



Churchwardens and The Diocesan Advisory Committee (For The Care Of Churches) (DAC)

Welcome to your role as Churchwarden, an important one with responsibilities for ensuring the PCC maintains, cares for and insures the church buildings and its contents.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) is a statutory body which plays an important role in advising parishes, the Archdeacons, the Bishop and the Chancellor of the Diocese on matters relating to the care and use of church buildings in the Diocese, including their contents and churchyards.

DAC Informal Advice (for re-ordering and some specialist work)

The DAC often provides informal advice to parishes before the formal application is submitted:

- Site visits can be arranged
- Draft proposals can be considered at a DAC meeting before full drawings are prepared by an architect
- Early consultation is encouraged
- The Archdeacons may be able to issue a Licence for Temporary Reordering (eg for temporary removal of pews)
- A range of guidance notes is available

Quinquennial Inspections

It is a legal requirement that your church is inspected at least every five years by an architect or chartered building surveyor approved by the DAC. The quinquennial report issued after the quinquennial inspection will contain recommendations, which will help you in your role in caring for the Church building. Please remember that the report should not be used as a specification, but as a guide to what work should be done.

Records

You need, together with your parish priest, to make sure various record books concerning the church property are kept up to date. These are the terrier (a list of land belonging to the church), an inventory of items belonging to the church, and a log book of alterations, additions and repairs. You can purchase these record books from the Church Buildings Council, and you need to submit them to the PCC each year and sign a statement saying that they are accurate.

With the log book should also be kept any other records or certificates relating to the building, i.e. electrical inspection certificates, lightning protection certificates, access audit, asbestos survey, maintenance contracts, etc.

Annual Report

Every year you should prepare a written report on the fabric (stone, bricks and mortar), fixtures, fittings and furniture of the church, and present this to the PCC meeting before the annual parochial church meeting. This report should summarise all the maintenance done or proposed during the past year, and also set out plans to carry out the work recommended in the quinquennial report.

Faculties

Faculty matters should be handled through the Churchwardens, and special training days are set up which will help you to understand the faculty process. Faculty petitions are normally signed jointly by the incumbent and the Churchwardens, and occasionally by the full PCC.

The legal title to the plate, ornaments, furniture and furnishings of the church is in the name of the churchwardens and you need to ensure that a faculty is obtained before any item is added or disposed of, or before any major repairs are carried out. Planning permission is also required for external alterations i.e. extensions.

Churchyards

Like every diocese we have a set of Regulations governing the care of churchyards. You should be familiar with the Regulations, and make sure the PCC maintains the fencing of the churchyard, and maintains and keeps up-to-date a numbered plan of the graves together with a list of names. It is important that the incumbent is also aware of the Regulations.

It sounds daunting, I know, but we are here at the office to help you. You can contact me on 01634 560000 or via email on sarah.anderson@rochester.anglican.org

You can find useful information on the diocesan website www.rochester.anglican.org (click on Resourcing and from the drop down menu select Church Buildings/DAC) including helpful fact sheets on a number of different projects your PCC may be considering.

If you would like to learn more about your role, please do come to one of our Churchwardens' Training Days – either for new Churchwardens, or experienced churchwardens - contact Mrs Suzanne Rogers at the Diocesan Office for dates and to reserve a place.

We look forward to meeting you at one of our training days and we are always happy to assist you. If we had a motto for contact with the DAC it would be **“earlier is best”**. We would much rather tell you that you don't need to bother us with an item than try to unpick something that gone wrong.

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