DIOCESE OF EXETER

Grow in Prayer I Make New Disciples I Serve the People of Devon with Joy

ROLE DESCRIPTION

DETAILS	
Role Title	School Buildings and Trusteeship Officer
Department	Property Services
Reports to	Director of Property Services
Contract Type	0.6FTE
Hours	21.75 per week
Normal Place of Work	The Old Deanery, The Cloisters, Exeter, EX1 1HS with the expectation of travel throughout the county of Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay), as required, including occasional evenings.
Date of Issue	November 2025

NATURE OF WORK

Role Purpose:

The diocese manages a significant number of properties across Devon, including approximately 300 clergy houses, 1900 acres of Glebe land and 134 Church Schools, with the majority being primary schools. Most schools are Academies, while the remaining are almost evenly split between Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools. The diocese acts as the lead diocese for a regional group of dioceses in relation to receipt, allocation and administration of Capital Funding.

The role involves working closely with the Property Services Department (PSD) and the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) to provide property advice to church schools and academies and acting on behalf of the school site trustees.

In collaboration with the Director of Property Services:

- As a member of the Property Services team, work with colleagues to ensure a high standard of service delivery, adopting a team approach with the DBE/PSD.
- Manage and coordinate the administrative, organisational, professional and technical services necessary to fulfil the Diocese's legal and pastoral obligations

regarding VA school properties and where applicable, VC schools, Trust Schools and Church Academies.

- Support church academies and VA schools in premises matters, ensuring academy trusts and governing bodies fulfil their duties and achieve optimal outcomes.
- Liaise closely with property consultants to ensure successful delivery of building projects at church schools.
- Manage the receipt, allocation and administration of Capital Funding ensuring compliance the Department for Education (DfE) requirements
- Develop and communicate a thorough understanding of legislation and guidelines affecting church school properties and capital funding, making recommendations to ensure compliance and take advantage of associated opportunities.
- Act on behalf of the Trustee owners of church schools, assessing matters related to school buildings and sites, including academy conversion proposals and building projects and making recommendations for formal approval.
- Act on behalf of the Trustee owners of church schools and liaise with solicitors to ensure appropriate legal agreements are in place, including with third parties operating at church schools.
- Advise on policy and procedural matters affecting church school buildings.
- Collaborate with the Director of Education, school governors, academy trust directors and headteachers in the strategic development of school buildings to meet evolving educational needs.
- Work with the Diocesan Board of Education, Local Authorities and the Department for Education (DfE) to identify and pursue opportunities for new school buildings.

Key Aspects of Role:

This role demands expertise in the following areas:

- **School and Academy Legislation and Policy:** An understanding of the legal agreements required at school and academy premises and the policy frameworks governing such property.
- **Building Regulatory compliance:** Sufficient awareness and understanding of planning and building legislation to be able to identify issues and risks combined with an understanding of the various legal agreements required for schools and academies.
- **Building Project Delivery:** management of the funding streams for building projects and coordination with consultants.
- **Collaboration:** Working effectively with the Diocesan Board of Education, National Society for Education, Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and school management teams.

Given the nature of the work, the Surveyor is expected to be available during much of the school summer holidays, as this is when most building contracts are executed.

The role covers the entire Diocese of Exeter, necessitating considerable travel, including occasional meetings in London and other locations. There may also be a need for occasional out-of-hours work, for which time off in lieu can be claimed.

The Surveyor will need an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service as part of this role.

Key Relationships:

This role reports to the Director of Property Services and involves close collaboration with:

- Director of Property (DoP)
- Surveying and Administrative Staff within the Property Services Department
- Director of the Board of Education (DDE) and the Education Department
- Diocesan Board of Education
- Diocesan Secretary
- Directors within the Old Deanery, particularly the Director of Finance
- Head Teachers, Governors, Academy Trust Directors and Staff
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Local Authorities, including Devon, and Torbay and Plymouth Unitary Authorities
- The National Society for Education

