
Chair: Dr Christopher Green

Living God's Love

The DAC is a statutory body whose functions are set out in ecclesiastical legislation. Its role is to advise the Chancellor and parishes on proposals for works to church buildings and churchyards and church furnishings, and to advise more generally on the care and development of churches. In line with statutory provision and the priorities of Living God's Love, the Committee has regard to churches as local centres of worship and mission, in which

- *people can encounter God and be drawn into a worshipping community*
- *parishes can reach out in mission*
- *local communities can be transformed.*

The DAC pursues these priorities by:

- *Providing parishes with the advice they need as they consider how their parish church could be made to serve worshippers and community more effectively. DAC members have wide experience and expertise and their advice is available free of charge.*
- *Working through consultation visits when initial ideas arising from parish Mission Action Plans can be discussed on site*
- *Encouraging parishes to celebrate and build on recent experience and good practice by suggesting examples to visit*
- *Sharing good practice and new developments with parishes through regular newsletters and occasional training*

The DAC at work - The Chairman's view

Dr Christopher Green

Achievements in 2017

Understanding the condition of our churches

The Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, David Bevan, undertook a review of the diocese's 380 churches based on quinquennial inspection reports. This identified 12% in poor or very bad condition and the majority of the rest needing significant periodic repairs. 17 have been identified as actually or potentially at risk (a number were added to Historic England's Register or database as a result) and a further 15 are also priorities for action and support. David gave advice on funding and organising projects to 85 churches at visits, meetings or by tailored emails and notes.

Sharing good practice

We continue to share ideas at site visits and via regular e-mails to churchwardens (also available on the DAC pages of the website). New web pages and advice notes were created on the Diocesan website under 'Fundraising and Grants' with 1,412 'page views' in the first year. 55 people attended our 'Tackling Church Repairs' workshop for parishes and 27 church architects and surveyors came to our 'Summer Workshop' on a range of topics.

Protecting metal roofs, Heritage Lottery Fund and other grants

A metal theft and roof alarm campaign has been run with the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust with a package of grants from that trust, the Allchurches Trust and Diocesan Board of Finance. We have worked with the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership to start to provide funding for the repair of targeted churchyard walls and structures in the area.

The HCB Support Officer gave advice on successful funding bids totalling £300,000 by the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust and Shefford Church. Intensive support was given to Houghton Regis's Heritage Lottery Fund application (worth over £200,000) with advice given on similar applications by Meppershall and Kelshall. The applications were made to the last round of the dedicated HLF Grants for Places of Worship grant programme and in spite of the much higher demand caused by the ending of this grant programme, Houghton Regis was awarded a first-round pass.

Access

The DAC continued to encourage better access into and around our churches. This might mean dealing with physical barriers (steps; access to toilets; space for wheelchair users to sit) or being aware of other barriers e.g. sound systems; using AV technology or providing large-print service books. The DAC Secretary reported on a one-day course run by Historic England, whose resources include *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* (including examples from St Albans Cathedral) and *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes* (e.g. churchyard routes).

Specialist and technical cases

In many cases specialist advice is offered on a range of issues; heating, lighting, environment and wildlife, bells, organs and disabled access amongst others.

In November 2017 a DAC Technical Advisers meeting was held, involving advisers on electrical work, lighting, heating, fire safety, structural engineering and Building Regulations. The discussion highlighted:

- The overlap between different areas of interest e.g. fire safety / electrical inspection / emergency lighting / lightning conductors
- The statutory framework:
 - faculty/Minor Matters permissions for work
 - requirements for quinquennial inspection including checking that regular electrical, fire equipment and other inspections have taken place
 - inspection framework placing statutory duties on Archdeacons and churchwardens
- The importance of enabling DAC members and advisers to access updated legislation and technical documents such as British Standards
- DAC roles in:
 - Ensuring appropriate standards in assessing works as part of the process leading to a faculty or List B permission
 - Advising on appropriate professional qualifications, accreditation and experience of contractors e.g. for heating works
 - Signposting to relevant guidance e.g. Church Buildings Council publications; Ecclesiastical Insurance; Central Council of Bell Ringers
 - Publishing DAC guidance where appropriate

The DAC noted new or updated guidance published by a number of external organisations during the year:

Photovoltaic cells (solar panels) on historic buildings [CPRE and Building Research Establishment]

Historic Floors [SPAB]

Bats in Churches [project involving CBC, HE, Natural England & other bodies]

Archaeology of burial grounds [APABE]

Replacement of roof materials [HE]

DAC members and consultants

We were saddened by the death of Geoff Barton in July 2017. Geoff had continued to serve as a DAC member with personal experience of church project management whenever illness allowed him to attend a meeting or site visit.

