

said. “You learn so much from the specialists and contractors, the architect and structural engineer, then I liaise with the PCC and we work out the next steps.

“Whenever I see some actual physical progress on any kind of building project, it’s very professionally rewarding. Both at St Peter and St Paul, and also at St Michael’s, Paulsgrove, I’ll be really excited to deliver a safe and effective building back to the local community.”

Another advantage of Holly’s involvement in this building project is that it is easier for her to liaise with our Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC). Our DAC, which consists of volunteer clergy, architects and buildings specialists from around the diocese advises the Chancellor of the diocese – the ultimate legal authority – on whether to grant permission for repairs and improvements to church buildings.

Churchwarden Margaret Chappell said: “I am incredibly grateful to Brandon and his parents for their efforts in preparing the calendar to support the extensive repairs to the tower. We are a small congregation who are mindful of our responsibilities to maintain our beautiful historical church building to ensure it continues to welcome the worshippers of future generations.

“And Holly has been amazing to work alongside. Her energy and expertise has enabled us to identify the work required, and to prioritise the order of the repairs. Her enthusiasm is infectious as she has gently guided our PCC, keeping everyone informed with reports and photographic evidence.

“The church – and especially the tower – are landmarks in Fareham, with many of the local community commenting with sadness that the bells are now silent and the clock no longer functioning. So we

Help with solar panels project

ADVICE from experts was one of the things that helped worshippers at St Jude’s, Southsea, to ensure solar panels were installed on the roof of their historic building.

And our Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) was involved in the delicate negotiations that has now seen 36 solar panels installed on its south roof.

They will ultimately produce 12,500kWh each year, preventing three tons of CO2 entering the atmosphere annually. It should also save more than £120,000 of energy costs for the church over the next 20 years.

The Eco Church team at St Jude’s initially sought advice from the DAC because the Victorian church is a grade II listed building. They needed to consult bodies

including Historic England, the Victorian Society and the city council’s planning department, as there could have been objections that halted the whole scheme.

And the Rev Neil Smart, who led that Eco Church team, said: “The chair of the DAC, Giles Chapman, was very helpful as we were starting this process.

“We are the first church to get permission from Historic England for solar panels to be installed, in view of a public highway in the city. And without the DAC involvement, this wouldn’t have happened.

“It’s so good for us at St Jude’s because it is future-proofing the building, making sure our energy costs are reduced – these panels will save us at least £300 a month in energy bills – and it’s great for the environment.

“Part of the church’s mission is to steward God’s great and awesome creation, and these panels show that the Church is playing its part in making that happen, as the Church of England works towards being net zero carbon by 2030.

“These panels are just one more step along that road. To see them finally here is such a joy.”

The Eco Church team at St Jude’s deliberately chose Meyer-Burger low-embedded-carbon solar panels, made in a factory where all power is from sustainable sources.

The silicon is from Norway, where it’s melted and processed using hydro-electricity. The company also has a 100 per cent

transparent supply chain and stringently avoid parts made in places where there may be forced labour.

Generous worshippers from the church and the local community contributed £54,000 towards the solar panels project, and the

remainder came from grant-giving bodies, including the Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England and the Benefact Trust.

The project will now be used to demonstrate to other churches what it is possible. St Jude’s aims to be net zero carbon by 2027.



The Rev Neil Smart, Eco Church champion Claire Beadnell and former vicar the Rev Adam Tams with the solar panels on the roof of St Jude’s, Southsea



The new Lady Chapel roof at St Michael and All Angels Church, Paulsgrove

will encourage them to become involved in our fund raising efforts – initially by buying a calendar!

“Raising the £300k for the essential repairs is a mammoth undertaking for our congregation,

but we are confident that with our commitment, and the enthusiastic support like Brandon has demonstrated, we will achieve our target.”

Meanwhile, work has also begun at St Michael’s Church, Paulsgrove, where Holly Reynolds has also been managing vital repairwork.

Our Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) visited in April to provide advice on proposals to re-roof the church’s Lady Chapel with a new steel product which is more cost-effective and less attractive to thieves.

That replacement work has now taken place, and further refurbishments to the interior of the Lady Chapel will be finished by December. The church will mark its 70th anniversary in 2026 and tackling issues relating to the building was thought to be key to its five-year vision to engage even more effectively with those who live locally.

The team who can help you

THIS is the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) – volunteers who advise on changes to our church buildings.

They include clergy, architects, buildings specialists, and some representatives of various heritage bodies. They advise the Chancellor on whether to grant permission for repairs or changes to church buildings.

This way of working means that churches are exempt from any local authority planning process for changes that don’t affect the external appearance of the building. It also means our parishes have expert help from those with experience of church buildings when it comes to projects.

David Langton, from Holy Cross, Binstead, is one example of a DAC member who can offer advice. He is a Chartered Builder



Members of the DAC ahead of one of their meetings

who has been involved in the construction industry for years.

Recently, he has given informal advice to St Catherine’s, Ventnor, about external roof repairs and internal damp; to All Saints, Freshwater, about a wall-mounted memorial; and to Holy Trinity, Bembridge, about

internal and external stone works.

He said: “If I can, in some small way and at no cost, assist parishes to survive and grow, it is all to the greater good.”

For details: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/dac or email dac@portsmouth.anglican.org