

Developing Your Project

Knowing when to get the DAC involved in your project can be a tricky decision. We are keen to be involved in all projects at an early stage so that we can provide advice and guidance. However the DAC and its advisers cannot design your project and as a PCC you will need to have done some initial preparation and thinking before contacting the DAC. This guidance document explains how to go about developing a project, when to engage with the DAC and what information you will need to submit to ensure constructive DAC advice. Working with the DAC does often take many months and this will need to be factored into your project planning.

Developing a project

Understanding the needs of the church building, your congregation and your community are the starting point when developing any project, whether large or small. If you are wanting to do work to a church this will almost always be because you have a need. Whilst this might seem like an obvious statement to make, the concept of having a ‘need’ is a key part of the faculty process. You might need to make your buildings wind and watertight or need to create new spaces for community engagement. Your identified need will later form the basis of a document known as the [statement of needs](#).

Once you understand what is it that you need you can begin to understand what work you want to do to your church. In many instances this will be a fairly straightforward process, for instance if you need to make the buildings watertight then you will need to undertake roof repairs or repointing. Simple alterations and repairs to the church fabric are unlikely to need early DAC advice and should be developed in consultation with your inspecting architect or surveyor. The help of specialist DAC advisers (see below) may be beneficial and you should contact the DAC secretary if you feel their input would be helpful.

However some needs will result in more complex or controversial projects. For instance if you need to grow your church and believe community engagement is important then you may end up with a phased project that includes new heating, new lighting, new meeting rooms and a new kitchen.

In developing your proposals you must also understand what is important about the building. This can be its architecture, its history and archaeology as well as important furnishings or works of art, and the church may also play an important role in the community. These important features of the building combine to creates its significance. Understanding what is important about a church and what are its most important features will help you make informed decisions about what changes can be made to the building. Understanding the significance is also a key part of the faculty process and you will be required to write a [statement of significance](#). If your building is unlisted you are not required to submit a statement of significance but it will be helpful for the DAC and the Chancellor when they consider your application.

Once you have explored the needs of your congregation and community, and identified the significance of the church building you should be able to begin developing a project. Some churches might feel confident in developing projects with the help of an architect/surveyor whilst others might feel overwhelmed and not know where to start. If you are beginning to think about developing the church and do want some guidance at this very early stage you should contact your archdeacon and your church architect/surveyor to arrange an exploratory visit. They are best placed to understand the building and your archdeacon will understand the needs of your congregation and

community. Between them they should be able to help you focus your thinking and begin to develop ideas. All archdeacons are members of the DAC and whilst they cannot speak for the DAC they will have experience of considering a wide range of faculty proposals.

Getting DAC Advice

Constructive engagement with the DAC is a key part of a successful faculty application. As noted above the DAC cannot design a project for you, but we can help you refine your thinking and offer clear advice and guidance.

The advice we offer can only be based on the information you provide. If you are able to supply detailed and thorough statements and plans we will be able to offer detailed and thorough advice. If you only provide sketch plans or rough statements then our advice will not be as helpful.

If you are wanting the DAC to make a visit to the church you must supply a statement of significance, a statement of need and all relevant plans. The statements and plans will obviously be at a draft stage and we would expect that these would change and develop as you work with us. The level of information you supply to us must be sufficient for the DAC to understand the broad implications of your project as we will usually want to bring all relevant members and advisers from the DAC and may also engage with statutory bodies such as Historic England or your Local Planning Authority and [amenity societies](#). This may mean that for some large or complex projects we will also ask for conservation management plans, archaeology reports, ecology information etc.

Using our Advisers

If you are undertaking a smaller project, or need help and advice on a specific aspect of a church building you may want help from one of our advisers. We have people who can offer advice on the following subjects:

Archaeology	Environment/sustainability	Planning System
Art	Heating	Stained Glass
Audio-visual	Lighting,	Structural Engineering
Bells	Organs,	Trees and churchyards.

Our advisers come from a range of backgrounds. Some are retired professionals, others are still working in their chosen fields, whilst others have accumulated a depth and breadth of knowledge from their own interests. Our advisers are all volunteers who give their time to parishes and to the DAC for free. Advisers may sometimes need to visit churches and we would normally expect these visits to be during the day. We would not expect our advisers to attend a church outside normal office hours or to attend PCC meetings.

Our advisers are always keen to help parishes, but they are not consultants and cannot come out and design a scheme for you or offer commercial advice for free. For instance if you are wanting a new heating or lighting system we would expect the PCC to have undertaken some research and contacted companies for quotes before approaching the DAC. Our advisers will then be able to look at the quotes, understand your needs and advise on the best way forward.

All contact with DAC advisers should be arranged through the DAC secretary and her team. This will ensure that the advice you are offered is appropriately insured. Please be aware that even though you have received advice through the DAC this does not mean you can carry out work. You will still need to secure the appropriate permissions before starting.