

Continuing to manage, care for and improve your church building during the coronavirus crisis

This document, produced by the Oxford Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), should be read alongside the national Church of England guidance available [here](#).

The Chancellor of the Oxford diocese has issued an Additional Matters Order to simplify the permission process for items which might be required as parishes return to their church buildings following the extended period of closure brought about by the COVID-19 lockdown. The Order includes the introduction of hand sanitizer dispensers, internet connections and cameras for streaming services. More on what is included in this order, and how to obtain permission, can be found in this guidance note.

As we enter a second lockdown, we have also provided here answers to some emerging questions.

Please note that this document is subject to ongoing review and advice may change over time. If in any doubt about whether works require permission, please contact the Church Buildings Team for advice.

Construction work and Quinquennial Inspections

These can both go ahead so please do book your Quinquennial Inspection if it is due this year. If there are works required to the building and you have any necessary permissions in place these can also go ahead. If, on returning to your church, you have found that any works are needed to the building you can apply for permission via the [Online Faculty System](#). Please do seek advice from the DAC team if needed.

Regular inspections and maintenance of the building

Please consider identifying a member of the church team to regularly walk around the building and make sure the building is safe and secure and no leaks or other issues have occurred. This would ideally be done once a week, with an additional visit following any particularly heavy downpours or high winds. Making sure rainwater goods and stormwater gullies are clear of leaves will help to prevent damaging water ingress.

Public notices for faculty applications

Since the degree of access to churches, and the willingness of parishioners to enter church buildings, will be very mixed public notices for faculty applications should be displayed wherever possible, but also on any social media for the particular church and details of such display provided on an ad hoc basis.

Bell ringing

During this second period of lockdown the government is asking people to stay at home if at all possible. Stopping ringing is consistent with that request as churches are closed except for private prayer and to broadcast worship. The Central Council of Church Bellringers have produced extensive guidance on all issues surrounding bell ringing at this time, including confirming that they support the tolling of a single bell on Remembrance Sunday. Please check their [website](#) for information.

What permission is needed for the changes we need to make?

The additions to Lists A and B as authorised by an Additional Matters Order are set out below. Please make sure to read the specified conditions for each item and keep in mind that if a specified condition cannot be met for a List A item the works may therefore fall within List B.

Changes set out within Schedule 1 of the Additional Matters Order do not require any diocesan permission as long as the specified conditions are met.

Schedule 1 - Additional matters which may be undertaken without a faculty and without the need for consultation [additions to List A]

Matter	Specified conditions
(1) Introduction of distance markers	No adhesive of any kind (including stickers) is applied to any historic timber or floors
	No fixings are to be made to historic material
	Any necessary markings on historic floors should be with chalk only
(2) Introduction of free-standing hand sanitizer dispensers	
(3) Introduction of fixed hand sanitizer dispensers	No dispenser is to be affixed to any historic material
(4) Introduction of screening for the protection of those working at desks and public-facing areas	The screens are not to be affixed to any historic material
(5) Introduction of equipment to enable the provision of internet connectivity for use within the church building (including the introduction of phone lines and internet cables)	The works do not involve any openings into historic material
	The works do not involve excavation within the churchyard
	The DAC's standard electrical guidelines are followed
	The equipment is located in a discreet location such as a vestry
(6) Introduction of cameras and equipment to be used for the recording and/or live-streaming of services	The DAC's standard electrical guidelines are to be followed
	No equipment is to be fixed to any part of the building
	Guidance issued from time to time by the Diocesan Communications Team as to the use of this equipment and the manner of the recording, filming and/or live-streaming of services is to be followed
(7) Introduction of a letter box	No fixings are to be made to historic fabric

Changes set out within Schedule 2 of the Additional Matters Order require List B permission which can be applied for via the [Online Faculty System](#) and is granted by the Archdeacon.

