

## BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### **ADVISORY PAPER ON TEXTILES**

The dominant position of altar fronts, dorsal hangings, banners, pulpit falls, burses and veils means that they are of great importance in a church and should be chosen with the utmost care. They can add beauty and dignity to worship, but the reverse is also true.

Churchwardens should inspect textiles annually when they check the inventory.

#### Display

Expert advice may be required for fine textiles which are kept on permanent display e.g. exposure to sunlight may not be advisable. It may be no longer appropriate to display banners which relate to defunct organizations. Some banners may be of excellent quality or of historic importance in which case their display or storage will require care.

#### Storage

Care should be taken over storage of textiles, for poor storage can be more harmful than use.

- Altar frontals should be hung in a suitable cupboard and not folded. Where this is not possible fabric "sausages" may be used to cushion the effect of folding. Smaller items can be kept clean in cardboard boxes or pillow cases. On no account should textiles be wrapped in plastic as this advances the process of decay.
- Altar linen should be starched and rolled on cardboard rollers rather than folded.
- Ironmould should be removed - "Beckman" Stain Devils rust and ironmould powder is ideal.
- Unless a church has a proper vestment press, chasubles and copes are best hung on special hangers - available from suppliers like Vanpoules. These items suffer greatly when hung on ordinary hangers.

#### Repair

Competent minor repairs can add years of life to textiles. Many altar frontals look shabby because the fringes are worn and dirty. These can be given a new lease of life by removing or renewing the fringe.

#### Redundant items

If there are items which are no longer in use and there is no storage space for them the Archdeacon should be consulted about their future.

#### New and renewed items

The Archdeacon should be consulted at an early stage. Many renewals will need a faculty. Individual designs and local work are to be encouraged - early consultation will avoid hurt feelings and wasted labour.

When considering new work a PCC must take account of the need to harmonise with the immediate surroundings. For example, a new altar frontal must relate to the Cross, candlesticks, Sanctuary carpet, dorsal curtains, stained glass and so on. If used, vestments and altar frontals should match in style and colour.

Faculties for new banners and the like will usually impose a time limit on their use and display.

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Further guidance may be obtained from the booklet "Guidelines for the Care of Textiles (1984)" available from the Council for the Care of Churches, Fifth Floor, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ. For historic textiles, the Watts Book of Embroidery may be useful.

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