



DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES CHAIR

Role Description

BACKGROUND

The Church of England is responsible for operating its own system of planning consents for works to churches. Faculties, permission to undertake works, are granted by the Diocesan Chancellor. Before considering a faculty application the Chancellor is obliged to take advice from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).

The DAC is the lead body in the diocese for advice on the care and development of churches; providing advice to parishes, Archdeacons and the Diocesan Chancellor. It has a key role to promote good practice over the maintenance and development of church buildings.

The DAC helps parishes make changes to their buildings. All deliberations are undertaken with the aim of balancing care and conservation with enabling worship and mission. The committee is made up of both clergy and lay people and can offer specialist advice on a wide range of topics including archaeology, bells, clocks, lighting, organs, stained glass, heating, re-orderings, etc – as well as on the conservation of our rich store of historic buildings. All of this time and expertise is given freely. Representatives from interested societies are also appointed as members of the DAC.

The Oxford diocese contains 815 churches, 689 of which are listed. The Oxford DAC meets 6 times a year and may discuss 10 - 20 major cases at each meeting. Major cases are deemed to be those which affect the character or significance of the church or involve the introduction or disposal of a significant item. All other cases are handled via online sub committees of relevant members or advisors, or utilising authority delegated to its officers, and are then reported to the full committee at a subsequent meeting. The Church Buildings team handle an average of 130 applications and enquiries each month.

In recent years the Oxford DAC has gone through significant change and development and this work continues. The new Chair will take a lead role in this development alongside the Church Buildings team, Archdeacons and Diocesan Bishop.

For further information about the Oxford DAC please visit <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/parish-support/church-buildings/>

ROLE SUMMARY

The Chair, together with the Senior Church Buildings Officer, represents the DAC within the diocesan structures. Within those structures, the Chair represents the work of the Committee and seeks to ensure that its interests are fairly considered in the formulation of diocesan policy and allocation of resources. In this role, the Chair will need to attend the Diocesan Synod and when invited, to meet with the Bishop's Council. The DAC Chair is an ex – officio member of the Diocesan Synod.

It is important for the Chair to understand the close liaison with our secular partners and to encourage the strengthening of links with Historic England, the Local Planning Authorities, and the National Amenity Societies.

Some travelling for site visits and attendance at the annual conference is expected. In addition to allowing time for chairing the meetings of the DAC, it will be important to make time prior to each meeting to discuss the agenda and all the applications with the Senior Church Buildings Officer.

Within the DAC it is important for the Chair to affirm the work of all members and consultants and the contribution which they make. Nationally there is a drive for simplification and reduction of bureaucracy in church administration. The DAC chair should be looking for ways to achieve this at a diocesan level and able to participate in online working, including the Online Faculty System.

The Chair is expected to be actively involved in recruitment of members of, and advisors to, the DAC Committee.

From the casework, the Chair may identify needs for training or the preparation of a guidance note, either by the DAC or from the Church Buildings Council.

The DAC provide training for clergy, churchwardens and others responsible for the care and development of church buildings. The DAC Chair would normally be involved in these events.

The Chair reports to the Diocesan Bishop and works closely with the Archdeacons, Registrar, Chancellor and Senior Church Buildings Officer. They should have a good relationship with the Diocesan Secretary. There is a vice-chair of the committee.

The secretariat for the DAC is provided by the Senior Church Buildings Officer and Church Buildings Officers. The Chair has no line management responsibility but is expected to work closely with the Church Buildings team.

The Chair is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop after consultation with the Bishop's Council, the Chancellor and the Church Buildings Council. The normal maximum tenure for the DAC Chair, in line with diocesan policy, is nine years. The maximum term is 12 years. The post is voluntary but expenses are paid.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

An ability to relate well with people at all levels; good analytical skills and grasp of detail are necessary.

The ideal candidate will possess excellent skills of chairmanship, diplomacy, tact and a generous sense of humour.

In chairing meetings of the DAC, the preferred candidate will need to possess the ability to weigh up decisions carefully, well-developed listening skills and the ability to move each agenda along quickly and smoothly but still allowing for each decision to be carefully and thoughtfully reached. Flexibility in approaching different proposals is essential as is the ability to absorb the key features of disciplines that may be unfamiliar. Whilst building conservation skills are not required, the Chair will need to develop a clear understanding of current issues.

The preferred candidate will possess the skills to be an ambassador of the Committee within the life of the diocese and positively promote its work among clergy and churchwardens. They will also need to be comfortable with the Church's developing links with our secular partners and the ways in which the life of the DAC can be resourced by their skill and expertise.

The Chair will need the wisdom to stand back from the detail of schemes to ensure that all meetings of the DAC are chaired in a fair and unbiased way.

The Chair will work closely with the Senior Church Buildings Officer to ensure the smooth passage of proposals through the faculty procedure but will not engage directly in the processing of any particular scheme. A relationship of trust and co-operation with the Senior Church Buildings Officer will be an essential part of the post.

Church House, Oxford
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