Statement of Need Guidance

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is intended for any PCC or project group considering development works to their church building. Examples of such projects include:

- installation of WC and/or kitchen facilities
- creation of meeting space
- changes to seating and/or internal layouts
- liturgical reordering
- provision of community services and/or space shared with other organisations eg village hall, foodbank, children's services, partnering with another denomination etc, where this will require changes to the church building.
- National Lottery Heritage Fund supported schemes, or projects seeking grant support from similar bodies
- applicants to the Diocesan Development Fund

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to help you develop a strong, evidence-based vision and brief for your project, formally expressed in a Statement of Need.

When is a Statement of Need necessary?

You must produce a Statement of Need for any project that includes changes to a historic church building that may potentially affect its character. You may also find it useful to write a Statement of Need if you are thinking about a particularly complex project for a modern church building. Though it is not a formal requirement in these cases, it will be a useful document for your project team, your designers, and your funders.

What is the purpose of the Statement of Need?

A well-written Statement of Need serves several important functions for your building project. As a requirement of the faculty process it is an opportunity for you to explain your proposals, as well as the reasoning and the vision behind them. Beyond this it can be a vital document in making your case to potential funders, and to your local community. When produced in the early stages of your project it is a great way of providing your architect or design professional with a clear brief for their work.

Most importantly, the process of researching and writing your statement of need will help you shape a better project. It will help you understand the communities served by your church, express your vision for your mission and ministry to them, and explore how the church building can serve that mission into the future.

How detailed should my Statement of Need be?

Generally speaking, the larger and more complex your project, the more detailed your Statement of Need should be. Remember that the document will be used by lots of people who do not necessarily know anything about your church or your parish, so include a sufficient level of detail for them to clearly understand what you are doing, any why.

What form should my Statement of Need take?

We recommend that you produce your Statement of Need within a word document, which you can add images and tables to. There is no standard form to complete, but the sections may follow the template of parts laid out in this guidance note. You can then upload this document to the Online Faculty System.

Who can help me?

Your **inspecting architect** can assist you with identifying repair priorities, where these are to be included in the scope of the project. Your **Parish Development Adviser** can help the PCC/project group explore the vision for the project and how it links with mission planning. The diocesan **Church Buildings Team** can help you scope the feasibility of your project in the early stages, advise you on permissions and any relevant changes to the legal status of the building (for example becoming a festival church), and together with your archdeacon can arrange for permission for temporary experimental reordering through an **Archdeacon's Licence**. Professional **heritage consultants** can facilitate, review and edit your statement, or even draft it for you, but the PCC or project group will still need to be at the heart of the process so that the final document is an accurate reflection of your needs.

Who should be involved?

Researching and producing the statement of need for a successful development project is a collaborative process, which the PCC, incumbent and (if applicable) project team should be at the heart of. Delegate tasks to members of that team as appropriate. Remember that to be sustainable the project vision should accurately reflect not just the needs of the church leadership, but also of the congregation and of the wider community. Depending on the scale and subject of the project you are encouraged to consult:

Consultee	What kind of feedback?	Consultation method
Representatives of specialist church groups eg. youth work, choir, bell ringers, maintenance team	Specific requirements in key areas eg. access, storage, AV, facilities etc Current and future usage of the building - when, how often, how many people, and for how long?	Meeting User survey Open response via email/letter
Current users - representatives of other groups or bodies using the church building	Comment on why they use the building, what works for them, what restricts them? Specific requirements in key areas eg. access, storage, AV, facilities etc Current and future usage of the building - when, how often, how many people, and for how long?	Meeting User survey Open response via email/letter
Potential users - local businesses, schools, or service providers	Comment on why they do not use the building, and whether your project would change that If they would use the building in the future ask for specific requirements and usage data as for current users (above)	Open response via e-mail/letter; follow up with user survey where applicable
Congregation	What do they value about the building? What frustrates them? What one thing would they change?	Tailored user survey
Community (individuals)	Attendance/use (current and potential) and qualitative data as for congregation, above.	Tailored survey - share in community newsletter/social media groups/local venues etc
Other churches in the benefice	What existing facilities and future plans do other churches in the benefice have? How can you work together to prevent duplication and ensure your visions are complementary?	Meeting with follow up correspondence

