



---

**THE DIOCESE OF YORK**  
*Diocesan Advisory Committee*  
*for the Care of Churches*

---

Diocesan House  
Aviator Court  
Clifton Moor  
York YO30 4WJ

Tel: 01904 699523  
Fax: 01904 699510  
E-mail: phil.thomas@yorkdiocese.org

***Philip Thomas***  
***Church Buildings Officer***  
***& Secretary to the DAC***

## **Tele-communications installations in churches: A note on suggested procedure**

This advice note has been developed from discussions with the DAC, various officers of the Diocese of York and several incumbents and telecommunications companies. It is likely that more information will be available from the Council for the Care of Churches in 2002, including a suggested national agreement and model licence. At present several operators are pursuing Parishes, but their approaches are purely speculative. Please do not feel that you must rush into reaching an agreement with a particular operator on the basis of an informal approach and the potential income it might generate, or from fear that they might lose interest. Their interest is likely to continue and may even increase over the coming years.

1. Sometimes these installations arouse considerable local interest, and may have significant pastoral and community implications. It would be sensible to consult the Archdeacon and to inform the DAC office of your plans at a very early stage, because the Parish is likely to find itself dealing with issues which have already been explored and addressed elsewhere.
2. The church architect should be involved as soon as there is anything for him or her to comment on, because the DAC will be looking for an installation and detailed specification that is generally acceptable within their architectural, archaeological, artistic and historic parameters.
3. The following sequence of events might be appropriate:
  - (i) Informal discussion with the appropriate Archdeacon.
  - (ii) Initial site meeting of incumbent, churchwardens and telecommunications company.
  - (iii) PCC meeting(s) to discuss the result and decide upon their strategy with the local community.
  - (iv) Informal, non-committal discussions with local people/institutions to canvass their opinions about such installations, and to explore any impact or benefits a particular scheme might have.
  - (v) A 'technical review' meeting at which the Company reveal their scheme and drawings, probably with the church architect in attendance. If necessary, the DAC Secretary could be consulted at this stage with regard to any potential impact on, or significant installation within, the fabric of the building.
  - (vi) Formal advice on the scheme from the church architect to the PCC and advisory discussions with the DAC Secretary and/or advisers.
  - (vii) More formal briefing and information sessions with the Parish and local community
  - (viii) Pro-forma application, or full petition to the DAC, supported by the architect.

4. As a general rule, the Chancellor will expect there to be no visible equipment. Everything should be entirely within the building or well hidden from view behind parapets or within one flagpole etc. Small control boxes may be allowed outside the building, but they will need to be sensitively sited, constructed and screened.
5. As a matter of course, the DAC will require all cable runs and fixings to be determined in close consultation with the church architect. If the installation is to have a new or independent power supply, the appropriate cabling and any archaeological implications will have to be addressed in the petition.
6. The only form of agreement between the Parish and the telecommunications company considered acceptable by the Church is a licence, not a lease. The draft licence and fees (including those of the architect, which should be met by the telecommunications company) will have to be approved by the Chancellor as part of the petition for faculty.
7. The Diocesan Communications Officer (responsible for press and public relations) should be consulted and copied into correspondence about all aspects of the scheme likely to affect the public, or inviting any response from them, so that any potential difficulties and inaccurate myths can be sensitively dispelled from the start.

**Phil Thomas**  
**Church Buildings Officer**  
**& Secretary to the DAC**  
i.2002

---

### **Up-dated procedure in a letter to Norton Saint Peter, xi 2015**

Dear Andrew and David,

Requests for installations of this kind were once quite common in this diocese, especially when mobile phone operating licences first became available, but we now have very few enquiries of this kind - partly, I suspect, because the population density in our part of Yorkshire is quite low (so will make less money for the provider) and partly because one installation in a rural tower can serve a very large area (unlike in cities where the signal may be blocked by the density of tall buildings), so old installations are up-graded rather than new ones being introduced. I think we have about twenty or so towers with transmitters in.

The DAC and Chancellor have no in-principle objection to installations of this kind – indeed, they can make a useful contribution to parish resources and be seen as the church serving its local population – as long as they are well conceived and installed and all the legal agreements are water-tight. Given its great height and location, your church tower would seem to be more suitable than many.

Usually the best way forward is to invite the telecoms company to design an outline installation in consultation with your Inspecting Architect (this is very important, and at the faculty stage it will be made clear that his/her fees are to be paid by the telecoms provider). It should include information about the location of all transmitters, the locations of any equipment cabinets (and how they are to be concealed if external), the precise methods of fixing ALL equipment, the power source, the runs

and fixings of all cabling, any necessary modifications to the building/replacement belfry louvres etc. This scheme should be submitted initially FOR THE ADVICE of the DAC.

At the same time you should take advice from the Diocesan Registrar (01904 623487 [Caroline.Mockford@lf-dt.com](mailto:Caroline.Mockford@lf-dt.com)) about the form and content of the contract between the PCC and the telecoms provider. This contract is an essential element of obtaining permission, and the Registry has advised on similar contracts in other churches in the diocese.

You may also need to contact the local authority and enquire whether any civil permissions (like Planning Permission) are required for new telecoms installations, but the Registry may also be able to help you with appropriate advice about this.

Once you have reached this stage, the DAC and the Registry will be a good position to advise you on the necessary faculty, which will need to include words (broadly) to the following effect 'to licence the church to be used for a telecommunications installation, to permit the PCC to enter into a licence agreement with a telecommunications provider, and to introduce an appropriate installation into the church tower, together with any necessary modifications to the fabric.....'

David's input will be essential (as it usually is.....).

I hope any or all of this is useful, and will give you some idea of how to move forward.

Best wishes,

Phil