Role Area	Main Duties and Responsibilities
Premises Advice and Support	• Advise the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and Schools on policies and procedures related to church school buildings. • Keep up-to-date with relevant legislation affecting diocesan properties and recommend actions to ensure compliance. • Liaise with Service Level Agreement (SLA) providers to offer and maintain services suitable for church schools and academies. • Monitor outcomes and budgets of the VA Promise SLA scheme. • Monitor and support VA schools with property compliance matters. • Support VA schools in emergency situations. • Reviewing Annual Academy Land and Building Collection Tool returns for DfE for academies
Project Delivery	• Lead on receipt and allocation processes for DfE capital grant (SCA) funding for VA schools. • Manage and coordinate external Building Consultants, overseeing their terms of engagement, performance and supporting schools/academies through the process. • Ensure compliance with CDM Regulations, Health and Safety Regulations and DfE requirements on capital projects. • Monitor and control project costs against available funding. • Liaise with Building Consultants and solicitors on school property matters as needed.

Legal Oversight Management	• Conduct detailed legal reviews and collaborate with solicitors to protect school trustees' long-term interests regarding academy conversions or other matters affecting them. • Oversee need for and liaise with solicitors to ensure provision of appropriate legal agreements. • Support voluntary schools transitioning to academy status by preparing documentation for consents and managing premises matters and academy conversion documentation with trustees, DBE colleagues and solicitors. • Act on behalf of school in trustees in relation to legal property matters
Monitoring and Training	• Facilitate regular training sessions for governors, academy trusts, headteachers and Diocesan colleagues on school property matters.
Funding and Resource Management	• Partner with Local Authorities to implement government initiatives and capital planning/funding where relevant. • Oversee the identification and assessment of projects qualifying for school funding support from start to finish. • Liaise with Government departments regarding property and capital funding issues for VA schools and church academies, including procedures and grant applications. • Work with Local Authorities and the DDE to identify opportunities for new church school developments and collaborate with the DBE in their development and delivery.
Relationship Building	• Develop and maintain close, client-focused relationships with local authority officers, headteachers, school governors and academy trust directors and staff. • Maintain effective links with colleagues in other dioceses, attending meetings and in-service training as required. • Represent the Diocese at meetings at relevant regional and national events.
Other Duties	• Consider the pastoral significance of your work and the role church school buildings play in delivering high-quality Christian education. • Perform any other duties reasonably expected of the role.
Information Management	• Keep accurate records of notes, correspondence and files. • Maintain the filing system and ensure compliance with information management policies, including Social Media, GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
Safeguarding	• Adhere to all Diocesan Safeguarding Policies and procedures. • Complete safeguarding training to Foundation Level C1.
Equality and Diversity	• Model inclusive behaviours in daily working practices. • Work in line with diocesan policies on equal opportunity.

PERSON SPECIFICATION The following areas outline what qualifications, training, experience and technical abilities the applicant will need to demonstrate.		
	Essential	**Desirable**
Qualifications and Training	• Relevant degree, diploma, or post-school qualification, or extensive and directly relevant experience in property and/or legal matters.	• Evidence of continuing professional development.
Experience	• Demonstrable relevant experience. • Proven professional, strategic, legal and organisational skills. • Experience of working with and getting the best out of external professionals. • Proven skills in financial oversight and project management.	
Technical	• Good knowledge of school building design and construction. • Familiarity with different procurement contracts. • Good knowledge of legal processes and documents. • Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint) and accounting software.	• Understanding of the church education system within the maintained sector. • Understanding of grant systems and financing for Church of England schools.
General Requirements	• Willing to learn • Welcome visitors and handle enquiries and phone calls promptly and courteously. • Adhere to health and safety instructions and ensure the safety of yourself and colleagues, reporting concerns immediately. • Be sensitive to the diverse cultures and traditions within the Church and work in line with the Five Guiding Principles in the House of Bishops' Declaration. • Understand how church belief systems impact safeguarding in Church of England schools. • Commit to anti-discriminatory practices within the Church of England's legal context.	• Understanding of the Church of England, its parochial system and the wider Diocese structure.

Personal Requirements	• Confident in and committed to the aims and ethos of the Diocese of Exeter and the mission of the Church of England. • Hold a full driving licence and have access to a car for work-related travel across Devon. • Willing to work occasional evenings and the majority of the school summer holidays as required.	

ROLE COMPETENCIES

The following impact areas outline the typical strengths, abilities and behaviours expected to fulfil the role.

