



Coventry Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

2020 was a very different year for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the way we and churches operated from March onwards.

Despite the restrictions making many ordinary activities for churches difficult or impossible and causing some development works to be put on hold, parishes continued exploring ways of improving the facilities in their buildings as well as undertaking many of the usual repair and maintenance works.



The Diocese of Coventry is steward to 244 church buildings, of which 202 (83%) are statutorily listed, 52 (21%) at Grade I, 78 (32%) at Grade II* and 71 (29%) at Grade II. The DAC considers faculty and minor works applications for all but a handful of these buildings – whenever repairs are needed or development is proposed, the committee's expert advisers go through the applications to ensure the parish is getting what is best for their mission and the long-term needs of their building.

The DAC's role is to draw on its body of expertise to advise parishes on all aspects of their applications for faculty and church buildings matters, to provide formal advice to the diocesan Chancellor on faculty applications in the form of its Notification of Advice, and to advise the Archdeacon on minor works applications for matters which fall under 'List B'. This advice assists the Chancellor or Archdeacon in their final determination of the applications before them.

There were no changes in the church buildings team in the DAC office in 2020, under the direction of Steve Davenport, Director of Operations. Will Jones continued as DAC Secretary and Operations Team Supervisor, Tim Latham continued as Assistant DAC Secretary and Operations Administrator, Claire Strachan continued as Church Buildings Development and Project Officer, and Andy Duncan continued as Church Buildings Funding Support Officer.

During the year, seven DAC meetings were held, in connection with which many application documents were circulated to aid consideration of the issues at hand. DAC meetings were held remotely online for the first time in 2020, with six of the seven meeting from April onwards taking place in that way. Much of the work of the DAC goes on outside meetings, however, through members considering in detail the applications referred to them for review, and through site visits to churches to consider applications in situ with all relevant interested parties, such as Historic England, the Victorian Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Church Buildings Council.

The DAC in numbers	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
New applications received for DAC Notification of Advice (first stage of Faculty application; formerly DAC Certificate)	96	84	85	86	76
Applications received for Minor/Routine Works (List B)	64	91	131	112	82
TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW APPLICATIONS	160	175	216	198	158
Site Visits by Committee/Secretary/Church Buildings Development Officer/Funding Support	43	45	46	55	-
Total Number of Notifications/Certificates issued	80	85	79	78	68
Recommendation (indicating the DAC's approval)	71	69	69	60	57
No Objection (indicating neither approval nor disapproval)	9	13	10	14	10
No Recommendation (indicating disapproval)	0	3	0	4	1

For further information on the Faculty system and terminology please visit www.dioceseofcoventry.org/ChurchBuildings/faculty.

The number of Notification of Advice (i.e. Faculty) applications in 2020 was 76, down from 86 in 2019, while the number of Notifications of Advice issued was 68, down from 78 in 2019 (note that some of the Notifications issued will have been cases from 2019, while some of the 2020 applications will be concluded during 2021). The number of minor works (List B) applications in 2020 was 82, down from 112 in 2019 (10 were not completed at the end of the year and 2 were abandoned); however, 15 of the 2019 applications were for the diocesan centenary trees (none were in 2020). Discounting these, the number of (non-centenary tree) minor works applications was still lower than 2019, 82 compared to 97. Likewise the total number of applications of both types was lower when centenary trees are discounted: 158 compared to 183. The main reason for the drop is likely to be the pandemic and associated restrictions. There were changes to List A and B from 1 April 2020, with a number of matters added to each, and this may also have reduced the number of faculty and minor works applications.

Because of the pandemic and restriction site visits by DAC members or Church Buildings Development and Project Officer Claire Strachan were largely put on hold in 2020. A few took place in the first 10 weeks of the year, particularly by Claire Strachan and Andy Duncan, and subsequently once restrictions were eased DAC members attended a few site visits by themselves. However, most discussions during the year were held remotely.

The church buildings team aim to turn around straightforward applications for List B permission within two weeks of receiving them. In 2020 this was achieved in 37 out of 82 applications. In the remainder the reason was typically due to complications arising in the application and PCC responses being awaited. Faculty applications take longer because of the in-built constraints of the statutory process, but a rule of thumb is that a straightforward application for Faculty (with complete information and no complicating factors) can expect to receive the go-ahead within 12 weeks of the application being made. In 2020 this timeframe was achieved in 16 out of the 68 faculties granted. In the remaining applications the reasons for delay have been investigated and were found in all but 1 case to be a result of the irregular meeting cycle, advisers being unavailable, or the application resting with the parish (or occasionally Registry) for longer than usual periods. In the remaining case there was a delay in the DAC office for owing to an administrative oversight; however, the application in question was a confirmatory faculty for works already undertaken under an interim faculty so no delay to works occurred.

