

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The DAC and its members continue to work with a large number of parishes each year and while some of this work relates to maintenance and repair a large amount covers the planning and preparation for significant extensions and re-ordering improvements.

The DAC was pleased to see the completion of some long standing projects over the last year at Ash, Plaxtol, and Crockenhill. Each of these churches has been discussing and developing plans over many years.

All Souls Church, Crockenhill, needed to replace their existing Church Room, which was well past its sell-by date. After site meetings to discuss the feasibility of an extension or internal reordering, the DAC suggested the PCC visit Chiddingstone Causeway for inspiration. The new Church Room was completed in 2017

Before



After



Plaxtol parish church completed internal reordering works in autumn 2017, including a tea station and WC at the base of the church tower, as well as the creation of a new welcome area at the west end of the nave.



The DAC's involvement at Plaxtol goes back to 2009, with an early site meeting to look at options to provide lavatory, tea making facilities and a room separated from the main worship space.

Over time, and with the appointment of their architect and advice from the DAC, the PCC re-evaluated their needs, and developed their proposals, with work completed in autumn 2017.

St Peter and St Paul's Church, Ash has recently completed a small extension to house an accessible to all WC, and tea making facilities were installed in the church. The works also create level access into church.



St Mary's Church, Kippington recently installed a new glazed door to make their church more welcoming to visitors, and small projects like this can make a big difference to how visitors perceive the church as well as making it more comfortable for regular worshippers.

Recommendations were also issued during the year for major internal and external works at Otford St Bartholomew, Bidborough St Lawrence, Sidcup St John, Sidcup Christ Church, Welling St John the Evangelist, Gillingham St Mary Magdalene, Beckenham St Michael and Petts Wood St Francis.

Ongoing work and involvement continues with the parishes of Lamorbey Holy Redeemer, Penge St John, West Malling St Mary, Sundridge St Mary, Ridley St Peter, Chislehurst St Nicholas and Gillingham Holy Trinity as they develop plans to provide new and enhanced facilities for their mission and worship.

Early site visits to parishes just beginning to consider such work are always welcomed and in 2017 such visits took place at Cliffe and High Halstow, both on the Hoo peninsula. In recommending work to listed churches, the DAC must invite and consider input from other consultees especially Historic England, the Victorian Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Church Buildings Council who are also frequently invited to these site visits. If plans involve changes to the external appearance of a church the local planning office may also be invited.

The DAC is anxious to embrace many of the ideas behind "Called Together" and in particular, encourages PCCs not only to maintain their buildings in good repair but also to seek to provide the necessary facilities and fellowship space to attract and welcome people inside.

Parishes are now benefitting from changes to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules, especially the List A and B arrangements which provide quicker authorisation without the need for a faculty for routine maintenance and repair work.

In April 2017, the diocese signed up to the new Online Faculty System, and after a test period over the summer, went "live" for all new proposals in September. The Online Faculty System makes the process of applying for a faculty, as well as obtaining approval from the archdeacons for List B works, far easier and quicker.

In terms of statistics, some 101 faculties were issued during the year and we received something of the order of 200 requests for items to be considered either by the full Committee or the relevant adviser for approval by the archdeacon under List B. As a result, we probably had contact with over half of the parishes of the diocese in 2017. The Chancellor held a Consistory Court hearing at Otford and found in favour of the petitioners. A further six judgments were issued to other parishes in the course of the year.

It is worth noting that even if the DAC does not recommend approval to an application, a parish may still petition the Chancellor for faculty; and equally, a recommendation for approval does not prevent parishioners or others objecting to the grant of a faculty.

The Committee meets ten times a year in Rochester and is always interested to hear from people whose skills and experience may benefit the membership.



During the year we were saddened to hear of the deaths of Michael Goodman, for 34 years Chancellor of the Diocese, and our Mechanical Engineering advisor, Brian Morton.

The Ven. Clive Mansell retired as Archdeacon of Tonbridge in July 2017, and was thanked by the DAC for his wisdom and advice and friendship over many years. The Committee was pleased to welcome the Ven. Julie Conalty, to the Committee in October.

At the end of the year the Committee was sorry to say goodbye to Malcolm Green who retired after 27 years loyal and valuable membership as an architect adviser.

Thanks are due to all Members and Consultants, past and present for their generous commitment, attendance and contribution. Without their support the DAC and the diocese would be unable to provide the help and advice it gives parishes. Finally, I would conclude by also thanking our DAC Secretary, Sarah Anderson and her assistant Beryl Mayes whose support is invaluable.

Derek Shilling
Chair.