We said farewell to: Brough Skingley, who retired after many years' contribution of expertise, practical advice and good humour in dealing with church heating systems and other technical matters; and Nicola Rutt, who advised on 20th century architecture.

Otherwise the committee's membership was unchanged during the year.

Our parishes are ***Living God's Love*** so that His kingdom might grow in our world:

Going Deeper into God....

Bovingdon – creation of a walkway around the churchyard with sculptures as focuses for thought

Standon – Improvements to access and focus for worship in this steeply-sloping church interior and provision of toilet and kitchenette

...inspiring people to discover God and helping people grow in their personal faith

Making new disciples of Jesus Christ....

Watford St Mary – transformation of the interior of this historic town-centre church for mission and outreach at the heart of Watford – faculty granted by the Deputy Chancellor with a Judgement following consideration of the application and a written objection from the Victorian Society

Braughing – Screening of the tower and provision of toilet and kitchenette facilities

Whipsnade – vestry/meeting room extension completed, with circulation space within the church, toilet and tea-point

Commonwealth War Grave Commission – installation of notices at churchyards with one or more war graves

...reaching out to welcome those unconnected to church

Transforming communities by the power of the Spirit....

Puttenham – new floor with under-floor heating run from air-source heat pump

...protecting the vulnerable and the environment

On-going projects *to improve the quality of our worship, grow the faith of children and young people, and engage in social action that addresses local needs:*

Sarratt – small extension and internal changes to provide flexible space, toilet and refreshment point

Little Gaddesden – Extension of the existing vestry room to provide better meeting facilities

Dunstable – complete re-flooring and replacement of heating

Stevenage St Nicholas – internal re-ordering with particular consideration of historic screens, to provide for active church

Childwickbury, St Mary – Provision of toilet and kitchenette for church and hall use

Flamstead – major roof repairs and associated works

Waterford – project to restore the unusual glass-tiled mosaic reredos

South Mymms – investigation into structural issues affecting the building, a historic screen and monuments

2017 Statistics (2016 in brackets)

- 6 (6) DAC meetings
- 82 (61) visits by DAC members and staff
- 420 (347) cases completed

Resulting in:

Notifications of Advice for Faculties	180 (150)
Archdeacons' Letters of Authority	232 (185)
Archdeacons' Temporary Re-ordering Licences	2 (8)

For matters including:

Extensions/New Build	7 (4)
Re-ordering/alterations	41 (32)
Repairs	99 (87)
Furniture/fittings	59 (62)
Services/M & E (mechanical and electrical)	44 (28)
Churchyard (incl. trees, benches, signage)	113 (68)
Other (e.g. bells; organs, clocks)	51 (50)

Plans for 2018

As part of **Living God's Love**, we would like to see more churches open outside the times of services, as places where people may encounter God; and more churches with access and basic facilities, to enable them to be used for wider purposes to serve and transform local communities.

In the next year we will continue to respond to the end of the HLF's Grants for Places of Worship scheme by using the remaining HLF schemes and exploring other opportunities for funding. We will also research ways of providing more support to parishes on community heritage.

This will be done in the context provided by the Government's recently published review of the 'Sustainability of Church of England Churches and Cathedrals' and the Church Building Council's review of the quinquennial inspection system and their implications for diocesan church stewardship, building management and funding.

The DAC's priorities are:

Responding to parishes' MAP priorities for church buildings by providing advice in site visits and when considering individual cases, to find the most appropriate way to make changes

Working with individual parishes to develop maintenance plans and access external funding to improve the condition of church buildings

Identifying churches at particular risk of metal theft and encouraging a range of measures to reduce this risk

Providing training for those involved in the care and use of church buildings, to enable people to maintain and repair church buildings, access external funding and develop wider use of churches. Planned events with a focus on maintenance include:

- Maintenance workshop for parishes – in conjunction with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings – in April 2018
- Training for architects and surveyors in July 2018
- Workshop introducing the National Churches Trust's *MaintenanceBooker* initiative –October 2018.