



Diocesan Advisory Committee

Guidance on the Use of Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

With an increase in the use of drones or UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) to assist church building inspections or to film or photograph events such as weddings, there is a need to ensure that visitors to our churches are not exposed to any harm or any unauthorised invasion of privacy and that the church building itself is protected from physical damage.

To that end the DAC recommends that any drone or UAV operations in or around our church buildings and churchyards should comply with the following:

- 1 The drone/UAV operator must obtain prior written approval for the flight from the minister, churchwarden(s) or other nominated church officer.
- 2 All operators must hold the following:
 - 2.1 A current and valid Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) 'Permission for Commercial Operations' (PfCO) certificate
 - 2.2 Evidence of valid insurance cover, both Drone Insurance and Public Liability Insurance (minimum cover £1million)
 - 2.3 A risk assessment for the proposed flight
 - 2.4 A method statement outlining the equipment to be used
 - 2.5 A flight plan outlining when and where flying is proposed

Copies of these should be provided to the church BEFORE the flight and should be retained in the church log book.

- 3 All drone/UAV operations must be conducted strictly in accordance with CAA legislation and regulations.
- 4 Site assessment – the drone/UAV operator should carry out a site assessment with the minister, churchwarden(s) or other nominated church officer before the flight.

- 5 Data Protection – Using a drone to record images of other people without their consent could constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act or the CCTV Code of Practice

- 6 Building Inspections
 - 6.1. Quinquennial Inspections
 - 6.1.1 The use of drones in Quinquennial Inspections is at the discretion of the church’s Inspecting Architect but should be supplementary to, and not in place of, a physical inspection of the building.
 - 6.1.2 The Inspecting Architect should be present on site to direct the operator during the flight.
 - 6.1.3 It should be made clear in any inspection report which part or parts of the building were inspected solely by drone and not by the Architect him/herself.

 - 6.2 Other inspections
 - 6.2.1 The use of drones in any other building inspections is at the discretion of the minister, churchwarden(s) or other nominated church officer
 - 6.2.2 The minister, churchwarden(s) or other nominated church officer should be present on site during the flight.

- 7 Indoor use - The CAA regulations make no distinction between flights made indoors or in the open; the whole safety criteria continue to apply. Certain hazard factors are mitigated by the fact that the drone/UAV is flying in an enclosed environment and access to the building can be controlled. Persons within the building, and who may be exposed to a hazard by the flight, should meet the criteria for ‘persons under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft’ or else have safety precautions taken on their account (e.g. safety netting, tethered drone, etc).