**Cathedral and Major Church Projects Support Panel: what to expect**

**Guidance for cathedrals, major churches and panel members**

This guidance has been produced for the launch of the Cathedral and Major Church Projects Support Panel (CMCPSP), to help inform panel members and the churches and cathedrals using their advice about their roles, drawing on experience with the first phase of the project. It covers the following:

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# What panel members need from churches and cathedrals

We have found that panel member involvement works best when there is a **clear request**, agreed and supported by all relevant people at the church or cathedral, with a **lead person** identified and responsible for taking the contact with the panel member forward. Who this person might be will depend on the resources available at the church or cathedral and could be either lay or ordained, but should be someone well integrated into the daily running of the building. In all cases the incumbent or dean should be fully aware of and in support of the application.

It is helpful to put together an **information pack** for the panel member. This should give the context and background to the request, and might consist of material such as the Statement of Significance for the church/cathedral, the latest QI report, a Conservation Management Plan, and any other relevant information such as a draft Statement of Need or prior contacts with the DAC/CFCE or Local Authority.

# Applying for panel assistance

**Major churches** should contact Nick Chapple, the Major Churches Coordinator for the panel project, for an informal discussion: [nick.chapple@englishcathedrals.co.uk](mailto:nick.chapple@englishcathedrals.co.uk) or 07758442553.

**Cathedrals** should contact Anne Locke [anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk](mailto:anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk) about their requests, as previously. Most cathedrals have already engaged with the project during its first phase, before it was extended to major churches.

# Approaching panel members

Having received a request, the coordinators Nick Chapple (major churches) and Anne Locke (cathedrals) will **identify potential panel members** to help, and see if they are available and willing to take the request on. If so, we will give an outline of their experience to the requestor, inviting them to get in touch with the member(s). We would expect the church or cathedral to make at least initial contact **within two weeks** so that the panel member(s) know that their offer has been received, and for panel members to respond within a similar timescale.

Although in the first phase of the project we received some requests for a **full list** of panel members so that cathedrals could make their own approaches, we decided this was unfeasible as it risked some members becoming overloaded. A list of their specialisms is at [Annex A](#_Specialisms_currently_represented).

# The first contact

We strongly advise **an initial ‘getting to know you’ meeting**, either in person or through a video link, in order to build relationships and for the panel member(s) to understand the context before they become involved in reviewing specific documents or giving detailed advice. Where it is a panel member’s first assignment Anne or Nick will aim to accompany the visit or participate in the video call, and/or to pair the member up with another more experienced member.

# What panel members can and can’t do

The panel’s normal role will be to provide advice to cathedrals and major churches in the **earliest stages of considering complex projects**. In most instances, engagement with the panel will come before formal engagement with the DAC (for churches) or CFCE (for cathedrals). This is because it is not the panel’s role to help to design concrete proposals, but rather to give **‘Intelligent Client’** advice on the sorts of issues that need to be considered, and the additional expertise that may need to be sought, in order to develop proposals.

Typically panel members will provide additional support by giving churches and cathedrals access to professional expertise in a wide range of areas such as strategic planning, business review (of retail and catering operations, for example), the identification and initiation of projects, the preparation of project briefs, providing comment on feasibility studies and options appraisal, or support for preparing documents such as Visitor Engagement or Conservation Management Plans. Panel member involvement may take the form of engagement with key members of a project team either remotely or (COVID-19 restrictions permitting) face-to-face, a workshop(s), or one-to-one support.

Panel members will **not** give advice on the acceptability of proposals under Faculty Jurisdiction Rules or the Care of Cathedrals Measure, and it is expected that in many cases they will work prior to close DAC or CFCE/FAC involvement. A site visit or advice from the DAC/CBC or CFCE/FAC will usually mark the end of the panel’s involvement with the project development process. However, it is recognised that where churches or cathedrals are asked fundamentally to rethink aspects of their project they may benefit from continued engagement with the panel as part of this process. Panel member involvement will end by the time projects reach the detailed design stage.

# Can you get assistance with more than one project?

**In most cases it would be more efficient for a church or cathedral to make only one request to the panel**. This could consist of several strands resulting in several different panel members being brought in – there are often advantages in them working as a team. However we recognise that some requests will be about topics which are unrelated to each other so, resources permitting, we do not rule out making more than one request. Please approach Anne (cathedrals) or Nick (major churches) if you are at an early stage and would like some help developing your request.

# The panel members’ advice

The panel members advice **is between them and the requesting church/cathedral** and will not be copied to the project coordinators or passed to anyone else (e.g. the DAC, CFCE, local authority) without the permission of the requestor.

In some cases a church or cathedral will wish to use the panel’s advice in support of a permissions or grant application: they are free to do so, but bear in mind that members are not able to advise on the acceptability of proposals under Faculty Jurisdiction Rules or the Care of Cathedrals Measure (see [above](#_What_panel_members)).