Schedule 2 - Additional matters which may be undertaken without a faculty subject to consultation etc. [additions to List B]

Matter	Specified conditions
(1) Installation of fixed hand sanitizer dispensers	Fixings to historic material are to be avoided, where possible.
(2) Introduction of cameras and equipment to be used for the recording and live-streaming of services which involve fixings to the building	Fixings to historic material are to be avoided, where possible.
	The DAC's standard electrical guidelines are to be followed
	Guidance issued from time to time by the Diocesan Communications Team as to the use of this equipment and the manner of the recording, filming and/or live-streaming of services is to be followed

(3) Introduction of equipment to enable the provision of internet connectivity for use within the church building which involves openings into historic material (including the introduction of phone lines and internet cables)	Where possible existing cable routes and entry points to be used.
	The DAC's standard electrical guidelines are to be followed
(4) Introduction of equipment to enable the provision of internet connectivity for use within the church building which involves excavation within the churchyard (including the introduction of phone lines and internet cables)	Excavation is for the laying of cables only, the route of which is to be determined with the assistance of churchyard plans, burial registers and assessment of physical features so as to avoid any known graves
	Any necessary excavation is to be no deeper than 6 inches
	The DAC's standard electrical guidelines are to be followed
	Archaeological concerns are unlikely to arise except close to the church building, and it should not be the case that articulated human remains will be uncovered given the limited excavation authorised. Any works giving rise to disturbance of articulated remains must cease immediately, without removing or further disturbing the remains and the Diocesan Registry must be contacted immediately for the Chancellor's directions.
	If any disarticulated human remains are discovered they must be reverently reburied in the churchyard as soon as reasonably practicable.
	No artefact or ecofact is to be removed from the church or churchyard without further Order of the Consistory Court or an Order of the Archdeacon under section 53 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018.
	If in doubt on archaeological matters, advice should be sought from the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser via the DAC office.
(5) Introduction of a letter box where fixings are proposed to be made to historic fabric	Where possible all fixings are to be made into mortar joints.

The Archdeacon will seek the advice of the DAC on the application before issuing permission. These usually take around a week to process.

[How to apply for permission for works covered under the Additional Matters Order](#)

When making the online application you will be asked whether the works apply to the church building or churchyard. Once you have selected one of these options, you will need to choose what category the works fall into. The first screen applies to List A items, if you scroll down to the bottom and select 'none of the above' a list of List B items will open. At the bottom of the page of List B items there is a check box for 'Additional Diocesan Matter'. Please check this box to apply for permission for any works included within Schedule 2 of the Additional Matters Order.

When making an application for List B permission please make sure to include details of the proposals, such as:

- A plan of the church, if one is available, indicating the proposed hand sanitiser or camera locations
- A plan of the churchyard indicating the route of a phone or internet cable
- Photos of the affected area of the church or churchyard
- A description of work from the installer

- Images of equipment to be installed (such as CCTV cameras or hand sanitizer dispensers)
- Details of proposed fixing locations and methods- annotated photos are helpful

The more information you can provide with the application the swifter the DAC and Archdeacon will be able to progress the application.

Throughout Lists A and B, the DAC electrical guidelines are referenced, these can be found [here](#). Oxford diocese guidelines on streaming services and filming worship can be below.

If something is not listed within the full [Lists A or B](#), or the Additional Matters Order, it may require faculty permission.

Streaming services and filming worship

Please include this text within a pew sheet where a service is being filmed:

This is a public occasion. Please be aware that photography and filming will take place during the service, and that the service is being livestreamed to those unable to attend. No other photography or filming is permitted during the service. Still and video images captured today may be used in other materials published by the church or the Diocese of Oxford. Please speak to a warden or sidesperson prior to the start of the service if you have concerns. For any questions or concerns following the service please email xxxxxx

Published as part of the Covid-19 response, this is specifically for streaming from church buildings - <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/COVID%2019%20Livestreaming%20Worship%20v1.1.pdf>

Additionally, we advise the following:

- Avoid close up shots of the congregation, particularly where there are visitors or guests not known to the church.
- If children are participating in the service (such as a reading, worship or other activity) check with their parent or guardian that they are content for their child's image to be used.
- Avoid using the full names of children in broadcasts, service sheets and credits.
- If there are vulnerable children or adults in your congregation, take time to listen and respond to their concerns. For instance, some people may be willing for a live stream to be broadcast which shows them, but unwilling for a permanent record available on an open platform such as YouTube. Others, such as protected children or victims of abuse, have good reason to avoid appearing on film and photographs. With good planning it is perfectly possible to live stream or document a church service without infringing on people's right to privacy.

Funding and advice for Internet Connectivity and Streaming Equipment.

The diocese offers a grant towards the installation of this equipment. More information can be found [here](#). This page also offers advice from the Communications team on the types of installations and equipment available.

