

Statement of Need

This sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of the parish cannot be met without making changes to the Church building and the reasons why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the Church in its worship and mission.

A Statement of Need should be a document which serves both the parish and those who are involved in the faculty process. It should be a tool for the parish, enabling the PCC (which should endorse and support the document) to focus its vision and agree on what it seeks to achieve. For others, such as the DAC, Church Buildings Council and English Heritage it serves to provide easily accessible information to help assess the scheme which is being proposed for a faculty.

In short, Statements of Significance and Need are the parish's opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise the proposals to all interested parties. Don't forget that some people on the DAC or other body will not have the opportunity to visit the Church and will need to base opinions on the information you provide in these supporting Statements.

Bearing this in mind, you are strongly encouraged to ensure that the Statements are factual, informative, clear and concise. Try not to be emotive or over-dramatic. The facts of the situation should speak clearly for themselves.

The following note sets out a way of presenting a Statement of Need in order to cover all the relevant information. You may need to adapt this to suit the particular needs of your parish.

General Information

Your Statement of Need should provide information about the parish, congregation and community and help interested parties understand what activities are already going on within the building (and on other related sites, such as the Church hall, if appropriate). The amount of information provided here is suggested as a guide and you may wish to tailor the extent of the detail according to the scale and impact of the needs the parish is facing.

The following questions are a guide to the sort of information that this section of the Statement might include. YOU WILL NOT NEED ALL OF THEM FOR SMALLER APPLICATIONS!

- How many people live in the parish/village/town
- How many people are there on the electoral roll
- How many people attend services on average.
- What services do you regularly hold throughout the week / month? i.e. 8am, Communion average of 10 attendees. Monthly family service average of 60 adults and 20 children
- What is the general make up of the congregation? i.e. predominantly elderly/wide variety and growing numbers of pre-school children.
- If there is a Sunday school or creche give details of what age-groups meet together and what the average attendance is.
- Is the Church normally left open during daylight hours?
- What other community facilities are available in the local area?
- Does the parish have a Church hall or other buildings? Give details of size, facilities, distance from Church and state of repair.
- When was the last Quinquennial Inspection Report? Are there any major outstanding issues that were highlighted in the QIR?

- Explain briefly how the project will be financed. i.e. grants, existing funds, bequest, fundraising.
- Has there been changes in the parish or community that are relevant to how the needs of the parish have changed or which have prompted the proposals now? For example a new vicar, introduction of music group, new development in the village bringing new families, worsening situation with Church hall, a bequest to spend?

The Specific Need

The next stage in the Statement is the opportunity to explain what the needs of the parish are now and also in the longer term. You can be quite blunt here; don't elaborate too much - a few bullet points should make your case clearly.

You may find it helpful to divide the needs up into areas such as:

- Facilities
- Space
- Access
- Liturgy
- Other

For example you could say:

- Facilities - We need one accessible toilet and the ability to serve refreshments.
- Space - We need a meeting room to accommodate up to 25 people sitting and 40 standing.
- Access - We need to provide a permanent route into the building which is accessible for wheelchairs.
- Liturgy - We need to make arrangements to use a nave altar.

If you have prepared a brief for your architect explaining what you want to achieve then you could include this for reference.

Explain why you consider meeting the need(s) outlined above is now necessary to assist the Church in its worship and mission.

Difficulties in meeting the need

The next stage is to explain why you cannot achieve what you have set out above without making any changes to the building. It can be helpful to include how you manage to meet those needs at the moment or if you are not able to. Be clear about whether users and activities are aspirational or more definite - you might be able to demonstrate particular groups that already exist and want to make use of the Church, but cannot because of the lack of loo/heating etc.

It may be appropriate to reference your Statement of Significance here also.

For example you could say

- Facilities - There is no toilet in the building and if people need to use one they have to use the Churchyard or the pub in the village (10 minutes walk). An existing Parent & Baby group would like to meet in the Church but cannot because there is no toilet.

- Space - The only separate space in the Church at the moment is the vestry, which is used for its original purpose. PCC meetings are held at the Vicarage.
- Access - There are two steps down from the porch to the Church. We have temporary ramps for occasions when wheelchair users attend services. The north door is not frequently used but has level access. The path to the north door is uneven and not suitable for wheelchairs.
- Liturgy - The pews in the nave are too far forward to position a nave altar satisfactorily. For family services we use a small table and position it on the chancel step.

The options

Most problems have more than one solution! But some solutions may be more expensive, or disruptive, or produce “side effects”; these solutions would be discarded in favour of a better solution. Be honest and don’t exaggerate. If there was a viable alternative but the PCC preferred this proposal then say so.

It will help the DAC, Chancellor, and others, as they consider your proposal, to see, written down, all the options you have looked at so that they can understand your reasoning. Sometimes the DAC may be able to think of an option which you hadn’t looked at, or may notice something you hadn’t spotted. It is for reasons like this that the DAC would prefer to be involved as early as possible so that DAC and Parish together work through the options.

The proposal

The next stage is to explain what it is that you are proposing in order to meet the needs that you set out above.

If the project is at an early stage then you can use simple amateur sketches or marked photos to illustrate ideas. Wherever possible include a complete floor plan of the Church as this greatly assists people in visualising the layout of the building.

If the project is large and you need multiple rooms/toilets then explain how you envisage the space being used. Explain which rooms will need to be used simultaneously. If it helps, include a chart or timetable of projected weekly use to illustrate what you are expecting.

If the project has a particular element of liturgical reordering it could be helpful to explain your expectations and what you want the result to achieve. The word flexible is often used but does not necessarily demonstrate what you are hoping for. Try and be more specific if you can. Use examples and explain how you would use a flexible space to relate to the needs you set out above.

Support and practicalities

Your project may provide a facility for wider users than the Church congregation. If so, explain here what research you have undertaken into possible users and explain why you believe the project to be viable. It may be useful, with larger projects to show evidence of a business plan. Evidence of support from users can also be shown here.

Will the project have an impact on the maintenance and upkeep of the Church building? If the project is likely to generate income then include this information here.