

Monmouth DAC Guidance Note:

Floor Coverings

This note is aimed at parish considering introducing or replacing a floor coverings in their church.

Although medieval and Victorian churches may have a small area of carpet in association with an altar, carpets are essentially domestic. Their introduction into churches must be given very careful consideration if the internal character and acoustic of a church is not to be compromised. The Diocesan Advisory Committee will require a PCC to consider other forms of floor covering before agreeing to a new carpet being introduced into a church. It should be noted that it is rarely the case that the whole church needs to be carpeted and the DAC is very reluctant to allow such practice.

The DAC will pay particular attention to the choice of colour. This can often be a source of aesthetics and protracted debate. Large areas of plain colour, especially blue and red, should be avoided as they detract from the fabric and character of an ancient church. A muted, soft colour that takes its tone from the permanent fabric should be sought. The underlying principle is that carpet should never distract the eye from the historic fabric.

A faculty will be required whenever a carpet is either introduced or replaced. Advice Most churches do not have a damp proof course and are therefore subject to damp. The introduction of carpet will alter the balance between the fabric of the church and atmosphere. If damp cannot rise naturally because a carpet has been introduced it will travel to places where it can rise, such as non-carpeted areas or walls. This is the reason for the DACs concern when carpets are introduced. If the church has brasses, stone slabs and mediaeval tiles which carpets are going to cover then specialist protection will be required. When selecting a carpet, care must be taken to avoid carpets and underlay that are made with rubber, gel or other non-porous materials. If the carpet has to be fixed fixings must not damage the historic fabric or adversely affect the appearance of a floor when the carpet is removed. Further advice can be found at www.churchcare.co.uk Caring for your Church – floors and floor coverings (including carpets).

The Parish should consult with DAC Secretary at an early stage of a project – please contact the Secretary of the DAC to arrange a visit by members.