

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD**

**DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



**FOOTPATHS, ACCESS WAYS AND CAR PARKS**

**GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARISHES**

**Revised March 2013**

# **FOOTPATHS, ACCESS WAYS AND CAR PARKS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The importance of the visual aspect of paved areas cannot be overstated and the surface finish should be chosen after taking into consideration the location, setting and surroundings of the church buildings.
- 1.2 Church environments vary significantly depending upon whether the church is in a rural, urban or town centre setting. Additionally, churchyard and soft landscaped areas may require different treatment from those with largely paved surroundings.
- 1.3 Further factors to be kept in mind are the design, age and construction materials of the buildings.
- 1.4 There may be archaeological implications where excavation for the creating of paths, access ways or car parks is proposed. The DAC Archaeological Advisor will need to be consulted and will advise as appropriate.

## **2. CONSTRUCTION**

- 2.1 In considering the specification for construction and/or repair, account has to be taken of the type and degree of usage. The surface finish and depth of construction for light footpath usage will vary from that required for vehicle access or car parking, which again will vary with the amount of usage e.g. a car park used once or twice a week as against one used on a regular daily basis.
- 2.2 In all circumstances however the base foundation, whether for a flexible (e.g. crushed stone, hoggin etc.) or for a rigid concrete construction, should be of sufficient depth to sustain the loads imposed on the subsoil by the varying types of usage i.e. pedestrian or vehicular.
- 2.3 With existing surfaces the foundations should be effectively repaired before resurfacing, and reshaped and regarded as necessary.
- 2.4 In most cases paths can be cambered to be self draining, but there may be instances with large paved areas and car parks, where consideration may have to be given to piped drainage.
- 2.5 Depending on the condition of the areas to be surfaced and the type and degree of usage, a bituminous two course construction may be necessary

or, alternatively, the base course work may be limited to making good low and defective areas and for regrading in preparation for surfacing.

### 3. FINISHES

3.1 Colour rendition and texture of finishes is important viz :

- a) The surface dressing consists of a bituminous spray appropriate for the prepared base (see 2.5) which is lightly dressed with gravel or pea shingle and subsequently rolled into the surface.
- b) In certain circumstances a red bituminous top course such as “Red Macamit” which mellows with age and usage, could be acceptable.
- c) In townscape areas a black or red top finish may be acceptable.
- d) Concrete block paving and similar products are rarely compatible with historic environments and should be avoided. However, stone paving or other traditional surfaces are normally acceptable subject to the material proposed being in sympathy with the existing surroundings and buildings.

3.2 Consideration should be given also to the availability of local materials where appropriate (e.g. crushed shells in coastal situations).

3.3 Loose chippings **not** bound into a bituminous surface are **not** suitable for wheelchairs or the infirm.

3.4 When considering the area to be surfaced care should be taken to retain existing stone or brick thresholds to doors, porches and entrances and to ensure that the surfacing meets these levels neatly and avoids the collection of surface water.

### 4. EDGING

4.1 In cases where the footpath adjoins a grass or cultivated area, if an edging is required it should be of treated hardwood or metal and capable of supporting the construction and providing a satisfactory boundary to the adjoining area. Pre-cast concrete or brickwork edging is not normally acceptable.

4.2 Each location has to be considered on its own merits and the DAC is happy to give advice on the preferred treatments for individual circumstances.

## **5. WEEDS AND PLANTS**

- 5.1 Both tarmac and especially gravel paths can develop a growth of plants. In the early stages these are likely to be common weeds and could be killed by weed killers. However, care should be exercised when using weed killers on paths under or close to tree canopies as this may kill the tree whose roots will run just under the path.
- 5.2 Many churches will have paths that have been neglected for many years and so have a rich vegetation which should not be killed, or the path substantially repaired or replaced, without a survey of the plants first. On a number of churchyard paths in the Diocese rare mosses have been found and there is the possibility of protected species in these paths. Where such vegetation is growing alternative treatment may be appropriate.

## **6. GRASS PATHS**

- 6.1 Although hard paths will be used to reach the main entrances of the church, much of the churchyard will be accessed via grass paths. These will obviously be maintained by mowing. If the grass either side is allowed to grow long, keeping a very sharp and neat edge to the path maintains a cared-for look that many parishes desire.

## **7. REFERENCES**

- 7.1 For further information on access to church buildings for people with disabilities :

“Widening the Eye of the Needle” (3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2012) by John Penton (Church House Publishing), obtainable through the Diocesan Book Shop (Tel. No. 01245 294405).

## **POLICY**

1. The DAC will take into consideration the environmental impact of the colour, texture and materials to ensure harmony with the surroundings.
2. The DAC will expect consideration to be given to provision for disabled and wheelchair access.
3. Where archaeological implications are involved, such as excavation in churchyards or adjoining church buildings, the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser is to be consulted.
4. The DAC will expect all parishes when making Faculty applications to take into account the DAC's advice notes on environmental impact.
5. Where there is substantial plant and/or moss growth the DAC will expect a path to be botanically surveyed before old vegetation is destroyed.

**This is one of a series of guidelines published by the  
Diocesan Advisory Committee**

**Copies can be downloaded from the Diocesan website:**

**[www.chelmsford.anglican.org/parishes/dac/dac\\_notes](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/parishes/dac/dac_notes)**

**or can be obtained from the  
DAC Secretary at the address below**

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