Make it as easy as you can for people to respond to your consultation. Short online surveys using services such as [SurveyMonkey](#) or [Google Forms](#) are a good way of capturing a large number of responses and automatically collating them. Complement this with a paper option if you can - for those in your community who do not use the internet, and to allow you to collect on the spot responses at events. Think carefully about your survey design - remember that you need to find out not just what restricts people's use and enjoyment of the building, but also what they most love about it. This is so that your plans can preserve and enhance the things that make your church special to its community. You can find detailed guidance on community engagement in the Diocese of Hereford "Crossing the Threshold" [toolkit](#), and a sample community survey [here](#). When you write up your statement, don't forget to include a sample questionnaire showing what questions you asked, and a basic breakdown of the results.

Helpful information can also be found here
to https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-near-you/church-development-tool

> *Remember that to understand and prove need, you will require both **quantitative data** (things that can be measured or counted – such as usage patterns, attendance numbers, even the quinquennial inspection report) and **qualitative data** (opinions and experiences).*

Part one: Your church and parish today

In this information gathering stage, take your time working section by section to build a detailed picture of your local community, your current worship and mission activities, and your use of the church building. This will provide the evidence base for your project to build on. Presenting this information clearly in the statement of need will help permission givers and potential funders better understand your area, and show them that your project is responding to specific local challenges.

1. Population and demographics

In this section you can use data available online to build a simple statistical picture of your local community. Answer the following:

- What geographical area do you serve, and how large is the population?
- Are there any particularly large demographic groups, such as retired people, or young families?
- Are there particularly deprived areas?
- Are any large residential developments planned?

You will find the data you need in the following resources:

- Your parish profile
- A Church Near You for a map of the parish
- the Government NOMIS system for labour market and neighbourhood statistics including age, health, religion, ethnicity, employment, education, and poverty profiles.
- The Thriving Places Index
- Deprivation statistics by parish through ArcGIS and the Church Urban Fund lookup tool (for parishes of more than 500 people)
- your parish/benefice **mission plan**
- **local plans** produced by your parish/district/county council
- Parish dashboard

Present this information in the statement of need as clearly and briefly as possible. Focus on the headline figures rather than presenting all the details in the text, and use charts to give further information.

2. Worship and prayer

The purpose of this section is to summarise the existing use of the church building for worship activities:

- How many services are there a week? What are they, and what areas of the church building do they use?
- What festival services do you have?
- When is the church building open for private prayer, and is a specific area of the church kept aside for this?
- Do you host worship for other bodies (such as schools), or share your church with any other denominations? If so, summarise their use of the building here.
- Do you arrange off-site worship activities? If so, what are they, and where are they?
- What is attendance like at each of these events/worship activities?
- What is your electoral roll?

You can find your parish attendance and mission statistics at Parish Dashboard

For churches with many services or complicated service patterns it is best to present most of this information in a table, for example:

Service/worship event	Details	Frequency	Attendance	Location
Holy Communion	All-ages communion service using nave altar	Weekly	16 adults 6 children	Nave
Family service	Informal service aimed at younger children; includes recorded music	Monthly	23 adults 12 children	Nave and chancel
Songs of Praise	Lay-led service of hymns, with organist, followed by refreshments	Monthly	18 adults 8 children	Whole church

3. Community/non-worship uses of church building

The purpose of this section is to summarise the existing use of the church building for activities other than worship. Examples might include concerts, hosting school visits for RE, history, or music lessons, hosting U3A lectures, or offering meeting space to a local counselling service. Include the following information for each different event:

- Who organises each event (is it the PCC, or an external body)?
- How often does it take place?
- How many people attend?
- What areas of the church/existing facilities does it use?
- Are these existing uses limited by the current building? If so, how?