The panel member may give a summary of their advice to the coordinators for activity monitoring purposes. This information will only be used for general evaluation of the scope and nature of the advice being offered by the panel.

# Acknowledging contributions and keeping in touch afterwards

**Panel members’ contribution as volunteers should always be recognised and their communications responded to promptly**. We have identified that cathedrals/churches and panel members would generally both like to **keep in touch** with each other once the initial contact is over. A number of panel members have said they'd like to have heard more about what happened after their involvement, and some cathedrals have come back saying they'd like to have gone back to their panel contact with further questions and information but weren't sure that was allowed. Please assume (unless your panel member tells you otherwise) that you are welcome to go back to them in future, and look for ways to keep them feeling involved, such as inclusion on a project newsletter mailing list or an invitation to an opening event or service.

# Queries and questions

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further queries before, during or after your involvement with the project.

# Reporting/evaluation

It will be important to report to the project funders on the volunteer time spent on the project and the value added by the panel members’ involvement. Panel members are asked to keep a note of the approximate time they spend on projects and to report that when submitting expense claims or completing an advice request, along with a few lines on how their assignment has gone. Churches and cathedrals using the panel will be asked to complete a short evaluation form.

# Coordinator contacts

Anne Locke, Cathedrals Coordinator  
[anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk](mailto:anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk)  
07908 472082

Nick Chapple, Major Churches Coordinator  
[nick.chapple@englishcathedrals.co.uk](mailto:nick.chapple@englishcathedrals.co.uk)  
01353 664 218

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Annex A

# Specialisms currently represented on the panel

Archaeology

Architect

Artist (commissioning etc)

Building conservation

Business development

Capital projects

Catering

Charity administration

Conservation architecture

Digital worship

Education

Engineering

Fundraising

Grant bid-writing, grant administration

Health and safety

Heritage interpretation

NLHF project applications and management

Historian

Historic landscape conservation

Horologist

Law

Mission, ministry (several panel members are ordained)

Project management

Property

Quantity surveying

Retail

Solicitor

Strategic planning

Stained glass

Stonemason

Tax specialist

Town centres and retail planning

Town planning

Visitor attractions management

Visitor engagement

Visitor services

Works management

Other specialisms may be brought in if there is demand.

**Annex B**

# Background to the panel project

In 2017, the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC) was awarded funding by the Allchurches Trust Ltd for the two-year Cathedral Projects Support Panel (CPSP) project. This has established a panel of volunteer experts to offer cathedrals free advice at the pre-project stage to encourage the delivery of high quality, cost effective and timely projects. To date more than 100 requests to the panel have been processed and, of the projects assisted, 21 have been major ones, usually involving a team of members and one or more visits. More recently some of the panel members have offered their services during the COVID-19 crisis to advise on issues such as fundraising, remote conferencing, strategic planning and the process of recovery for operations such as retail and catering.

The Church Commissioners agreed to fund the panel's work with cathedrals for a further phase, from April 2020 until the end of 2022, and the Allchurches Trust is funding its extension to selected major churches. The new phase is known as the **Cathedral and Major Church Projects Support Panel** (CMCPSP) and is expected to assist with around 100 major church projects, as well as remaining open to cathedrals. The project will include joint major church/cathedral workshops with panel members, and guidance on topics which have proved popular with users.

The AEC continues to administer the project, in partnership with the Major Churches Network. The project is managed by a **project board** representing the interests of AEC members, major churches and other stakeholders, and staffed by two part-time **project co-ordinators**. **Anne Locke** continues as Cathedrals Coordinator and **Nick Chapple**, formerly of English Heritage and now an independent heritage consultant, has joined the project as Major Churches Coordinator.

## The panel members

There are currently **63 panel members**, many of them recruited in autumn 2017 through a national recruitment exercise. Others have joined since, either following them volunteering their services or through targeted recruitment to fill areas of expertise under-represented on the panel. Some are recently retired, others are working but have some time available, and they have a wide range of specialisms (see Annex A). The project pays their expenses if they undertake visits or incur costs such as printing, but otherwise their involvement is unpaid. They are based across the country and we aim to find reasonably local members to assist, though this is not always possible.

## The cathedrals and major churches

Panel assistance is available to the **42 Church of England cathedrals in England**, plus a few others, such as St Germans in the Isle of Man, who are also represented by the [AEC](https://www.englishcathedrals.co.uk/cathedrals/).

From April 2020 it is also available to **major churches**, which often face similar challenges to cathedrals.

Under criteria recently developed by the Church of England with Historic England, a major church has all or most of the following characteristics:

• Physically very big (over 1000m2 footprint)  
• Grade I, II\* or (exceptionally) II listed  
• Exceptional significance and/or issues necessitating a conservation management plan  
• Have a role or roles beyond those of a typical parish church, and make a considerable civic, cultural and economic contribution to their communities.

You can read more about major churches and the Major Churches Network on the Church of England website [here](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/strategic-planning-church-buildings/major-parish-churches).