

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE



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Notes for DAC Members and Advisers

PCCs often work very hard and look after their church buildings with great dedication. Works to churches involve a considerable commitment of time on the part of the PCC and congregation and often a lot of money too. It is important that the time and money devoted to caring for our buildings is spent well and enhances and secures the churches for generations to come.

The DAC

The DAC exists to help ensure that the work PCCs need or wish to do is of the highest possible value to the congregation, the building and the mission of the church.

Under Schedule 2 of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991:

1 The functions of a Diocesan Advisory Committee shall be—

- (a) to act as an advisory body on matters affecting places of worship in the diocese and, in particular, to give advice when requested by any of the persons specified in paragraph 2 below on matters relating to—*
 - (i) the grant of faculties;*
 - (ii) the architecture, archaeology, art and history of places of worship;*
 - (iii) the use, care, planning, design and redundancy of places of worship;*
 - (iv) the use and care of the contents of such places;*
 - (v) the use and care of churchyards and burial grounds;*
- (b) to review and assess the degree of risk to materials, or of loss to archaeological or historic remains or records, arising from any proposals relating to the conservation, repair or alteration of places of worship, churchyards and burial grounds and the contents of such places;*
- (c) to develop and maintain a repository of records relating to the conservation, repair and alteration of places of worship, churchyards and burial grounds and other material (including inspection reports, inventories, technical information and photographs) relating to the work of the committee;*
- (d) to issue guidance for the preparation and storage of such records;*
- (e) to make recommendations as to the circumstances when the preparation of such a record should be made a condition of a faculty;*
- (f) to take action to encourage the care and appreciation of places of worship, churchyards and burial grounds and the contents of such places, and for that purpose to publicise methods of conservation, repair, construction, adaptation and re-development;*
- (g) to perform such other functions as may be assigned to the committee by any enactment, by any Canon of the Church of England or by resolution of the diocesan synod or as the committee may be requested to perform by the bishop or chancellor of the diocese.*

2 The persons referred to in paragraph 1(a) above are—

- (a) the bishop of the diocese;*
- (b) the chancellor of the diocese;*
- (c) the archdeacons of the diocese;*
- (d) the parochial church councils in the diocese;*
- (e) intending applicants for faculties in the diocese;*
- (f) the pastoral committee of the diocese;*

- (g) persons engaged in the planning, design or building of new places of worship in the diocese, not being places within the jurisdiction of the consistory court;
- (h) such other persons as the committee may consider appropriate.

The DAC deals with cases in the following ways:

- **Preliminary informal advice to PCCs** – responding to early enquiries from PCCs about possibilities for development, often seeking guidance before any formal proposals are drawn up or an architect consulted, which may require a preliminary site visit
- **Informal advice to PCCs** – offered to help them draw up detailed proposals, ensuring that schemes are drawn up on a realistic basis so that they are likely to be permitted by the Chancellor (thereby avoiding PCCs making expensive mistakes in obtaining unusable specifications)
- **Formal advice to the Chancellor** – in response to formal faculty applications. The DAC makes a recommendation to the Chancellor that the works are:
 - Recommended
 - Not Recommended
 - Not Objected toThe Chancellor takes this advice into account when deciding whether to grant the faculty.

The Committee includes members who are clergy, architects and expert advisers for heating, lighting, AV equipment, bells, ecology, organs, archaeology, glass, and clocks, together with members appointed after consultation with Historic England, the National Amenity Societies and Local Authorities.

Some members choose not to regularly attend DAC meetings, being present only when there is an agenda item connected with their specialisation. The Committee also has access to national consultants through the Church Buildings Council (CBC) and other contacts. All of this is available at no cost to the PCC.

Sometimes the Committee can advise simply by looking at photographs, sketches, plans and statements sent into the DAC office. However, every year members between them make a number of visits to parishes so that the PCC's ideas can be discussed on site. Such visits may include the church architect, representatives from Historic England, Amenity Societies and Local Authorities.

Once the DAC has confirmed that it is in principle in favour of the proposed work, the Committee discusses the matter in a formal way. At this stage, the Committee stops advising the PCC and offers advice instead to the Chancellor of the Diocese. The DAC has to determine whether it recommends that the proposed work should go ahead, or does not object to the proposals, or does not recommend them, and issues a Notification of Advice stating its advice.

When the DAC Notification of Advice is issued using the Online Faculty System (on which faculty applications are made) the PCC receives notification that it has been issued and are invited to complete and display the Public Notices. Once the Public Notices have been displayed for 28 days in the church and returned to the Diocesan Registry, the Chancellor considers whether to grant the faculty. Once the faculty is granted and the PCC has the sealed document in its possession, the works can commence.

