

## **Projects – what project should you do and how should you go about it?**

### **The advice in this note**

1. Making sure that your first steps are in the right direction is key to delivering a successful project. It should also avoid some of the annoying pitfalls experienced by parishes. You will be confident that your project will deliver what you need and want and can be achieved with the resources available.
2. The first two parts of this note talk about starting your project in the right way whether it's for repairs or making changes or adding to your church building. The third part gives links to past training events and good practice guidance such as the Diocese of Hereford's *Crossing the Threshold* toolkit which covers the stages of developing and delivering a church buildings project.

### **Getting going with repairs**

3. Every five years your quinquennial inspection report describes the condition of your church and sets out the repairs and replacements needed and when. QI reports often list a good number of priority jobs and some may be tackled by the parish with little cost. However, those requiring more investment need to be looked at carefully to pick out a practical package of priority works which can realistically be achieved.
4. You should meet your Quinquennial Inspector to agree such a package of works based on priorities, funds and costs.
5. The PCC should confirm what funding it, a Friends group and the community may be able to contribute. It should also say what it expects to be able to get in grants.
6. The Diocese's Historic Church Buildings Support Officer can advise on grants. This includes when an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund may be needed and its implications including for the advice in this note.
7. Your Inspector should be able to give a very rough estimate of the costs of most projects based on experience and sometimes the input of a contractor. Large and more complex projects may need to be costed by say a quantity surveyor.
8. There has to be a realistic chance that a project can be funded before you move forward and start to spend money on fees and other costs. Most parishes can't afford to do everything or even most of what the QI report says is a priority in a single hit. However the pragmatic and prudent approach suggested here will make worthwhile progress.
9. A number of parishes are better placed because they have more funds and/or have been able to carry out full repairs in the past and budget for the future.
10. In some cases a church will require very expensive repairs which are particularly challenging to fund. A plan to try and find sufficient grant-aid and/or phase the works will be needed with advice sought from the Historic Church Buildings Support Officer.

11. In addition to QI reports other triggers for repairs can be unexpected physical problems and failures, and emergencies resulting from fire, flooding, theft and other causes. The approach taken to planning projects for these situations will depend on the particular circumstances including insurance cover and help and advice will be given by the DAC team.

12. In general, where you have identified your priority, achievable project you can take the next steps. You will need to commission your professional adviser to produce a specification and schedule - a description of the required works and their location – and get tender quotes. A specification/schedule will be needed to gain faculty permission for the work – though this permission may not be required for like-for-like repairs. The specification/schedule and quotes will be required when applying for most but not all grants.

13. The Chancellor expects to see funding in place before granting a faculty while, on the other hand, funding bodies normally want permissions to be in place before giving grants. This chicken-and-egg, or which comes first, dilemma can be tackled by giving reassurances. The DAC team will advise on how that can be done if a faculty permission is required. Confirming that early will be helpful for repairs. Faculty approval is likely to be required for changes to buildings and spaces.

### **Getting going with changes to buildings and spaces and constructing new buildings**

14. Changes and additions to your church and churchyard typically include and sometimes combine: reordering the layout of the church to give more flexible, open or contained spaces; providing toilets and kitchens; converting parts of the church to new uses; extending the church to make an office and/or meeting area; or building a hall in or near the churchyard.

15. With changes and additions to spaces and buildings the driver can be practical issues with using the church, for example how people can take part in a baptism or other event or how people can feel comfortable and use energy efficiently. But these practical issues along with the other triggers are bound up in wider questions about the significance, purpose and use of the church such as: its heritage value and meaning; its mission, worship and outreach; its welcome to its congregation and newcomers, the community and visitors; and the services it provides to churchgoers and the wider community.

16. Three documents give a good basis for considering such changes. The Mission Action Plan brings together the various strands of a church and its future plans. A Statement of Significance describes the heritage character, interest and value of the church and the impact of a project on it. The Statement of Needs sets out the demands and wishes the project is seeking to address.

17. It's never too soon to share your ideas about making changes or additions to your church and churchyard with the DAC team. The DAC is happy to arrange a visit to discuss your ideas at the church.

18. Getting going with the changes requires a good amount of wide-ranging thought and conversations, which reflect the type and scale of project. Before thinking that you need a such and such physical change, facility or building you need to identify what your vision is and whether that is a priority and achievable. If you are doing something in whole or part for the community does it deliver what they actually need and want? Does it add to what is already available, for example, at the village hall? If you are expecting the change to generate income what evidence is there to support that it will give you the revenue you hope? What happens from the start to finish of events and services at your church and how will you plans work with all those scenarios?

19. Challenging questions like these should be seen as a positive way of testing your assumptions and plans to make sure your proposal will actually deliver your objectives. Your assessment of needs and your vision and plans should be based on sound evidence from factual information to community consultations to running through scenarios to test how your project will work in practice.

20. When you have a robust need and vision you can get the initial thoughts of an architect or other professional adviser as to whether they can be achieved successfully on the site and a very rough indication of the cost. This will allow you to check whether the project can attract the necessary funding. If the answer is no you can discuss cheaper options and whether they will achieve enough of your original or modified vision and meet sufficient needs to justify going ahead.

21. When you have confirmed your project delivers your vision and meets your needs, is achievable and also good value for money then you can develop it further with your professional adviser such as by following the steps suggested in the *Crossing the Threshold* toolkit referenced below.

### **Further advice on project development and delivery**

22. We have given advice on developing and delivering projects at workshops. Programmes and presentations are available on our 'Training – information and events page' <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/training-events-presentations/>. See 'From Vision to Reality: Developing your project and making it happen' from 2020.

23. The Diocese of Hereford's *Crossing the Threshold* toolkit gives an excellent step-by-step guide to managing a church project <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/parish-support/community-partnership/crossing-the-threshold-toolkit/>. You should choose and make use of the elements in a way which is relevant to your situation and reflects the scale and nature of your project.

24. Other organisations give advice on managing church buildings projects including the National Churches Trust <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building-advice/managing-building-projects>. ChurchCare advice on various aspects of projects is here <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare>.

25. DAC Advice Leaflets <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/dac-advice-leaflets/> cover a range of topics relevant to projects such as Statements of Needs and Significance.

**For further information and advice:**

Contact the Historic Church Buildings Support Officer by email [HCBSupport@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:HCBSupport@stalbans.anglican.org) or telephone 01727 818108.

**Please note:** This is draft advice which has been written to help parishes deal with some of the current challenges. The aim is to combine it with other advice and cover more subjects in the future.

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