

East Anglian churches need particular care

⇒ **AS ONE OF** the two Anglican dioceses in East Anglia, and home to one of most historic cathedrals in the country, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich has a large number of historic churches within its remit. The diocese has consequently published guidance on its website on the repair and development of churches in the diocese.

The guidance states: "The majority of the churches in our diocese are medieval and these do not react well to modern building materials such as cement and emulsion paint. It is therefore important to use the correct materials and methods for a repair and ideally employ an architect or surveyor with relevant experience.

"Your architect or surveyor should produce a specification and schedule of works which describes the repair and details the materials to be used. The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) will want to see this. It is likely the archdeacon will be able to authorise the repair without the need for a faculty, but the paperwork will have to be seen by a DAC representative – a process which should take around four weeks."

On managing change, the guidance advises: "Churches do develop over time and they need to change to accommodate new needs or liturgical practice. However, PCCs need to make the case for such changes and this is done through the production of a Statement of Needs and a Statement of Significance.

"The DAC may wish to visit the church to discuss your plans in the context of the building. Draft Statements are useful tools



St Edmundsbury Cathedral

to prepare the DAC for the visit. The DAC may want other organisations to be part of the visit as they will have a say in allowing the works to proceed. Groups such as Historic England, the SPAB, the Victorian Society and the national Church Buildings Council won't attend a site visit until they have seen your Draft Statements." □

• *The secretary of the DAC at St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is James Halsall – one of the most experienced professionals supporting church buildings nationally. He is the author of *Caring for your Church Building*, an accessible, comprehensive book and an invaluable aid to getting the balance right between making buildings fit for mission and worship – as well as community use – while respecting their heritage.*

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Based in Bury St Edmunds, the firm was founded by Mike Rickards in 2012. Mike had a background in restoration prior to that and has built upon that experience to establish a reputation for undertaking projects others may shy away from – whether because of the material used, design, access or other site-specific challenges.

Said Mike: "Our extensive knowledge of local construction and the built environment, along with familiarity of the complexities of period property housing, means we can provide appropriate material applications for the delicate building fabric and unique build materials of East Anglia – whether these are timber frame, clay construction, hemp, flint or soft red brickwork."

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One of the company's notable projects in East Anglia was at the Grade I Listed St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds, where they undertook plaster repairs for Universal Stone, following relocation of the Suffolk Regiment memorials. □