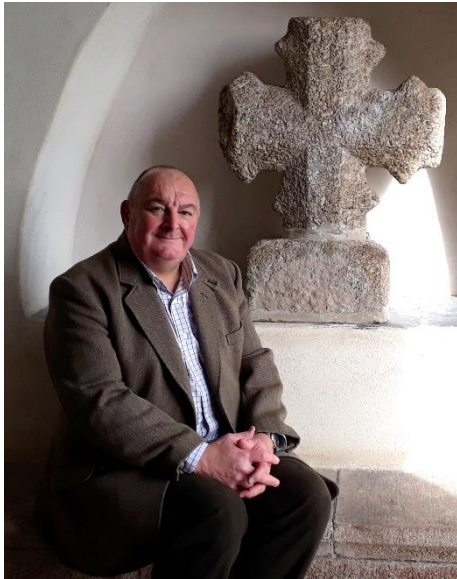


ANNUAL REPORT

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches 2019

Chair: Walker Laphorne

The Diocesan Advisory Committee at work – The Chair's view



Being newly appointed to the Chair of Exeter DAC on 1st January 2019 I can now reflect on a full year in post and give my personal hopes for the year ahead. In our last Annual Report, my predecessor, Frank Eul, speculated that there might be a new movement taking place in the Church and that this was impacting on the work of DAC's across the country. He felt that evangelism aimed at the younger population was driving an increase in projects requiring reordering to accommodate exciting new styles of worship. Whilst we have found this to be true in the larger urban centres of Devon, there is still a strong need running in parallel, particularly in the rural churches, to adapt in a more subtle way. This usually involves the introduction more flexible space, improving the welcome, the comfort and the

essential need for accessible toilets but still respecting the more traditional style of worship.

I have personally visited 56 of our 605 churches over the year, some 9% of the entire portfolio. This gives an indication of the level of activity and demand for change as this is only a selection of those churches planning works. The statistics below will give a fuller picture. They also show that the DAC is administering a sustained demand for the faculty process. Nigel Pratt, the Senior Church Buildings Advisor and DAC Secretary has also been in post for just this last year. As the 'New Team' we have worked together to understand the system and to try and identify areas where the service to the churches could be improved. We feel that the time scale for matters under our direct control are as efficient as current resourcing permits.

National changes to the Faculty Regulations, due in the coming months, will further impact on this, particularly with regard for the need for early consultation with external bodies such as Historic England, SPAB and the Victorian Society.

The tremendous goodwill that the professional advisors and members of the DAC contribute to ensuring the process works as it does is much appreciated. Most give their time and expertise at no cost and the Exeter Diocese is indebted to them all. The level of informal visits shows that PCCs are realising that to involve the DAC at an early stage in the process, can save time and professional fees being wasted exploring schemes that are unlikely to be supported. We are always pleased to be able to engage at this initial stage and to guide and assist. The level of detailed information needed to support and inform a

Faculty Application can seem daunting, but it is the secret to a successful submission. There is excellent guidance available through our own website and other resources such as the Church Building Council.

The challenges facing our churches have not significantly changed this year. Falling rolls and distressed financial resources are clear concerns. Sadly, this can also lead to a significant backlog in routine maintenance of the building. The Quinquennial Inspection process, which we also administer, ensures that PCCs are aware of what is needed. The costs of such professional support are increasing as the specialist firms involved are no longer guaranteed of the continuity of subsequent related project work. A well-presented building survey is an essential part of this, but there is always a balancing act between cost and quality.

As a DAC, we also appreciate the need for churches to respond to the growing threat of Climate Change. Advising on appropriate heating and lighting solutions can significantly improve the carbon footprint. This is very much a specialist area, as the size, age and construction of the building fabric makes improving insulation, siting of solar and PV panels and introducing new cables problematical. In similar vein, the Mission requirements for increasingly sophisticated audio-visual equipment can significantly alter the character of a church interior and needs sensitive handling.

