

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC)

Report Delegation Visit of 3rd March 2025

Parish: Bathford St Swithun

Accessibility project

From the DAC

Archdeacon Charlie Peer
Simon Baker DAC Chair
Jacqui Carreira-White DAC Secretary
Mark Lidster – Church Buildings Adviser
Dr Allan Brodie - Historic England Nominee
Joanne Finneran – DAC Officer

From the parish

Revd Lauretta Wilson – Vicar
Michael Gilbert – Treasurer and Petitioner
George Chedburn – Parish Church Architect

Purpose of Visit

This was an informal visit requested by the parish to seek direction from DAC to discuss the scope of planned works and provide guidance to the parish on the faculty process. Discussions were initiated on the document marked as Addendum “A”, attached.

Options discussed

The Church Architect presented a number of plans of which option 6 was decided to be the most favourable – the plan is attached as Addendum “B”. The DAC attending delegates are content that the parish have worked through an options appraisal with their architect.

The items identified in Addendum A were discussed to understand the order of priority to meet the missional needs of the parish.

A number of different areas of the church had been considered for possible development.

However, the following have been identified as priorities:

WC, Kitchen, Office, Organ pipe and boxing removal and ramped access to North door

- WC is currently too small and inaccessible for some. The WC is to remain where located to use current water sewerage pipes and electric services. One additional toilet to be installed to be fully accessible.
- Kitchen to be improved - regularly used for church youth cooking activities – missional imperative.
- Office space to be moved to the base of tower to be more accessible. Ground floor suggested rather than the upper floor.
- West window on upper floor not visible. Organ pipes currently not in use and block view of the West Window – removal will give visibility to the window and allow light in.

The DAC would be grateful to receive an application on the OFS as soon as the parish is ready under the guidance of the architect.

Summary of advice

General Advice

- A single faculty application to include new ramp to North door, new accessible toilet, improved kitchen, removal of organ pipes and moving office to base of tower.
- Branding as “accessibility project” creates a coherent narrative and may assist with statement of need and stakeholder engagement.
- DAC team will share link to CBC Conservation grant funding.
- Timescales: The parish may wish to bear in mind the grant that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme is not guaranteed to continue beyond March 2026.

Preparation and presentation of the Statement of significance and statements of need:

- The statement of significance is a largely historical document about what the parish has inherited and what the parish intends to alter.
- A statement of significance, once prepared, acts as a point of reference and can be re-used for future faculty applications with minimal alteration.
- The parish to prepare an inventory of items- particularly the numerous monuments within the West end which will require permissions to remove and relocate- this should be set out in the Statement of Significance.
- The statement of Need should emphasise the missional case – numbers of attendees at services, frequency of services and activities/events – present data/figures if possible. Pictures can be effective.

Install new toilet facilities/removal and installation of existing kitchen/installation of new office/removal of organ pipes & case/ramped access

- New office- the parish is encouraged to consider the ground floor as the office space for accessibility. This should be fully explained in the statement of need.
- Base of belltower most important to set out clearly. The Parish is encouraged to state the significance of the pipes as balanced against the significance of the west window which is now going to be exposed with a wooden framed glass screen- similar to work already done at east side window.
- The room at the foot of the tower currently provides useful storage for various bulky and unsightly items. Storage needs to be considered as part of the plan.

Possible future work: Pews / Aisles / Flooring / Walkways

- DAC team to look into previous faculties/TMRO in respect of pews removed. This may provide an insight into possible comments by amenity societies to aid in the direction of the removal of remaining pews.
- These items will be considered and further explored at a later stage.
- It is suggested that the application to be submitted will make reference to further development but will not make specific reference to pew removal.
- Font significance – One option might be to move the font to its original position (West end). This will make it more of a focal point
- For any future pew removal application, advice was to weigh up benefit of pews over chairs for capacity. Storage of chairs to be considered.

The Ven. Charlie Peer
Archdeacon of Bath
Date 6 March 2025