

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dear Churchwardens & Incumbents,

This comes with my greetings and prayers for 2026. It is good to be in touch to let you know, and provide you with some information, about an exciting project that the Diocesan Advisory Committee are planning to launch this year, with the generous support of Ecclesiastical Insurance.

After some months of planning and conversation, I am very pleased to say that the DAC are launching their Church Buildings Awards, offering us an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of so many (including yourselves) in caring for, preserving and serving the wonderful church buildings of our Diocese. This has been something that the DAC has hoped to do for a number of years, so we're grateful to be able to do this as we now look to the year ahead.

If your church has completed a significant project in the last ten years (since January 2016) then we would very much like to hear from you. This is not necessarily about the grandest or most expensive projects, though we would love to hear about those too. It could be an imaginative re-ordering that has enhanced your building, the introduction of toilet facilities or social space that has made a difference to your church community or an eco-project that has helped to reduce your carbon emissions and the cost of your energy.

We are looking for best practice, and to present awards, in the following areas:

- Missional Impact (to include interventions to the building that have allowed greater missional opportunities for the church)
- Building (to include reordering, new build, extension, insertion or intervention)
- Care and Conservation (to include repair/restoration of building fabric and fittings)
- Sustainability (to include towards net zero, re-use of materials and innovative solutions)
- Churchyard (to include imaginative use, re wilding, nature conservancy)
- Access and interpretation (to include access, inclusion, flexibility/multi use, interpretation, tourism)

Your project might fit into more than one category and that's fine, however you will only be able to receive an award in one category.

We are intending to reward winning entrants with a celebration event on the evening of Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Our Diocesan Chancellor, Adrian Isles will be joining us, as well as members of the DAC and other guests.

The closing date for entries is Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026, with the winners being notified by the end of July. We may ask to come and see your church, so as to give us chance to talk to you about your project. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Howard, our DAC Secretary, via [martin.howard@durham.anglican.org](mailto:martin.howard@durham.anglican.org) or 07586090996. I warmly encourage you to consider applying.

The DAC exists to serve the Diocese and our treasury of buildings and I hope that these Awards provide a further means for us to hear about, and rejoice in, the dutiful, diligent and imaginative ways you support the churches of our county, for the glory of God and the loving service of our communities.

Yours sincerely

Ven Nick Barker  
Chair of the DAC

Blessing our communities in Jesus' name

The Durham Diocesan Board of Finance is the Financial Executive of the Diocese of Durham of the Church of England, is registered in England (Company No 192018) under the Companies Act, is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a Charity registered under No 248287