As pressure on finances increases, more radical solutions to generate income from the building assets may be contemplated. This might possibly involve leasing out spare space to commercial concerns, thus sharing the running and upkeep costs. Examples of churches stepping in, to provide essential community facilities such as Post Offices are becoming more common. Improved toilet and catering facilities may facilitate rental income from wedding receptions, cafes, exercise groups and other commercial activities. This also assists in a wider community engagement. The Growing the Rural Church Project, a national pilot scheme, based in our Diocese, is already successfully supporting many PCC's. As a DAC, we need to continue to work closely with them, to ensure such change can happen.

Looking forward, I am encouraged by the level of activity at grass roots and I am determined to ensure that the DAC continues to help to solve the varied building problems. An appreciation of the value of these buildings will always be coupled with an overarching respect to protect them as heritage assets for the nation. Nearly 70% of our buildings are Grade I or II* Listed and with sensitive and creative architectural solutions, these can be adapted to serve the requirements of the Church Mission and to ensure their sustainability. We must never lose sight of their original purpose as places of worship, of peace and of contemplation. Our churches offer a unique opportunity to provide not only for the changing needs of the Mission, but to offer complimentary community services to improve health, provide therapy and reduce social exclusion and loneliness. The work of the DAC is central to meeting this challenge.

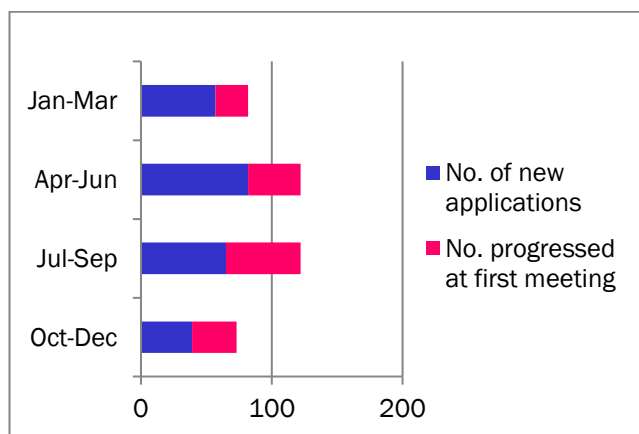


Walker Lapthorne
Chair of the DAC

Review of 2019

In 2019, **277** items of casework were discussed during the six DAC meetings and weekly 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 (APTRs).

During 2019, the Church Buildings Office received **133** new applications for a DAC Notification of Advice - the first step in making a faculty application - via the Online Faculty System. While the majority of applications were from PCCs, **9** were from external applicants, such as individuals requesting items such as new memorials in the church, headstones which fell outside of the Churchyard Regulations, installation of mobile phone or broadband equipment, or applications from Local Authorities carrying out works within closed churchyards.



The DAC received **243** new applications for advice in 2019 and of these **156 (64%)** were issued at the first meeting considering the application. Another **83 (34%)** were granted following more detailed discussion and consideration, and an outstanding **5** applications had not been resolved by the end of the year, with discussions either yet to take place, or ongoing.

The busiest quarter for new applications was April to June with **82** new applications received for consideration.

The average time taken for the DAC to issue a formal Notification of Advice once the application was received was **45** days. It took an average of a further **64** days for the Chancellor to issue his advice but this period includes the statutory **28** day period for the public display of the petition by the parish.

