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Over the centuries, each generation has renewed and added to the rich inheritance of furnishings for liturgy, devotion, mission and remembrance in our church buildings. From time to time, individual items may go out of use and others take their place.

We have a careful process for dealing with items which are no longer needed for church life.

## Download our guidance

- [Fonts](#) (267.52 KB)
- [Redundant organs](#) (241.87 KB)
- [Seating](#) (566.67 KB)
- [Disposals and Loans](#) (317.57 KB)



**Remember:** This process of renewal and change must be carefully managed to make sure that the needs of the present generation are served with proper respect to the faith and contribution of past generations.

## Do you need permission?

The permanent or long-term removal of an item from a church is called a disposal.

In the majority of cases a disposal will need faculty.

In your application, include:

- A statement of significance which describes the significance of the item and assesses the harm that will arise from its disposal.
- A statement of needs setting out why you no longer need the item and how disposing of it will benefit mission and worship.

The disposal of historic, archaeological or artistic items will harm the significance of the church.

You need to show how the need for mission and the benefits for worship outweigh that harm.

## What are your options?

Decisions on disposals follow a basic principle:

Moveable items do not belong to the Parochial Church Council. They belong to the parishioners at large. And the churchwardens act as custodians on their behalf.

When assessing your application, the chancellor will consider the following options:

#### **Keeping the church’s property intact**

The default position is to keep as much of the church’s property as possible. Any option other than this will need to be justified by making a case for disposal, assessing the significance of the item, its association with the parish, and any potential benefits of disposal.

#### **Giving the item to another parish**

If you’ve made a case for disposal, then the preference is for you to give the item to another parish (where appropriate).

It will continue in shared use and church ownership. And this will limit the impact on its significance.

#### **Loaning the item to your diocesan treasury or a museum**

The chancellor can choose this option for items of particular interest, especially those which would benefit from specialist care.

#### **Selling the item**

For very important items, there is a general presumption against sale.

This means that it is up to you to make a strong case if you wish to sell something. The more valuable or significant the item, the higher the bar is set.

For a “treasure” you need to show that you face a financial emergency.

And even then, the preference is for you to sell it to an institution, which will keep the item in this country and provide public access to it, rather than an open market sale.

The need for money to fund another part of maintaining or developing the church is not considered a justification for sale.

[Find out more on disposals.](#)

## **Types of furnishings**

#### **Fonts**

Find out more about fonts and the factors you should consider if you want to replace your [church’s historic font](#)

#### **Organs**

Find out more about organs. See especially the guidance on [redundant organs](#)

#### **Bells**

Find out more about [historic Bells and bell frames](#)

#### **Seating**

Find out more about [historic seating](#) and how to assess its significance. Our guidance also covers the factors you should consider if you want to replace any of your church’s historic seating.

**Remember:** A proposal to dispose any item of significance needs to be supported by a [statement of significance](#) and needs.

Include a willingness to record the item to a suitable standard and deposit the record in an archive as well as your inventory and terrier. This will provide some mitigation of the harm to its significance.

## How to dispose of your furnishings

**Once you have your permission for disposal, you can look for a home for your item in your diocese:**

Contact your [diocesan furnishings officer](#)

**You can advertise more widely to all dioceses and other interested bodies:**

Advertise on the central contents register. This is a list maintained by the Church Commissioners and is updated every three months. It includes details of specialist groups which can help find suitable homes for some types of item (e.g. bells, organs, stained glass). [Contact the Church Commissioners](#) to advertise on the register (select the Enquiry Topic of Church Property and land)

## Our role in the process

The Church Buildings Council advises parishes and dioceses on proposed disposals.

We give advice on a case by case basis for items of special interest.

It is mandatory for the chancellor to consult us about the disposal of items under [Rule 9.6](#). If there has been early consultation with us it can satisfy these requirements.

[Find out more](#)

Also of interest



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