Setting Direction	**Seeing the Big Picture:**	• Understand how your work and the Property Services team's work support the strategic development of Church of England (C of E) schools across the diocese. • Keep an overview of strategies and activities from local authorities, the Department for Education (DfE), Academy Trusts and other educational bodies and how these impact Property Services. • Communicate effectively with senior leaders to influence and shape future strategies, translating these strategies into operational plans and service delivery. • Gather diverse perspectives and feedback to inform organisational strategy and planning. • Stay alert to emerging issues and trends that could affect your work and the services provided. • Expand, develop and share your knowledge across key areas of Property Services.
	Changing and Improving:	• Encourage and share innovative ideas for improving property team services, overseeing implementation where appropriate. • Create an environment where colleagues feel safe to challenge decisions and express ideas and support their creative initiatives. • Work with others to simplify processes and improve service delivery. • Clearly explain changes to your team and other key personnel, guiding them through the transition and supporting those with different needs. • Identify early signs of problems and respond promptly, providing constructive feedback to senior management on change proposals when needed.

	Making Effective Decisions:	• Use your delegated authority wisely and empower others to make decisions where appropriate, ensuring timely decision-making at the right level. • Analyse and interpret data from various sources to support decision-making. • Understand situations fully, including the needs and expectations of others, to advise on the best course of action. • Make decisions or recommendations even with incomplete information, consulting others to understand the full impact of decisions on the Property team and its services.
Engaging People	**Leadership:**	• Motivate and influence key personnel, ensuring they understand the goals, activities and timelines of the Property Services team. • Welcome and respond to feedback and challenges, defending or promoting your team's actions as needed. • Role model high standards of practice in C of E schools and in the workplace. • Work closely with the Director of Property and other key personnel to provide expert advice and support. • Recognise and praise the contributions of others, fostering a supportive and cohesive team environment. • Manage conflicts and non-inclusive behaviours, addressing issues with senior managers when necessary.
	Communicating and Influencing:	• Ensure clear and effective communication within Property Services, with EDBF employees, external agencies, contractors and C of E schools. • Monitor and improve the effectiveness of your team's communications. • Deliver difficult messages with clarity and sensitivity, considering individual needs and the impact of your language. • Communicate in a clear, honest and positive manner to build trust, explaining complex issues simply and choosing the best communication styles. • Remain open-minded and respectful of different ideas and feedback, building a cohesive team.
	Working Together:	• Build and maintain strong professional relationships with key personnel and agencies across the diocese, including school leadership teams and Local Authority officers. • Foster teamwork within your own team and across the diocese, understanding and addressing varying needs. • Invest time in maintaining team focus, creating a positive team spirit and being approachable to colleagues. • Lead by example, promoting an inclusive working environment where bullying and discrimination are

		unacceptable, while showing diplomacy, patience and a sense of humour. • Be aware of your own wellbeing and support colleagues when needed.
Delivering Results	**Developing Self and Others:**	• Identify gaps in your own and your team's skills and knowledge, taking responsibility for relevant training and support. • Reflect on your work, seek feedback and act on it to improve service delivery. • Set personal development objectives to address gaps affecting current and future work, ensuring training goals are met. • Coach and mentor colleagues to support service improvement and succession planning. • Encourage sharing of experiences and learning across the EDBF and the wider diocese, adjusting organisational plans and processes as needed. • Recognise signs of stress in yourself and others, providing or seeking appropriate support and referring issues to senior management if necessary.
	Managing a Quality Service:	• Address the diverse needs of service recipients to ensure high-quality and efficient delivery. • Work with senior management to create practical plans for service delivery that comply with legal and governance requirements. • Understand the needs of Property Services, C of E schools and other key agencies to provide timely and appropriate advice and support. • Develop, implement and review procedures and processes to ensure excellence in service provision.
	Delivering at Pace	• Maintain focus on team goals and priorities, following procedures to ensure timely results while allowing for innovation. • Ensure resources and information are available for colleagues and contractors to perform effectively. • Regularly review and adjust workloads and priorities to manage conflicting demands. • Give colleagues the space and authority to achieve goals, offering additional support when needed while maintaining overall responsibility.