



Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee Role pack 2025

Introduction

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) is a statutory body whose functions are set out in ecclesiastical legislation. The Church of England is responsible for operating its own system of planning consents for works to church buildings. 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. The role of the DAC is to provide specialist advice to parishes and the Chancellor on the wide range of works affecting church buildings, their furnishings and churchyards, including appropriate repairs, alterations and developments and artistic and technical matters. This advice may be offered in informal conversations or formally within the framework of the faculty jurisdiction and Ecclesiastical Exemption.

At a national level the Church Buildings Council provides support to DACs by organising training events, a national conference for DAC chairs and secretaries and responding for requests for advice on specific issues. The Council provides a wide range of published guidance on the Church of England website to support DACs and parishes.

In line with statutory provision and the priorities of the Diocese of St Albans expressed through the vision of Living God's Love, the DAC 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.

There are 380 parish church buildings and consecrated chapels of ease in the diocese, in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire/Luton and parts of the London Borough of Barnet. Most are listed and the churches include around 10% built in the 20th century, reflecting urban and New Town development in the diocese.

The DAC Chair is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop after consultation with the Bishop's Council, the Chancellor and the Church Buildings Council. This is a voluntary role, but expenses are paid. The term of office of the Chair and DAC members is six years, renewable for another term and with the possibility of further extension in exceptional circumstances.

For further information about the work of the DAC, please see the diocesan website:

[Buildings and Churchyards - The Diocese of St Albans](#)

The DAC's ethos within the Diocese of St Albans

In undertaking its work, St Albans DAC and the DAC staff team seek to support and encourage parishes in caring for and developing their church buildings with well thought-through schemes.

- The DAC encourages parishes to make their church buildings welcoming, accessible and sustainable.
- The DAC recognises the potential for church buildings to serve the community in many ways and encourages parishes to explore and develop this opportunity.
- The DAC recognises that much of the work in caring for church buildings and funding works is undertaken by churchwardens and other volunteers and is sensitive to the need to support them.
- The DAC recognises the importance of good information and understanding of significance and needs, and supports parishes and their professional advisers in developing clear and full documentation at an early stage.
- In encouraging sustainability of use and in environmental terms, the DAC recognises that church buildings should be considered holistically.
- The DAC's work is informed and supported by the Support Officers' roles in monitoring the condition of church buildings across the Diocese, working with those on the Heritage at Risk Register and other vulnerable churches and supporting parishes to develop achievable packages of priority repairs and to access the funding to implement them.

Role Description

- The Chair will steer and guide the work and ethos of the DAC in supporting parishes to care for and develop their church buildings for worship, mission and as centres in their community, in support of the priorities of the diocesan vision of Living God's Love
- The Committee's advice needs to reflect current policy, guidance and research. The Chair will work with the DAC Secretary in developing guidance on policy and practice for the Committee and parishes in response to identified local needs, changes in legislation and national policy developments.
- The DAC Chair is an ex officio member of the Diocesan Synod and represents the work of the Committee within diocesan structures, providing input [as appropriate] in the formulation of diocesan policy.
- The Chair will represent the DAC as appropriate in national and regional forums including attending the annual DAC Conference and Annual Meeting of the Church Buildings Council.
- The Chair will prepare for and chair meetings in a way which teases out the issues in each matter under consideration, engenders mutual understanding and respect among committee members with their range of expertise and

experience, enables all voices to be heard and provides clear, well thought-through and impartial advice.

- The role requires close liaison with the DAC Secretary and team, particularly in agenda preparation (normally a half day's discussion before the agenda is issued); approval of minutes; and discussion about policy and casework between meetings. The Chair does not have line management responsibilities. The Chair will meet from time to time with the Diocesan Bishop and works closely with the Archdeacons, Registrar, Chancellor and DAC Secretary. They should have a good relationship with the Diocesan Secretary.
- 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.
- The DAC undertakes a substantial number of site visits each year and carries out much of its business via consultation with individual members on technical, routine and specialist casework and the Chair will be involved with these aspects of the Committee's work.
- The DAC staff team provides training and resources for clergy, churchwardens and others responsible for the care and development of church buildings. The DAC Chair will often be involved in these events.

Person specification

- The ideal candidate will possess excellent skills in chairing meetings and diplomacy, whilst tact and a generous sense of humour are important. An ability to relate well with people at all levels, good analytical skills and grasp of detail are necessary.
- 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.
- The Chair must be in sympathy with the mission of the Church of England and have an awareness of the issues involved in balancing worship and mission with care and conservation.
- The Chair need not have specialist expertise, but will have a passion for church buildings, their use and sustainability, as well as a good understanding of the development of ecclesiastical architecture and the liturgical use of church buildings.
- The Chair will be able to foster a sense of mutual respect and collegiality between DAC members and consultants.

- The Chair will have, or will be able quickly to develop, a good understanding of the DAC's advisory role within the ecclesiastical framework for permitting repairs and changes to church buildings, including highly listed churches through the Ecclesiastical Exemption from listed building consent.
- The Chair will have empathy with the context in which much of the work in caring for church buildings and funding works is undertaken by churchwardens and other volunteers, an understanding of the challenges they face, and will be sensitive to the need to support them.
- 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 secular partners and the ways in which the life of the DAC can be resourced by their skill and expertise.

Further information - How St Albans DAC works

St Albans DAC meets as a full committee every two months, normally in person on a Thursday morning. Casework items (usually between 10 and 25 cases) are presented with background documents via an on-line portal, a PowerPoint presentation and relevant drawings/plans displayed for discussion in the Board Room at the Diocesan Office.

The full DAC considers major proposals including for extensions and re-ordering, as well as any matters raising an issue of policy. Discussion and the process of making recommendations tend to be handled collaboratively, rather than members feeling they can only contribute in their specialist field or perspective.

Routine and technical matters are usually considered by a standing committee process involving consultation with individual DAC members and specialist consultants. Normally this would be done by sending a link to the relevant documents for recommendations and comments via the on-line portal.

Most site visits are arranged at the request of the parish, often at the early stage of development of plans for reordering or development, and involve DAC members with appropriate expertise, supported by one or more DAC staff. Site visits are always arranged subject to the availability of DAC members. If a DAC member or consultant considers that a visit to the church concerned is desirable, the DAC staff team will arrange this through the office and may invite other members of the DAC to attend the visit if appropriate. Travel expenses are reimbursed.

The full DAC receives a list of advice provided through the standing committee process between meetings and written reports of site visits.

The DAC staff team comprises the DAC Secretary, Pastoral & Advisory Officer and Team Secretary – Church Buildings. They are supported by colleagues with specialist parish support roles in the fields of Heritage at Risk / major funding; church building maintenance; and Net Zero Carbon.