In this section it is also helpful to include information on casual visits to your church. Your visitor's book will provide an indication how many people visit on average every month, but if your project is likely to have some focus on increasing visitor numbers you will need more accurate figures. A range of footfall or people counters are available to purchase online; for most purposes a simple infrared version will suffice and can be temporarily installed by fixing to a porch noticeboard. Remember to contact **the Church Buildings Team** for advice if you need to mount the sensor to the fabric of the building itself.

If there is already extensive use of the church building for non-worship activities it is best to present the information in a table, for example:

Event	Organiser	Details	Frequency	Attendance	Location	Limited by building?
Lunchtime Sessions	Trumpton College	30 minute recital by students from local college	Weekly	c.30	Nave and chancel	No. of performers limited by space between choir stalls in chancel
Christmas Fair	PCC	Sale of Christmas trees and local crafts in aid of PCC funds and local charity	Annually	c.120	Whole church	Craft stalls limited to aisles due to fixed seating in nave
1-1 counselling	SeeSaw (charity)	Bereavement counselling sessions for children	2x90 minute sessions/ month	2 per session	North chapel	No

4. Condition of church building

For your project to be sustainable it must factor in the current condition of the church building, and any outstanding repair work. Repair and development works go hand in hand: a building in good repair will be easier to heat, more energy efficient, more comfortable for its users, and cost less to maintain in the long term. Many of the larger funders are particularly supportive of joint repair and development projects for these reasons.

In this section summarise your last quinquennial inspection:

- When was the last quinquennial inspection?
- What repairs were identified as necessary within the next five years?
- What is the estimated cost of these repairs?

If you do not have a current quinquennial inspection (i.e. one conducted no more than five years ago) you must commission one before pressing forward with any development plans requiring building works. If you are approaching the five year inspection cycle, it may be appropriate to bring forward the inspection so that you have up to date information to use as part of your planning process. Contact the **Church Buildings Team** for further advice on all matters relating to quinquennial inspections.

This is also the appropriate place to include summaries of any specialist reports covering work to be included in the project, such as:

- your access audit
- your energy audit - there is a diocesan subsidised scheme for these
- conservator's reports on artefacts such as monuments, wall paintings, or furnishings
- condition reports on bells or organs

5. Finance

Look back at the last five years of parish accounts. Is the church meeting its running costs or are the accounts in deficit? What are the chief elements of expenditure? Is the church building itself generating any income, for example through lettable spaces? What is the treasurer's forecast for the next 2-5 years? You can get this information from your Parish Return for Finance dashboard, where it is automatically collated into a one page summary with graphs.

If you are collating this information from parish sources rather than the dashboard, present it in a simple table, such as that below. Either way, highlight any relevant trends or discrepancies in the accompanying text.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (forecast)
Income						
Regular giving						
Fees						
Fundraising						
Legacy/ donation						
Grants						
Other						
TOTAL INCOME						
Expenditure						
Parish share						
Running costs						
Building works						
Other						
TOTAL EXPENDITURE						
Surplus/(deficit)						
Savings						

6. Stewardship

Each project should consider its impact on the energy consumption of the church and how it can help you meet the goal of Net Zero by 2030. More information can be found at the Diocese of Oxford webpage here.

7. Existing facilities

The purpose of this section is to give a brief overview of existing facilities at the church. It will also give you the opportunity to highlight where these are in poor condition or otherwise not fit for purpose. Cover as many of the following as you have:

- Heating
- Lighting
- Audio-visual system and/or hearing loop
- Flexible areas
- WC facilities
- Servery/kitchen facilities
- Meeting rooms
- Storage

For each item say what it is, where it is, when it was installed, and what condition it is in. For example:

Heating: The church is heated by 30 electric under-pew heaters, installed in 1998. Four have been disconnected after being condemned in our annual electrical inspection. There are no other heaters besides these.

WC: There is a single WC in the vestry, installed c.2001 and connected to a trench arch system. The cubicle is small and does not meet standards for disabled use. It is rarely used as the vestry has to be kept locked.

Remember that you can include photographs to help illustrate your points.

