

ST EDMUNDSBURY & IPSWICH DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

Volunteer Role profile and person specification

Chair of the Diocese Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC)

PURPOSE

We're looking for a new Chair of the DAC, the main source of expertise on the care and development of church buildings. **Please note that this is a voluntary role.** The DAC is the body that advises the Chancellor, the judge of the Diocese, on granting faculties – the legal permission to carry out repair and development work. Under the terms of the Ecclesiastical Exemption, the Committee also discharges listed building consent. The post involves responsibility for some of the most beautiful and historic places in East Anglia.

The ecclesiastical heritage of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich forms part of what is reputedly, along with that of the Diocese of Norwich, the greatest concentration of medieval churches north of the Alps. Out of a total of 476 functioning churches, 95.6% are nationally listed, with 50.8% listed at Grade I and 37.2% listed at Grade II*. Among them are nationally and, indeed, internationally celebrated buildings, such as Holy Trinity in Blythburgh, SS Peter and Paul in Lavenham and Holy Trinity in Long Melford. Suffolk is notable not only for the scale and architectural quality of its church buildings, but also for the large number of outstanding historical artworks and artefacts within them, many of pre-Reformation date. Numerous churches are integral parts of exceptionally significant historic built environments, such as the wool towns of Hadleigh and Kersey, while others benefit from pristine natural settings, including two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

As Chair of the DAC, you will lead discussions touching on all the opportunities and challenges facing the communities for whom these buildings are living places of worship. Repairs to historic fabric feature prominently, but so do the works to render ancient churches fit for purpose in the 21st century – installing toilets and kitchens, providing level access for disabled people, renewing heating and lighting to make them comfortable and further General Synod's goal of making the Church of England carbon net-neutral by 2030. Casework encompasses all areas of parish life, from multi-million-pound reordering and extension projects to commemorative plaques.

An active interest, though not necessarily professional-level expertise in historic buildings is essential, but so also is a solid understanding of the operation and mission of the Church, especially at parish level and especially in rural areas. A good chair will be a pragmatist, capable of working through a busy agenda efficiently, using the Committee's expertise effectively and reaching clear decisions while upholding accountability. You will have a sharp eye for crucial points of detail though also be able to keep them in proportion. You will be able to distinguish quickly between open and shut cases and those where there may be more to investigate than meets the eye. This will sometimes include chairing discussions at site visits

with architects, representatives of parishes and clergy. Casework often involves matters with delicate pastoral sensitivities, so tact and good humour are essential. In particular, you will be able to identify situations where discharging the Committee's remit involves striking a balance between the conservation of historic fabric (as well as the legislation and positions of special interest groups that have a bearing on this) and addressing the needs of parishes.

The Chair is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop after consultation with the Bishop's Council, the Chancellor and the Church Buildings Council (CBC). The term of office of the Chair is six years, i.e. equivalent to two terms of Diocesan synod. The current term began in September 2024 and runs through to June 2030. The Chair reports to the Diocesan Bishop and works closely with the Archdeacons, Registrar, Chancellor and DAC Secretary.

The Chair is an ex officio member of Diocesan Synod and represents the DAC there. The DAC consists of no fewer than 12 members in addition to the Chair and three Archdeacons. It currently meets six times a year at the St Nicholas Centre in Ipswich and usually has a social day in the summer during when members tour churches and inspect completed development projects. The Chair of the DAC attends some of the rounds of site visits in each of the three Archdeaconries held between meetings of the full committee, as well as the annual conference organised by the CBC for DAC Chairs and Secretaries.

Interviews will be held in the autumn at a date to be advised in due course. We hope that the successful candidate will be able to take up the role in early 2026.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

| ESSENTIAL | DESIRABLE |
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| Qualifications | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full driving licence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postgraduate degree in conservation or related discipline (e.g. heritage management); Undergraduate degree in history / history of art and architecture / archaeology or other relevant subject; Membership of relevant professional body (e.g. IHBC); |
| Knowledge and experience | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven experience of chairing (a) committee(s); An understanding of the Church of England's legal and governance processes, including the faculty system An understanding of the care and conservation of ancient buildings; Understanding of the place of the Church of England in wider society as well as an appreciation of the challenges and opportunities faced by clergy and Parochial Church Councils; Familiarity with the funding bodies who grant-aid work to churches, their policies and decision-making criteria; Familiarity with Suffolk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-hand experience as a PCC officer; Good general understanding of the development of English ecclesiastical architecture and how church buildings have been used for changing patterns of worship during the course of their history; Experience of managing listed buildings; Experience of work in the heritage sector. |
| Skills and abilities / aptitudes | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good leadership skills; A first-rate communicator – confident, personable and concise, able to put across technical matters clearly and comprehensibly to non-specialists; Good analytical skills and a grasp of detail, able to grasp the salient points of complex proposals; Able to steer wide-ranging discussions to a clear conclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to read and interpret technical drawings, specifications and schedules of work. |
| Work-related personal qualities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment to the mission of the Church of England and the missional | |

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| <p>priorities of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to understand importance of role in a larger structure and its interdependence with other departments and related organisations; • Good problem-solver, able to distinguish between matters requiring short-term fixes and long-term aims; • Able quickly to form effective working relationships with people from a wide range of different backgrounds; • A diplomat, able to address and balance conflicting views and aims. | |
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GENERAL INFORMATION

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| Expenses | Voluntary, all reasonable expenses paid |
| Commitment | 10am-1pm five times a year (schedule of DAC full committee meetings for 2026 TBC), to be available for site visits and other formal engagements in between as and when required, and also contactable by phone and e-mail at all reasonable times during the working week. |
| Location of work | Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ, and the Dioceses of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich |

The DBF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All volunteers are expected to share this commitment and the appointment is subject to a satisfactory DBS check. Volunteers are expected to work in accordance with Diocese's Volunteer Policy and the successful candidate will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement.

For an informal conversation please contact Edmund Harris by email on edmund.harris@cofesuffolk.org to arrange a suitable time.

To apply: please send a CV and covering letter explaining why you want to take up the role and what you feel you could bring to it, marked 'Confidential Application', to HR@cofesuffolk.org or by post to Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ.

Closing date for applications: Friday 16th January 2026