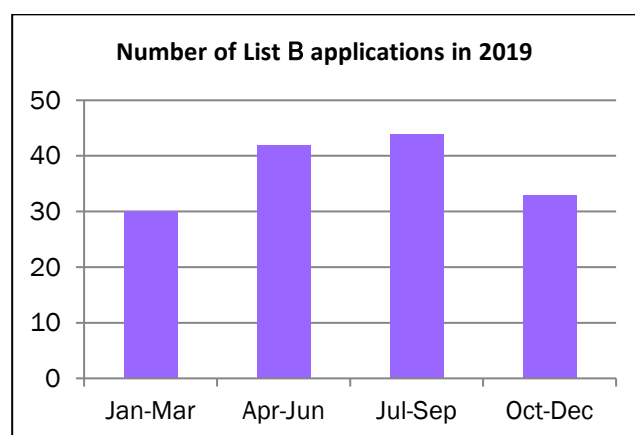
Informal Advice

The DAC encourages PCCs to apply for early advice on proposals to make changes to their building, so that they can be involved in the discussions at an initial stage. Parishes can also access the early advice of our specialists on matters relating to their bells, organs, heating, and lighting, and these visits are free of charge to the PCC.

In 2019, **112** requests for Informal Advice were received. Of the **132** applications for a Notification of Advice issued in 2019, **24** had received the DAC's Informal Advice before applying for a faculty

List B approvals

Many items of work which do not need authorisation by way of faculty need to be approved by the Archdeacon under the 'List B' process, after consultation with a DAC member or officer. The full list of items which can be covered by List B authorisation can be found on the Diocesan website (<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/church-buildings/faculties/>).



Of the **149** List B applications received in 2019, 129 had been approved by the end of the year, with the remaining 20 awaiting additional information from the parish. The typical time to process a List B application from submission to approval in 2019 was between **11** days.

Site visits

A large part of the work of the committee members, consultants, and officers, is making visits to parishes to offer Informal Advice on proposals when they are at an early stage. In 2019, there were **118** visits made by committee members or consultants. There is no cost to PCCs for such visits, and parishes are encouraged to make contact with the Church Buildings office at an early stage in their plans, and to make use of this free service. The Church Buildings Advisers are also available to visit parishes for a very early initial discussion on how to start a project, including advice on funding, and how to make a faculty application.

E-subcommittees

It was decided that for 2019 the number of DAC meetings will reduce from 8 to 6 per year with regular e-mail sub-committee meetings helping to streamline the process of moving applications forward as swiftly as possible. This enabled applications for smaller projects to move forward without the need to wait for a formal committee meeting. A total of **148** applications were dealt with by the email sub-committee in 2019.

Quinquennial Inspections

Every 5 years the PCC will commission an approved inspector to visit the church and carry out an inspection of the whole building, its fixtures and fittings, the services to and from the building plus the churchyard, as required under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955. The inspector will provide the PCC with copies and will also send an electronic copy to the Archdeacon and the DAC. The total number of reports received during 2019 was **84**, however this will include those overdue from previous years.

A reassessment of architects and surveyors approved to undertake quinquennial inspections was undertaken in 2019 and the total currently stands at 33, including two new inspectors added to the list in 2019. It should be noted that under the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure, which is expected to come into force in 2020, the lists will no longer be maintained.

Delegated powers

The Church of England (Miscellaneous Provision) Measure 2018 came into force on 1 March 2019. Section 12 of the Measure allows the DAC to delegate the exercise of any of its functions to an officer of the committee. At the October meeting the DAC members resolved to delegate advice to the Church Buildings Advisers for straightforward cases with the option of 'opting-in' when required. All advice from the DAC will still be ratified by the full Committee before being issued.

Events

Two successful events aimed at increasing awareness of church building issues among heritage professionals took place at the Old Deanery in 2019: one for church architects and the other conservation officers. Talks were also given by the Senior Church Buildings Adviser to the Mission Communities of Modbury and North Creedy East. Church buildings staff also participated in the Exeter Diocese church warden training days.

Staff changes

After five years with Exeter Diocese Charlotte Vickers left to take up a new role at the University of Exeter. The new Church Buildings Adviser, Alex Copsey, takes up his post in January 2020.



DAC visit to St Lawrence, Clyst St Lawrence

Chair: Walker Laphorne

Senior Church Buildings Adviser: Nigel Pratt

Church Buildings Adviser: Alex Copsey

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