



This guidance note will help you consider the relevant questions if you are considering a new pipe organ for your church

Pipe organs

Cost and reliability

Overall costs not only include first cost but also depend on reliability and longevity. There are many examples of well built pipe organs that have been in regular use for many years where the cost of installation and maintenance are modest for the use made of the organ.

Initial costs

The cost of a pipe organ is almost directly proportional to size.

Long-term costs

Any pipe organ with reed pipes needs tuning, usually twice a year for a typical parish church. Pipe organs with mechanical action need cleaning and minor repairs at intervals of 25-40 years, depending on usage and environmental conditions, at a cost which may be about 5 per

cent of that of a new instrument.

In the long run, pipes and casework will last almost indefinitely and the action of a good mechanical-action pipe organ lasts seventy to one hundred and fifty years.

Making a Choice

After assessing the potential of your existing organ in relation to your needs, taking into account not only musical but liturgical and financial aspects, how is a decision to be made?

Any proposal for restoration or replacement of the organ in an Anglican church will require a faculty, granted by the Chancellor of the Diocese. The Chancellor's decision will be taken after consideration of the advice of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), with its Organs Adviser.

It is important to take qualified and independent advice. In addition to the organ adviser to your DAC you can get help from the Association of Independent Organ Advisers (www.aioa.org.uk).

An adviser from the AIOA will be able to assist you with contractual arrangements, managing an organ project and the selection of an organ builder, matters that go beyond the role of the DAC.

Be clear what weight you are putting on the musical, visual, liturgical and financial factors. If there is a case for change, one factor only is not sufficient reason. A decision based only on musical considerations, ignoring all others, could be as mistaken as one taken purely on financial grounds.



In conclusion, your choice will lie between:

1. Restoration and repair of an existing instrument without fundamental change. This is almost always preferred when an organ is of historic value.
2. Adaptation and either enlargement or reduction in size of an existing instrument, perhaps in conjunction with removal to a new position.
3. The acquisition and installation of an existing pipe-organ.
(<http://www.ibo.co.uk/IBO2005/services/redundant/redundantMain.asp>)
4. Commissioning a new pipe organ.