8. Other facilities in the area

In this final section of part one, briefly outline what other community facilities exist locally. Examples might include:

- Community facilities such as halls, arts centres and performance spaces
- Commercial premises providing community spaces such as pubs, cafes, village shops.
- Other (Anglican) churches in the parish and/or benefice
- Churches of other denominations

For each place, give basic information including:

- How many people can be accommodated
- What hospitality facilities are available
- Whether there is disabled access
- How heavily used it is
- In the case of other Anglican churches in the benefice, how their work links in with that of your own church, and how it will do so in the future

For example:

Trumpton Memorial Hall (c.400m north-west of church)

Trumpton Memorial Hall is situated on the village recreation ground and acts largely as a pavilion for the sports taking place there. The hall seats 100 people and it is popular for parties and social functions. It has at least one activity booked on every day of the week, including the WI, flower club, youth groups, history club, pilates and other fitness activities. It is currently undergoing building work including extending the large car park and adding a meeting room.

Christ Church, Camberwick Green

The small, Grade II listed Christ Church in Camberwick Green is sited in the centre of the village and is open daily for visitors and quiet prayer. It was built by G E Street in the 1850s, and is the only other Anglican church in the benefice. There is level access, modern lighting and sound systems including a hearing loop, and seating for 60. Due to the nationally important interior, which includes pews designed by the architect, there is no possibility of major internal alterations. This makes Christ Church the natural venue for more traditional formal worship in the benefice, complementing the more informal, family oriented worship at our church. Churchgoers happily travel across the benefice to attend the church that best suits their preferences, with the result that Christ Church is well supported and continues to be viable. The electoral roll is 21.

Part two: Vision

You want to ensure that your project results in a building that serves its purpose effectively. Being clear about your vision for the project will enable this.

What is a vision?

A vision can be defined as a description of what we seek to become. Setting a vision is a discernment process which includes prayer, listening and creative thinking.

Why do so many projects miss out this step?

It's easier not to do it. Many of us love a clear implementable plan (an "answer") and building an extension or reordering a church interior can be reduced to just such a plan. Including our communities in God's work of love, truth and grace is a privilege and a joy but working out just how best to do this can be hard, and there is no single simple "answer" that we will find in a product, a programme or a project. Setting a vision for the future and for your project is hard, but worth it: it will act as the backbone of your statement of needs.

What's so good about having a vision?

1. It acts as a plumb line

A clear understanding and communication of your vision for the project acts as a guide against which to make decisions, aligning the project with what you have prayerfully discerned is most important.

Example: A church clarifies its vision for a building project (an extension to house a café): to further its mission of sharing Jesus' love with those not attracted to traditional church the project will increase the number of quality relationships through providing community space.

The extension was originally planned for the back of the church: an easier, cheaper build. However, in the light of the vision, the other side of the church building was chosen as it was adjacent to a well-used thoroughfare to the school: a more suitable location from which people could regularly "drop in" to the café.

2. A shared vision draws people in; it motivates and mobilises

The adventurer John Graham says: "A vision inspires action. A powerful vision pulls in ideas, people and other resources. It creates the energy and will to make change happen. It inspires individuals and organizations to commit, to persist and to give their best. A vision helps keep organizations and groups focused and together, especially with complex projects and in stressful times."

In contrast, Proverbs 29 suggests that "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (29:18, KJV) and although the definition of "vision" here may be different, the point probably stands!

Setting a vision gives an opportunity for greater ownership and participation leading to a greater chance of sustainability and success.

Setting a vision: some principles

- It's God's mission! Remembering this leads to thankfulness, and a people motivated by hope rather than anxiety; abundance rather than scarcity. It encourages you to start where you are, with what God has given you, trusting in Him and having confidence in His gospel. It leads to being generous about sharing your vision with those within your congregations and wider community.

- "Your church is not a 'problem' that needs 'fixing'". Bishop Steven used these words a little while ago, and they formed a starting point for [a resource for churches](#) to explore and clarify their vision in a positive, appreciative way.

- The vision for your projects flows from your church's overall vision which, in turn, sits within or draws from wider visions. Start with what has already been prayerfully discerned for your church (e.g. in an existing vision statement or current parish profile) and for the diocese [(our Common Vision)](#) and build the vision for your project from there.

