

The [Church Buildings Council](#) seeks to support dioceses in working with parishes and other stakeholders where the future of a church building is being considered to help them make informed decisions about their future, including any changes which might be made to improve their sustainability as buildings for mission and community service and outreach. This might include physical changes to the building or new forms of governance, partnership and management.

This might mean carrying on as before with support and advice, or it could include adopting new partnerships or uses complementary to worship, perhaps within a new Model such as [Festival Church](#). It might also mean closure as a place of worship, when consultation has shown that all other options are exhausted and this is the right way forward



## What Is An Options Appraisal?

The first step in this process is considering all the possibilities, which we call the **options appraisal** process. The Church Buildings Council (CBC) offer a conversation with diocesan staff, the Archdeacon and any other parties concerning the factors which have led the parish to consider the future of the building (or exceptionally, by special request from the diocese and our agreement, a group of churches) as a functioning place of worship.

To initiate this process, please contact Keri Dearmer using the "Initiate an options appraisal process" selection.

- Such an early conversation should enable a suitable and effective way forward to be discerned, which could be as below, ranked from light touch to full statutory process, with escalating levels of CBC involvement;
- To take forward an agreed plan of action with the church, with no further CBC involvement
- To take forward a plan of action with CBC officer advice
- In some cases where it is felt to be justified, convene a formal meeting of all stakeholders (normally including the relevant amenity societies and Historic England) to discuss the way forward, with delegations from the diocese and CBC
- Following the above and by agreement with the diocese, the CBC may compile a formal Options Appraisal Report\* which explores the outcomes of this meeting and suggests one or more ways forward. This is a resource-intensive process, which is discretionary and will be rare
- If the above steps are not successful or realistic and another way forward is not obvious, to compile a Church Buildings Report as set out in Section 21, subsection 6 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, which may lead to formal closure as a place of worship, although other outcomes are possible.

An Options Appraisal Report is similar in content to a Church Buildings Report, but has no statutory status, that means it can be confidential to the diocese and parish and other stakeholders, as required. No outcome is assumed.

The appraisal helps churches or groups of churches facing particular challenges where there is no desire for closure to consider constructive ways forward, and offers an opportunity to think about the potential of a particular church and to explore complementary uses in addition to worship.

Should no way forward be found through the options appraisal process and the PCC petitions for consideration of closure, the report can easily be converted into a statutory Church Buildings Report as required by the Measure, so there is no double handling and the legal process can begin with no delay, with the submission of the report to the CBC at one of its regular meetings.

# Also of interest

## Think outside the box

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## Develop a community project

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## Church Buildings Report

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[We give access to groups with a formal interest in historic churches](#)

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