The DAC has a statutory role and sometimes this causes frustrations for PCCs. However, it exists to help PCCs look after the building to which they are steward and, most important of all, make it a place where God can be worshipped, the church's mission advanced and the community served for many generations to come.

The role of the adviser

The DAC depends on its advisers for expertise in a wide range of subjects. This generous giving of time and expertise is greatly appreciated.

The assistance of the adviser may be sought in three ways:

- In response to an initial request from a PCC for early informal discussion on site about possibilities and on the pros and cons of possible different options
- In response to a request to the DAC for informal or formal advice on a specific proposal, which is referred to appropriate advisers
- As a member of a DAC site visit

Site Visits

Site visits of all types are a key element in building up a good working relationship between the DAC and PCCs, incumbents and churchwardens. Whilst advisers may be familiar with the faculty process and see many proposals for works in a year this is rarely the case for PCCs. Often the parish is uncertain about how to proceed and sometimes assumes the DAC will say ‘No’. Usually the parish representatives on site are focused on the project in hand rather than taking a more holistic picture. Advisers are, therefore, asked to use visits to build up positive rapport and emphasise the duty of advice which is the Committee’s remit.

It is important that advisers have respect for the liturgical and architectural setting of the church, and for the over-riding purpose of the building as a place of mission and worship.

Site visits are often very valuable. They clarify aspects of a scheme which are confusing on paper or enable the DAC to put a project in context in a way that has considerable impact on the advice likely to be offered.

Site visits are often characterised by a constructive exchange of ideas. It is important for parishes to be aware, however, that any advice offered on site by DAC members is provisional pending the endorsement of the report from the site visit at the next DAC meeting.

DAC site visits involving a group of members will be arranged by the DAC Secretary for complex cases, particularly those involving re-ordering or extensions. The invitation to these site visits will usually be extended to the relevant national bodies (CBC, Historic England, the National Amenity Societies) where appropriate. The DAC Chair normally leads on such site visits.

Conflicts of interest

When the adviser is a practitioner in the area of expertise they should be careful to avoid conflicts of interest. The DAC adviser and DAC Chairman should discuss the possibility of a genuine or perceived conflict of interest. This could be, for example, as a result of:

- Registering an interest in a particular project
- Submitting a tender for a project under competitive tender rules

If an adviser submits a tender and for whatever reason is neither shortlisted nor successful at the end of the process, regardless of any previous relationship with the PCC, that adviser must ensure that they:

- Offer no further advice to the PCC in either a professional or personal capacity or in any way that might be construed as acting on behalf of the DAC
- Ensure that the DAC Secretary is aware that they expressed an interest in or submitted a tender for the project

Failure to do so might compromise the impartiality of the DAC consideration process which might cause difficulties in the granting of a faculty by the Chancellor.

If the adviser does work for a fee in a matter that concerns the DAC, or is married to someone who does, they should declare an interest either at the meeting in question or in advance to the DAC Secretary, and take no part in the DAC's discussion of the schemes (except on questions of fact). In such cases, the DAC will need to consider whether alternative advice is required.

The adviser must be able to give the DAC unbiased advice, regardless of personal preferences and understand the need for appropriate confidentiality. The advice should be specific to the particular case, bearing in mind relevant similar casework.

The role of the DAC Adviser and the role of a paid Consultant

The primary role of an adviser is to give advice as part of the Committee. Advisers may, if they think it appropriate, give informal advice to parishes in broad terms, but it is not part of their duties to draw up detailed schemes or to recommend a particular contractor for a project. It is not unusual to become aware of situations where the parish needs a specialist in order to prepare a suitable set of proposals for their intended project. In situations like these, the DAC adviser should not prepare a scheme of work for the PCC. A parish about to embark on a potentially costly and possibly complex scheme in need of advice should appoint a paid consultant. This will often save them money in the long run. The consultancy fee brings the benefits of the consultant's insurance as well as experience, with someone answerable for their advice in the unfortunate instance of projects not producing the expected outcome. This leaves the DAC adviser free to give impartial advice to the Committee without being open to the accusation of approving only their own schemes or those of preferred contractors.

In circumstances where the DAC adviser is acting as a consultant to a parish, the DAC adviser must declare an interest and take no part in the DAC's discussion and the DAC will seek impartial advice from elsewhere.

It is not part of the DAC adviser's role to oversee projects – that is the role of a paid consultant. However, it is appropriate for an adviser to take discreet and constructive interest in the work, in order to learn lessons, which may be useful in the future.