1. Setting a vision

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams: "Mission, it's been said, *is finding out what God is doing and joining in"*.

Vision flows from a good understanding of:

- Identity (ask: Who are we?)
- Purpose or Mission (What are we called to do?)
- Context (Who are we called to love and serve?)

A vision setting process involves:

- Listening to God
- Listening to each-other
- Listening widely
- Noticing what God might be doing
- Discerning priorities

The process should result in a vision statement (or a "statement of intent") that describes these priorities and a description of how your project reflects those priorities as well as the difference it will make in addressing them.

There is more than one way to approach this, and there are resources to help:

Your [Parish Development Advisers](#) (PDAs) will gladly speak to you about and support you in setting a vision.

One of the resources that the PDAs will point you to is the [Parish Planning Tool](#) (PPT), which guides you through a process over a day or number of sessions, starting with thankfulness about what is good ("the best of what is") and then encouraging you to think creatively into the future and "the best of what might be".

As listening forms such an important element of the process, those involved will find [Dwelling in the Word](#) a valuable tool.

Longer term (year long or more) supported discernment processes include [Partnership for Missional Church](#), and programmes run by [Lead Academy,](#) amongst others.

2. Expressing your vision

When setting out your vision in the statement of need, try to be as brief and as focussed as you can. It helps to have a headline - one or two sentences expressing the core of your vision - accompanied by a short paragraph explaining it in greater detail. Include a brief summary of what processes you went through to arrive at the vision, and who (beyond the PCC) you worked with.

Part three: Needs

Now you can focus on the church building itself. The purpose of this part of the statement of need is to explain in detail what the building must provide in order to resource your mission. Whilst it is natural to focus on the shortcomings of the building here, do not forget to acknowledge what must stay the same about it too, so that these elements can be protected. Be as specific as possible, and make sure that you are expressing need rather than listing solutions. An example of a need is "a flexible space seating 10 people that can be separately heated from the main church, for meetings and prayer groups". The solution to that need might be a meeting room created at the west end, or the conversion of a chapel space, or something else entirely. Leave specifying the solutions to your architect or design professional, and focus instead on giving them as clear and precise a brief as possible. Include numbers of people to be seated/accommodated and storage requirements wherever you can, and make no assumptions that the reader already understands the way you use the building.

Sections in this part of the document will depend on your church and your particular context, but might include the following:

1. Liturgy and worship

Needs particularly related to the primary use of the building for worship - from formal services to private prayer.

2. Accessibility

Needs related to inclusion and fair access for all - this could be anything from increased light levels at entrances to assist the visually impaired, to the creation of space amongst the main seating for wheelchair users, to the provision of dyslexia-friendly visitor resources.

3. Children and families

Needs related to the use of the building by younger people and families, for example spaces to nurse or take an unsettled child, baby changing, equipment storage, child appropriate seating etc.

4. Stewardship and sustainability

Needs related to the call to reduce our use of natural resources, and to safeguard creation. Examples typically include replacement of inefficient electrical or heating installations, but there are many other possibilities, ranging from churchyard biodiversity to putting strict environmental standards on any building works - ensuring that old materials are recycled, that new materials are local and sustainably sourced, and that new work is low carbon by design. This is also the place to include any needs related to the financial sustainability of the building.

5. Community use

Needs related to the use of the church building for activities other than worship. Examples might be the need for seating and AV provision to host lectures or concerts, or for a small space for a post office counter, or for shelving and comfortable seats for a small-scale community library. Don't forget to include any storage requirements associated with these functions.

In all cases make sure you can back up your stated needs with objective evidence - link back to this in the relevant sections in part one of your document.

Here is an example of how these needs can be stated:

Trumpton St Mary
Children and Families

As explained in our vision statement, we consider it vital for the mission of our church that we form meaningful and long-lasting connections with the growing number of young families in the town (see "Demographics", above), many of whom are recent arrivals. We intend to do this in a number of different ways. We have trialled a family service for three months, supported by an Archdeacon's Licence to temporarily remove three pews, making a small space for prams. This has proved popular and shows that widening the range of worship on offer is a good way to connect with young families.