Coventry DAC is blessed with a rich array of expert members and advisers who give their time and expertise free of charge to help parishes with their development and repair projects.

The committee has a longstanding policy of encouraging early consultation on larger and more complex projects, and this continues to show its benefits as PCCs have their ideas shaped and sharpened through the advice of specialists. It allows the various parties to be brought to one mind, as far as is possible, on what is best for the church, its mission and conservation.

New legislation governing quinquennial inspections of churches came into force on 1 September 2020, requiring the creation of a new diocesan scheme. The new scheme for Coventry was drafted and approved by the Diocesan Synod in the autumn ahead of coming into effect on 1 January 2021. As part of this, all quinquennial inspectors of churches were asked to re-submit their details so that the DAC could provide PCCs with formal advice as required under the new legislation and scheme.

During 2020, Claire Strachan (Church Buildings Development and Project Officer) continued to support parishes in caring for and developing their church buildings. Opportunities for providing training and other engagement were more limited in 2020 owing to the pandemic and restrictions but Claire continued to do what she could where technology, rules and guidance permitted.

The Church Buildings Team remained involved with the Diocesan Environment Group and alongside Godfrey Armitage, Diocesan Environment Officer, exploring ways to tackle climate change and other environmental issues and improve energy efficiency in church buildings.

Claire also worked closely with parishes on their building projects, particularly in relation to developing their applications for DAC Advice, and supporting them in writing Statements of Significance and Need.

As a team we continue to maintain good working relationships with Historic England, the National Churches Trust, the Churches Conservation Trust, Caring for God's Acre and the Church Buildings Council, as well as our counterparts in other dioceses.

Further progress was made on the church buildings strategy during 2020, as part of the Whole Diocese strategic plan, though progress was not as quick as anticipated owing to the pandemic. Deanery plans continue to be in the pipeline. These include the use of church buildings in furthering mission, and will provide the Diocese with a comprehensive overview of church ministry, which can then contribute to the strategic deployment of resources, and a better understanding of church building sustainability in the diocese in the future.



Church Buildings Funding Support Officer Andy Duncan continued to support parishes engaged in fundraising projects with grant funding applications, bid writing, project management and feasibility with a view to meeting funders' requirements.

We were very pleased when Andy's temporary role was made permanent in November 2020. Andy supported 33 churches in 2020 with grant applications, helping to secure nearly £110,000 for buildings and community projects and helped parishes navigate the rapidly changing grant funding landscape as a result of Covid-19.

At the end of the year the Church Buildings Team reluctantly said goodbye to Claire Strachan following her decision to take up an exciting new opportunity in Lincolnshire. Claire has made an invaluable contribution to the work of the DAC over the last 13 years, through her support and advice to parishes across the diocese, in their care and development of church buildings. On behalf of the DAC I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for everything she has done in the furtherance of the work of the Committee.

DAC Membership

This year the membership of the Coventry Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches remained unchanged, and at December 2020 is:

Chairman: The Revd Canon Richard Williams

Members of the Committee

The Ven Sue Field	Archdeacon Pastor
Mr Nigel Allcoat	Organs (Pipe)
Mr Chris Baker	Diocesan Synod
Dr Colin Bemrose	Heating
Mr Simon Bird	Architect
Dr Charles Brown	Architect
Mr Keith Chambers	Bells Adviser
The Revd Graham Coles	Incumbent and heating
Mr Mark Evans	Architect
Dr Heather Loosemore	Lighting and Electrical Adviser
Mr David Lowe	Ecological Adviser
Mr Nicholas Molyneux	Historic England Representative
Mr Chris Patrick	Archaeological Adviser
Mr Nick Reading	Architect
Mr Ben Sinclair	Glazing adviser
Mr Brough Skingley	Electrical and Lighting Adviser
Mr Mark Stewart	Architect and Amenity Societies representative
The Revd Peter Walker	Incumbent and Diocesan Synod representative

Advisors

Mr Paul Platt	Clocks
Dr Linda Monckton	Twentieth Century Churches/Interiors

Diocesan personnel in attendance

Director of Operations	Mr Steve Davenport
DAC Secretary and Operations Team Supervisor	Dr Will Jones
Operations Administrator and Assistant DAC Secretary	Mr Tim Latham
Church Buildings Development and Project Officer	Dr Claire Strachan

Current Vacancies

Local Authority representative

The Revd Canon Richard Williams
Chairman, Coventry DAC
April 2021