Early stage DAC site visit – what to expect

When is an early stage visit carried out?

A pre-application visit by a DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) case officer is usually the first step in planning a faculty application for more major works, for example the introduction of a toilet or servery, creation of gathering space, or even the construction of an extension.

This type of visit is an opportunity for your DAC case officer to get to know the church building and the project team to better understand how they can help you. They will ask about how the parish currently use the building, how they would like to use the building, and what changes the parish think are needed in order to achieve this.

The incumbent should always attend this visit, together with the key members of the parish project team.

As the pre-app visit takes place at the very early stages of a project you are not expected to have any documentation yet, such as Statements of Significance and Need or drawings, but if you do have early drafts of these documents it is very helpful to send them to the case officer to review before they visit.

Who will attend the visit?

Usually the DAC case officer will attend alone but occasionally they may be joined by an Archdeacon, Associate Archdeacon or Parish Development Advisor as we try to think of buildings, and their places within parishes, in a holistic way.

The case officer who attends this visit does not have any power to make decisions about whether permission will be granted for the scheme and cannot confirm how the DAC Committee or amenity societies will react to the proposals. However, they will use their professional experience to give an indication of how these bodies may react to an application, and to guide you to the next steps in developing the project.

What will happen after the visit?

We aim to make the case officer who attends the visit your DAC point of contact throughout the project, from inception to completion. They will provide advice on what the next steps will be to progressing your application. Usually this will include information on how to produce the Statements of Significance and Need as well as other pointers relevant to your scheme.