Expanding our youth groups and encouraging extension of the existing use of the church building by local schools will provide further opportunities to engage young people. All of these require our church building to be a space that is both welcoming and functional for parents with children. For our youngest children, parents need to be able to change and feed them without having to leave the church site. For primary aged children, we need appropriately sized furniture, toys and resources, and space to carry out activities. For secondary aged children, we need a space that can be used for youth activities.

The PCC have identified the following needs in relation to children and families:

- *Space to park prams*
- *Separately heated meeting space with AV and WiFi*
- *WC and changing facilities*
- *Servery with ability to heat bottles*
- *New heating system with zoned controls*
- *Appropriately sized furniture, possibly including highchairs*
- *Storage for toys, resources and furniture*
- *Seating for school services and concerts for up to 650 people*
- *Breakout space parents with younger children*

*Once you have completed your statement of need up to and including part three, it should be supplied as a brief to your **architect** or design professional along with the **statement of significance**. Both documents should also be sent to the **Church Buildings Team** for comment and for advice. A DAC officer may arrange to visit the church to discuss the project with you and your architect, and will offer guidance on the specifics of the design and the permission process. Once this guidance has been received, work with your architect to refine the plans. There is guidance on managing this stage of your project available from the Church Buildings Council, at the Church Building Projects website.*

Part four: The proposals

Once you have appointed an architect and a preferred design option has been chosen by the PCC, you can finalise the statement of need. In part four the statement of need gives a brief overview of the chosen proposals, and should refer to plans and specifications produced by your architect rather than trying to list every single item of work proposed. For example:

Trumpton St Mary
Proposals

The following proposals have been drafted by Mary Bloggs (Spire Architects):
   1. *Removal of unused choir vestry from base of tower*
   2. *Installation of WC in base of tower served by trench arch system*
   3. *Removal of three pews and installation of servery at west end of north aisle*
   4. *Disposal of chapel chairs and creation of flexible space and store cupboard in south aisle*
   5. *Purchase of 20 Howe stacking chairs*

For full details see Drawings SK001, SK002 and SK007 together with the draft specification dated February 2021.

Part five: Justification

This final part of the statement of need is the place for you to explain:

- the process by which you arrived at the current design, and why other options were discarded
- why you cannot meet your needs without making these changes
- what impact your proposals will have on the historic, architectural, archaeological, or community significance of the church building
- what steps you will take to mitigate that impact where necessary

You can also include any community consultation responses to the proposals.

Though generally more permissive than secular listed building consents, the **Ecclesiastical Exemption legislation** that governs the faculty process has a strong presumption in favour of maintaining church buildings as they currently are. When the Chancellor (or for some case, your Archdeacon) considers your faculty application, he or she has to consider:

- If your proposals would harm characteristics, features, or artefacts, that make your church a building of special architectural or historic interest

- How serious any harm would be
- How clear and convincing the justification for the proposals is
- If the public benefit of your proposals would outweigh any harm they cause to the building

These public benefits include things like liturgical freedom, pastoral well-being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship.

It is therefore vital that you make a robust and objective assessment in this section, weighing the impact of your proposals against their benefits, and backing up that assessment with evidence. Understating the real impact of the proposals will not give you a better chance of gaining permission - it will bring you into conflict with permission givers, and with statutory consultees such as Historic England. It will also hamper the design of any mitigation measures. So be honest and open, and do not forget to describe any changes already made to the plans to reduce their impact, for example following early stage or pre-application advice from the DAC. Refer to relevant sections of the statement of significance to illustrate your points.

Finally, remember that this part of the Statement of Need is a chance for you to state your case not only to permission givers, but also to potential funders. The Statement of Need is the most important document you will produce for your building project: take your time over it to get it right, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Examples: What have others done?

Large projects - Wokingham All Saints have recently obtained a faculty permission for internal reordering and an extension. The Statement of Need for the project can be viewed here.

Small projects - Peasemore St Barnabas are in the process of obtaining faculty permission for the introduction of a toilet and kitchenette and removal of a small number of pews. The Statement of Need for the project can be viewed here

August 2022.