It is sometimes appropriate for an adviser to provide a brief, which places the required work within the context of an overall project, and outlines the work that will be required. Advisers should not, however, give detailed specifications for schemes and expect practitioners to quote for them. It should always be made clear that the DAC adviser visits on behalf of, and at the request of, the DAC. It is understandable that some advisers want to be involved in the early stages of a scheme but this should not be used as a way of giving consultancy services to the PCC. Advisers should always report back to the DAC, not to the PCC. There is an agreed procedure for sending the DAC's written advice to the PCC.

A DAC adviser should not promote the work of particular contractors. Occasionally, it might be necessary to point out when someone is quoting for a scheme that there are good reasons to doubt their ability to complete satisfactorily or to work to appropriate standards. Such concerns should always be voiced by the adviser to the DAC, not the PCC, and must be based on objective evidence. Similarly, when a PCC and a

contractor have taken trouble to work up an appropriate scheme of work it is not the role of the DAC, or their adviser, to point out a contractor who will do the job for half the price ‘to help the PCC’.

Practicalities

Advisers must be able to offer the necessary time. The adviser must maintain sufficient competence in their subject to give credible advice, being aware of current best practice, relevant technologies, policies and legislation.

The adviser should maintain an informed and up-to-date knowledge of general conservation philosophy. It is strongly recommended that advisers should attend appropriate conferences and study days, particularly those that enable them to meet and share knowledge with other advisers and those with specialist knowledge.

Expenses

The Diocese greatly values DAC members’ contributions to the care of churches and churchyards and is deeply aware of the amount of time and expertise that members offer to PCCs through their membership of the Committee. Expenses (e.g. travel to and from site visits and DAC meetings) are reimbursed when members submit a claim form (available from the DAC Secretary). Please return these forms to the DAC Secretary who will countersign them before sending them to the Finance department for payment. Payment is made directly into the member’s account by BACS transfer.

Advisers should not send invoices to PCCs for their expenses, neither should they move from giving a PCC free advice on an initial visit to charging on a consultancy basis for subsequent ones.

The DAC pays expenses incurred by advisers in attending conferences and study days that are relevant to their advisory work.

DAC Meetings

There are approximately 8 meetings a year, which take place every six weeks or so. The meetings take place at the Cathedral and Diocesan Offices, 1 Hill Top, Coventry, CV1 5AB.

Agendas and Information

Agendas are sent out a week before each meeting, together with as much information as is considered necessary to aid the discussion (referred to as ‘Circulated Papers’). Any additional papers relevant to items on the agenda or matters not on the agenda requiring consideration are tabled at the meeting (referred to as ‘Tabled Papers’ and ‘Additional Cases’).

Attendance

If unable to attend a meeting, advisers are asked to send their apologies to the DAC Secretary as soon as possible. Should advisers have particular views on any items on the agenda which they would like to be expressed in their absence, they should send these to the DAC Secretary so that they can be reported at the meeting on their behalf.

Conflicts of Interest should be declared before or at the start of each meeting.

Referral of Cases

Cases are referred to appropriate member(s) or adviser(s) before the meeting so that at least one member / adviser has seen the detailed papers in advance of the meeting. This enables:

- Any further information required to be identified before a meeting (preferably by email to the DAC office as soon as possible after receipt of papers)
- The member(s) to whom the case has been referred to visit the church, if necessary, in advance of the meeting

The member(s) / adviser(s) to which a case has been referred should, if at all possible, send or preferably email comments to the Secretary within two weeks of being sent the referral, or failing that at the DAC meeting, flagging up any issues that need to be discussed in Committee or suggesting appropriate conditions to any approval of Minor Works or the DAC's Notification of Advice. This enables the Chairman to be briefed before the meeting begins

It is very helpful if members / advisers notify the DAC Secretary if they will be unavailable to accept referrals in advance of the meeting so that referrals are only sent to members / advisers who are able to consider them.

Consideration of matters at the DAC meeting

The aim is for the Committee to deal with straightforward cases at the first meeting. There will be cases where more time is required, in particular where further expert advice is needed, but no case should be allowed to 'drop out of sight'.

The member(s) to whom an item is referred is (are) asked to:

- Introduce the item by expanding on the brief description given on the agenda – if more than one person is involved, the Agenda will make clear who is required to do this
- Highlight issues for Committee discussion as previously notified to the DAC Secretary for briefing the Chairman
- Indicate his/her recommendation(s) - which may or may not be adopted by the Committee!

Advisory Notes

The DAC has a wide range of advisory notes for PCC members, which may be found on the website at <http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/ChurchBuildings>). Please ask the DAC Secretary for copies if required.

Conclusion

The Diocese greatly values advisers' contributions to the care of churches and churchyards and is deeply grateful for the amount of time and expertise offered to the DAC and the diocese.