



Diocese of Ripon & Leeds Diocesan Advisory Committee Guidelines

CARPETS

Carpets may unify the place where the liturgical assembly gathers, can reduce noise, and can contribute to a feeling of warmth and intimacy.

However, carpeting can adversely affect the acoustics of a church building and, where an unsuitable choice is made, can seriously detract from the interior as a place of prayer and worship.

When considering the carpeting of a church, or an area of the church, the following points need to be borne in mind.

- 1) Carpets can be an asset in a church, but too much carpet does not always enhance the look and feel of the building. Some areas are best left uncarpeted because the flooring is not suitable for a covering of carpet. Some areas will look better showing the stone, wood or tiled floor. Don't always assume that 'the more carpet the better'.
- 2) The carpet is not a feature in its own right, but a background on which the colour and movement of the liturgical action is set. Strong patterns and colours are therefore discouraged. Neutral colours are more appropriate than strong colours.
- 3) Durability and ease of cleaning are important considerations in selecting a suitable carpet, as churches will need carpets to look good for a number of years.
- 4) Where carpet is being used for the specific intention of people kneeling on it (for example at a communion rail) care should be taken to ensure that the type of carpet and its backing are sufficiently comfortable for kneeling.
- 5) Carpet tiles may appear to be an attractive proposition but seldom give satisfactory results.
- 6) Before laying carpet, the floor area in question should be tested for rising damp and the backing chosen accordingly. Rubber backed carpet and some other types of carpet can prevent the floor from breathing and create many ongoing and potentially expensive problems. Your inspecting architect's comments should be sought as to what kind of carpet backing is appropriate to the floor surface.
- 7) Carpet needs to be laid on clean, sound and level surfaces. The area to be carpeted should be carefully examined to assess what work needs to be done before the carpet is laid, and any work to level the floor should be included as part of the Faculty application.

- 8) An excellent advice booklet 'Church Floors and Floor Coverings' is available from Church House Publishing (ISBN 0715175637).
- 9) Some floor coverings, when involved in fire, may react to produce large volumes of heat and smoke, thereby presenting a hazard to the means of escape. Floor coverings should comply with British Standard 5287, and if in doubt, expert advice should be sought.
- 10) Make early contact with the DAC if your church is uncertain whether its choice of carpet will meet these guidelines.

This advice and information is given in good faith and is based on our understanding of the current law. The DAC cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any errors or omissions which may result in injury, loss or damage including consequential or further loss. It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that it complies with its statutory obligations