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You can't start building works in your church until you have the right permissions.

Your Diocesan Advisory Committee can tell you which ones you need to apply for.

Download the toolkit



Always talk to your DAC first

Never start any work before you have permission.

Always talk to your Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) as early as possible because they can tell you what is likely to be approved and what isn't.

And they will tell you what permissions you need and if you have to consult other organisations.

If your church is listed, you might not be able to make all the changes you want. So they can suggest new solutions or tell you if a church is doing something similar nearby.

~~Find out more about how your DAC can help you~~

“The secretary is there to help all; from those unfamiliar with Faculty Jurisdiction to those seeking straightforward advice on basic housekeeping and maintenance.”

Stephen Challenger, Property and DAC Secretary, Hereford Diocese

What is the Ecclesiastical Exemption?

The Ecclesiastical Exemption exempts our churches from some parts of the Planning Act.

You do not need to apply for:

- Listed building consent
- Conservation area consent

Instead, you apply for faculty.

Find out more about how we manage our buildings

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules

The faculty jurisdiction is how we manage change to our church buildings, their contents, and our churchyards. It applies to all Anglican parishes.

We make sure to reach the right balance between the needs of the worshipping community and the needs of the building.

For most works, you will need a [faculty](#).

But there are two types of work that do not need faculty:

- [List A](#): mainly routine maintenance that does not affect fabric or historic material.
- [List B](#): works that do not change the character of a listed building. You will need your archdeacon's written permission. Your DAC can help you.

The faculty process does take time. Bear this in mind when [planning your project](#).

Warning:

You must have it in writing that a faculty is not required.

Helpful hints

- [Church Buildings Project: Permission decision tree](#) (229.59 KB)

Other types of permissions you might need

There are some types of works that need extra permissions from other authorities. [Your DAC](#) will tell you which one you need to apply for.

Building regulations

You will need building regulations approval before doing any building works. [Your architect](#) will usually deal with this.

Planning permission

You will probably need planning permission from your local authority if you are doing work to the outside of the church. This also includes small projects like putting up a [new noticeboard](#).

It's best to apply for planning permission and faculty at the same time.

Scheduled monument consent

A scheduled monument is an archaeological site which is nationally important and is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979.

You need to get [scheduled monument consent](#) from Historic England if your project affects one.

Find out if you have a [schedule monument in your churchyards](#)

Bat licence

All bats are [protected](#) under the law. You might need to contact Natural England to ask about getting a licence before you do any work to your church.

Find out more [bats in churches](#)

Tree preservation orders (TPO)

A TPO protects specific trees, groups of trees, or woodland. They are made by local planning authorities.

You need their permission and a faculty before you fell protected trees or perform tree surgery.

This also applies if your church is in a conservation area.

Find out more about [taking care of your trees](#)

Sites of special scientific interests (SSSI)

Sites of special scientific interests are areas protected under the law to conserve their wildlife or geology.

Some churchyards are SSSIs. There are certain things you can't do in them. Each SSSI has different rules and you will need to get permission from Natural England.

[Find out if your churchyard is an SSSI](#)

When to consult with statutory consultees or national amenity societies

Your DAC will tell you if you need to send your project ideas to these organisations for comment:

- [Church Buildings Council](#)
- [Historic England](#)
- [Local planning authority](#)
- [The Ancient Monuments Society](#)
- [The Council for British Archaeology](#)
- [The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings](#)
- [The Georgian Group](#)
- [The Victorian Society](#)
- [The Twentieth Century Society](#)

A good time to contact them is when you've drawn up early plans.

It's good to know what each society thinks is important about your building, because you can adapt your plans accordingly. Leaving this conversation until the end could delay your project and cost you more money.

[Find out more about working with amenity societies](#)

Case studies

- [Case study: St Michael Aylsham](#) (327.18 KB)

Next steps

To make your vision become a reality you need to start thinking about:

- [Developing a structure](#) to manage the project in the short, medium and long-term
- The [long-term future](#) of your project's activities
- [Developing your project](#) ideas a little more
- Making sure you [keep people informed](#)

Want more help?



[New work in historic places of worship](#)



[Consulting the Church Buildings Council](#)

[Find out the types of projects the CBC wants to know about](#)



Wildlife in your churchyard



local wildlife

Before applying for permissions

Find out [what your diocese will want to know](#) about your project

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