



INFORMATION ON APPLYING FOR A FACULTY

1 **Faculties Only Affect Churches – Not Halls nor Vicarages**

As a rule, nothing should be obtained for use in a church until the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain and Wardens have been consulted. Such a rule will prevent duplication and the receipt of items in bad taste or not fitting from a church point of view.

If a purchase is contemplated, the request for a faculty is to be submitted to the Diocesan Manager and approved before the actual purchase is made (refer Section 2 below).

No faculty will be granted unless it first has the approval (by means of a resolution) of the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain; the Warden and the Vestry. If the purchase, alteration, erection or disposal is of a large or costly nature, or involves a departure from the present layout of the church, the parishioners must be advised. The Vestry resolution that a faculty is being applied for should be notified to the Parish on the following Sunday. If the expenditure exceeds \$20,000 (or 20% of parishioner giving in the preceding year, whichever is the lesser) the matter must be agreed to by a resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting of parishioners.

Every application for permission to place in (or remove from) any church any furniture, monuments, ornaments, vessels, etc., shall be accompanied by:

- A drawing or photograph and full description
- A description of the location intended for each article
- The exact wording of any inscription
- An explanation of how the cost will be met
- If it is intended to remove an article from a church, there should be a description of the article and the manner of its disposal (refer page 2 of application form)

Parishes need to allow sufficient time for the application for the faculty to be considered. The Diocesan Manager needs time to examine the nature of the proposal, to take advice and to discuss key issues with appropriate people.

2 **The Application Process**

The regulations relating to Faculties are in the Diocesan Manual of Canons.

- Applications for a faculty are to be submitted to the Diocesan Manager
- Application forms are available from the Diocesan Office
- If necessary the Diocesan Manager will take advice from the Regional Archdeacon and the Diocesan Property Manager
- The Regional Archdeacon and/or the Diocesan Manager/Diocesan Property Manager will discuss the faculty application with the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain and Wardens, particularly the changes being sought, the cost and the funding arrangements

- If necessary the Regional Archdeacon is asked to seek advice from a consultant(s) before recommending to the Diocesan Manager that the faculty application proceed
- The Diocesan Manager will forward the signed faculty recommendation to the Bishop who will approve the application
- The faculty will be issued by the Diocesan Office
- A register of faculties is kept at the Diocesan Office and is published annually in the Diocesan Year Book

3 Consultants for Faculties

The Diocesan Property Manager may be consulted for a list of people with appropriate expertise who are available as consultants. Archdeacons and Parishes may consult these people. In some situations, such as items involving ecclesiastical design, it would be appropriate for the Parish to seek advice early in the process.

Archdeacons may establish their own list of consultants, but the people included need to be approved by the Bishop, on the advice of the Diocesan Property Manager.

4 When is a Faculty Required?

Faculties are required for the addition to (or the removal from) any church of 'church furniture'. No faculty is needed for necessary repairs or maintenance. In general, 'church furniture' means everything inside the bare walls of a church building (including the glass in the windows) from the altar itself down to the hymn board.

Faculties are required for all furniture, including altars and tables, altar rails, fonts, pews, chairs (at least those chairs which are meant to stay permanently in the building), special windows, pulpits, lecterns, chalices, patens, wafer-boxes, aumbrey, special lights, crosses and crucifixes, memorials, signs (including banners which are regarded as permanent, but excluding banners which are intended only for a season or short time), screens intended to be of a permanent fixture, handrails or ramps required for safety purposes, pictures, carvings, statues, organs, pianos (but not musical instruments which are removed outside of the building), hymn-boards, and books which are meant to be regarded as a permanent part of the church. Although replacing a carpet is more a matter of maintenance, this too should be a decision taken by the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain, Wardens and Vestry, and a faculty sought.

Faculties are not usually required for things of a transitory nature, including robes and vestments which are intended to be in the church only for a short time.

Faculties which may have an effect on the 'structure' of the building will be referred to the Diocesan Property Manager. These include stained glass windows, installation of sprinkler systems, sound systems, etc. Faculties only affect churches (not halls, and vicarages). Matters relating to halls and vicarages should be referred directly to the Diocesan Property Manager.

5 Why is a Faculty Required?

Some people think faculties are purely restrictive. In actual fact, the purpose of faculties is to safeguard the individual, the Parish, the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain, and the Diocese.

If anyone says: 'Why shouldn't we do as we like?' the answer must be that the church of the Parish is not just the private property of individuals or of the local Vestry. The church of the Parish simply happens for the time being to be in their trust and care. The Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain has the responsibility of explaining that each Parish is part of the wider group: the Diocese, and is subject to the rulings of its Bishop and Diocesan Synod. In each Diocese there is a process for examining the applications made for faculties.

The purpose of a faculty is to keep in mind and safeguard the rights of:

- **The Individual**

When a person donates a gift to the church, he or she has the right to expect that it will be appreciated, looked after, and preserved for the purpose for which it was given. Sadly there have been instances where gifts have been discarded after a period of time without consultation with the original donor. A faculty prevents such things happening.

- **The Parish**

Clergy and Vestries come and go, but in general the parishioners remain. When a change is proposed towards a church in which they worship (and probably their ancestors worshipped before them), parishioners are guarded by the protection which the faculty application process affords – that of having the advice of independent specialists who are, as a rule, outside the Parish. When gifts are donated to the church, parishioners have the protection of a faculty to ensure that the gift is in keeping and are appropriate, and that it will remain within the church and not be discarded upon some future occasion at the whim of a clergyperson or layperson.

- **The Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain**

A faculty is as much a protection for the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain as it is for the Parish. Occasionally gifts proposed for a church are inappropriate – a beautifully carved seat is of no real use unless it is reasonably comfortable to sit on. A highly ornamental altar piece, however beautiful, is fundamentally wrong if it is too small for convenient use. Every piece of furniture should be of a size that is suitable for its purpose and be in proportion to the size of other articles of furniture in the same building. It can be difficult for a clergyperson to decline (however politely) a gift which someone intends to have placed within a church. If the gift is not in good taste, or is in any other way inappropriate, the faculty application process removes the decision-making responsibility from the Vicar, Priest in Charge or Chaplain.

- **The Diocese**

While not in any way wishing to have a blanket uniformity within the Diocese, there are certain minimum requirements which the Diocese would wish to see maintained in churches (just as there are certain minimum requirements in vicarages). The requirements are always for the long term good of the Parish in question, but they also assist the Diocese in that there is a minimum standard of quality within the Diocesan family.