



## Flowchart on the Closure of a Church Property

1. Consult with the Churchwardens and then speak with the Bishop before any action is taken. Contact the Registry for information about the process.
2. Raise the matter and discuss at Parish Council. Give members a copy of this Flowchart.
3. Organise a congregational meeting in relation to the building concerned and seek a resolution supporting closure which would go to the Parish Council. The meeting should be advertised as widely as possible and be open to members of the public. The closure of church building especially in rural communities attracts a wide community interest.
4. If there is contention about the closure, request the Bishop or Registrar to consider a Public Meeting which they would attend to address any concerns and/or questions.
5. Take the congregational resolution to the Parish Council for formal adoption. Where there is no congregation left, the Parish Council can make the resolution. The resolution is sent to the Registrar to be tabled at Diocesan Executive. The Executive makes the final decision. The Executive in making the final decision will also consider the wider issues of mission and demographics.
6. An inventory of all fixtures, fittings and holy vessels should be made and a copy supplied to the Registry, normally through the Registrar. Diocesan and Parish records should be checked to see what items have Faculties. (A memorial plaque or inscription will often indicate if there is a faculty) The Faculties will need to be rescinded by the Bishop. **Nothing should be disposed of without consultation and permission of the Bishop/Registrar.** It should be noted that all items in a church building are legally owned by the diocese (even where donated) and can only be disposed of or relocated with diocesan permission. Ultimately the Diocesan Trustee's under law are responsible. Local members of the congregation and Parish Council can submit suggestions in relation to items. Normally items will not be returned to individuals. Items may be placed in the public domain such as in Public Halls, community Centres or with local historical societies.
7. The diocese will appoint an estate agent to handle the sale and the agent will then consult with the parish and the diocese about suitable dates, etc. The diocese will also obtain an independent valuation. Under Trust law property cannot be sold for less than 10% of the valuation.
8. The cost of selling and legal costs will be drawn from the proceeds of the sale. The balance will be kept in Trust for the parish less 10% which will be contributed to the Diocesan Ministry Trust. Parishes may draw down up to 85% of the interest each year for parish funds. The capital can only be applied to capital projects.
9. All enquiries and questions about this process should be first of all addressed to the Registrar.
10. A final service will be organised by the parish in consultation with the bishop at which the Notice of De-consecration will be read. This returns the building to secular use.
11. If there is a Memorial Garden involved in the closure special advice should be sought from the Diocese.
12. All legal work will be undertaken through the Diocesan solicitor.