Parish buying – Internet connectivity and Audio Visual equipment

Parish Buying has started a new category with suppliers of AV equipment to churches.

<https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/categories/audio-visual-equipment>

Parish Buying has been working with the DCMS and the installers to make sure that churches can get the location information needed to have broadband installed. There is a new page on Parish Buying about this, with a solution. Essentially it should (slowly) help resolve the postcode issue by allowing churches to find out their [UPRN \(universal property reference number\)](#).

https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/images/documents/Problems_with_broadband_and_postcodes_2.pdf

Historic fabric

Fixings into historic fabric or material should be avoided wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, List B permission will be required. The usual guidance that fixings must be non-ferrous and made into mortar joints or plain plaster will apply. If in doubt about a proposed location please contact a member of the DAC team.

“Historic material” means material which is contained within a listed building (of any grade) or within a building which dates from before 1920.

Installing equipment

Where possible please aim to use freestanding equipment which does not need to be fixed to the church building in the first instance. This will remove the need to obtain permission and enable you to experiment with the introduction before applying for permission if it becomes necessary to fix the equipment to the fabric of the building. A number of hand sanitizer units are available with stands so as to avoid the need to attach to historic fabric.

Whilst recognising that certain equipment must be in a particular location to be effective, such as hand sanitizer by the doors, and cameras where they have a clear view of the celebrant, where items are being fixed to the church building these should be placed in discreet locations wherever possible.

In the majority of circumstances there should be no need for the incumbent or churchwardens of a PCC to have to enter into any form of wayleave, licence or grant of any rights to or with the internet provider. Where this is necessary faculty permission will be required.

Hand sanitizer dispensers and distance markers should be removed when government guidelines advise it is safe to do so.

Seating

The government recommends that face to face seating is avoided, this should be easy to achieve within the nave of most churches but may make the use of smaller spaces, such as Lady Chapels, unsuitable for gatherings. It should be possible in most cases to simply rope off alternative pews or indicate seats to be used with posters in order to meet safe distancing requirements in fixed pews. In buildings with moveable pews or chairs, these can simply be moved aside to ensure they are not used. Where possible please store any pews not being used in the church itself. If this is not possible, please contact the DAC team for advice.

Directing foot traffic with signs

This is likely to be done by free-standing signs and can therefore be classed as “temporary signage and cordoning” under the national guidance and therefore outside the faculty jurisdiction requiring no permission.

Better movement flows and appropriate distancing might also be achieved by some relocating of furniture. Furniture which is already flexible (such as moveable pews and chairs) can be moved without permission, but fire safety will need to be factored into the positioning of the furniture. The temporary movement or temporary removal of fixed items will require a Temporary Minor Reordering licence from the Archdeacon, an application for which can be made via the Online Faculty System.

Where possible please store any pews in the church itself. If this is not possible, please contact the DAC team for advice.

Cleaning

The Church of England has produced a guidance note on cleaning churches which can be found [here](#).

The Bats in Churches Project has also produced a guidance note on cleaning churches which have resident bats, it is available [here](#).

Frost Protection

There is new guidance on the website on [managing frost protection](#) in church buildings. Churches being used less often during Covid will maybe find this particularly helpful, but its advice is good for all churches that do not have users every day during the winter where a decision will need to be made about frost protection. Please encourage use of this guidance, February is often a cold month.

Other projects and permissions

The DAC team continues to work to process applications and enquiries for all other works to churches and churchyards and the DAC Committee are meeting virtually. Due to the current lockdown restrictions the DAC team will not be undertaking site visits except in an emergency. The team will endeavour as far as possible to honour the visits already booked for the remained of 2020 as far as government restrictions allow but we have taken the decision not to book any more site visits until further notice. Please do get in touch if you have any questions about your project or building, the DAC team will be happy to help.

Contactless donation points

This may be the ideal time to consider the introduction of a contactless donation point to enable those visiting the church for private prayer to donate. A number of different units are available, some requiring no wifi in the church. Where these units are not to be fixed to historic fabric no diocesan permission is needed for their introduction. For more information please visit the relevant page of the diocesan [website](#). A webinar on the benefits and practicalities of contactless donation is being planned – keep a look out for dates being published in the e news soon.

If you have any questions please contact the DAC team on 01865 208229 or liz.kitch@oxford.anglican.org

DATE OF ISSUE: 8th February 2021