

How to Write a Statement of Need

Introduction

A Statement of Need is the document that sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of a church cannot be met without making changes to the building and why the changes need to be made at this time. It should be read in conjunction with your church's Statement of Significance and with it will form part of your application for a Faculty.



Your Statement of Need provides an opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise your proposals to your own community, as well as members of the DAC, the Church Buildings Council and Historic England who may be unfamiliar with the church. It is important that you describe the impact that the proposed changes will make on the building, both in the immediate area of the changes and on how the building functions as a whole.

Bear in mind that your Faculty application depends on the clarity of the supporting documents, it is therefore important that you ensure they are factual, informative, clear and concise.

These guidance notes are intended to help you prepare a Statement of Need; the bigger the changes you want to make, the more justification you need, but for smaller projects you may not need to cover everything in this document. Please contact the Church Buildings Team if you are unsure what to include.

These notes are designed to augment the Church Buildings Council guidance which can be found via the link below.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/statements-significance-and-needs>.

SECTION ONE: General Information

Start by listing the 'key facts' that you included in Section Two of your Statement of Significance.

Next, provide information about the parish, congregation and community, including what activities are already going on in the church and other church buildings. Include the following information.

- Population of the parish
- Number of the church electoral role
- Usual Sunday attendance
- Attendance at weekday services
- How many regular services each week/monthly
- Age range of congregation – predominantly elderly/families/young people
- What are the arrangements for Sunday school/crèche, other regular children's gatherings
- Is the church normally unlocked during day-light hours? If locked, are the keyholders identified?
- Does the church receive many visitors? If so, is it a welcoming place to enter for the first time? Do you have a visitor's book or leaflet about the church?
- Is it used by local schools for curriculum work and/or school events and services?

- Are community events such as flower festivals, concerts or regular parish activities held in the church?
- Is there a church hall or similar building? If so, how close is it to the church, what facilities does it have?
- Describe any other community facilities in the parish
- When was the last Quinquennial Inspection? Are there any major outstanding issues identified in the QI Report? If so, when are you planning to deal with them?
- What is the financial position of the parish? How do you propose to fund the project – existing funds, grants, loans, fund-raising.
- Outline any changes in the parish that have prompted the need for the proposals identified – new incumbent, closure of existing community facility, new housing development.

SECTION TWO: Identify the Need

Use this section to explain the current needs of the parish and what they might be in the future. This can be set out under headings which identify different aspects of the project.

These might include:

- **Facilities** – the need for an accessible lavatory and kitchen facilities.
- **Space** – the need to have an enclosed meeting room for community groups and the Sunday school; or the need to have a large flexible space for village events.
- **Access** – the need to provide permanent or level access to the building for wheelchairs, prams, buggies etc.
- **Liturgy** – the need to move the altar or font, or to move pews.
- **Comfort** – effective heating and good lighting
- **Heritage** – the need to reinforce its role as the focal point of the community.
- **Environmental sustainability** – the need to reduce the carbon footprint of the building.
- **Visitors** – the need to keep the church open for visitors, to improve the welcome provided and to safeguard it as a place of pilgrimage and reflection
- **Churchyard** – the need to make the churchyard more welcoming and supportive to wildlife

SECTION THREE: The Proposal

Use this section to explain in detail how you are planning to make the changes and what has been done to mitigate their impact on the building.

- If you have already prepared a brief for your architect explaining what you want to achieve, include this to support your description. Include the feasibility study if you have one.
- Refer to Part II of your Statement of Significance to describe how the proposals will be integrated with the fabric of the church.
- Include photographs of the areas that will be affected by the alterations, as well as a plan and drawings of what is proposed.
- Explain the processes you have gone through to come to this decision. What other options have you considered? Explain your reasons for rejecting them.
- Include your business plan to show how the project will be run.

SECTION FOUR: The Environmental sustainability of the Proposal

Describe how the proposal contributes to the need for environmental sustainability.

- How will the proposed changes reduce the carbon footprint of your church?
- How do the design, materials, use of energy and water and disposal of waste address environmental sustainability?
- How does the proposal fit in with your church's long-term environmental strategy?

SECTION FIVE: The Vision

Explain how the proposals fit in with the parish Mission Action Plan

- Think through the ways your church building could be used to improve the lives of people in the parish. Will the proposals extend the use of the church by the whole community?
- Are they primarily intended to provide a more flexible space for worship?

SECTION SIX: Why now?

Use this section to expand on the Needs you have identified in Section Two and explain why they need to be made **now**.

Provide examples of how the church currently struggles to meet the Needs and why current arrangements are unsatisfactory – for instance:

- The portable ramp from the porch for wheelchair users is rather steep making access to the church difficult: the north door, which does not have steps, is too narrow.
- The timing of this project is the result of the condition of an area in the church deteriorating to the point of being dangerous. (e.g. the discovery of dry rot in pew platforms)
- The new vicarage does not have a large enough room to hold PCC meetings: an enclosed meeting room in the church could be used for this and by other parish groups.
- The congregation would like to have an altar in the nave; this can only be achieved by removing the front three rows of pews.
- The current arrangement of using the lavatory in the vicarage five minutes' walk away is not sustainable.
- New housing in the parish (or other demographic change) has affected the pattern of worship or church use, which means we need a new community room.

SECTION SEVEN: Who will benefit?

Explain who will benefit from the proposed changes – the church community, the wider parish community, local schools or adult education groups, visitors to the church.

Provide evidence of this:

- Include the results of consultation with the local community.
- Potential partnership use: this could include voluntary and statutory service providers. List organisations that have been approached and if available include copies of their letters of support for the project.
- Provision for cultural events such as concerts, exhibitions and festivals. List who has been approached and their responses.
- Local schools, pre-school or adult education groups. List who has been contacted and their responses – include any documents which demonstrate how they propose to take advantage of the changes.