

The Parish of Holy Trinity, Headington Quarry

Diocese of Oxford

Filming in the Church or Churchyard

1. Legal Position

Church of England churches and churchyards are consecrated areas of land. As such, they fall under the jurisdiction of the Consistory Court of the Diocese.

This has an important legal consequence:

- Neither the Incumbent, nor the Churchwardens, nor the PCC has the authority to grant filming rights (or any rights over the land) without the Court's authorisation, normally given through a Faculty.

To avoid the need for a full Faculty in routine filming cases, the Chancellor (the judge of the Consistory Court) has established a simplified process. This process may be used only if two conditions are met.

2. Conditions for Using the Simplified Process

Filming may proceed without a Faculty only when both of the following apply:

a. Script Approval by the Archdeacon

- All parts of the script relating to scenes filmed in the church or churchyard — including scenes that merely imply filming took place there (e.g., through scene splicing) — must be sent to the Archdeacon as soon as they are received.
- Filming cannot progress until the Archdeacon has formally approved the material.

b. Use of the Diocesan Filming Location Agreement

- The filming company must enter into the Diocese of Oxford's standard Filming Location Agreement.
- This agreement records the terms agreed locally and sets out the framework for using consecrated land, reflecting the PCC's responsibilities as a statutory charity.
- The Agreement replaces the need for a Faculty unless the filming company insists on using its own form, in which case a Faculty may be required.

If either condition cannot be met, a formal Faculty petition must be submitted to the Chancellor. This process can take months, and approval is not guaranteed.

3. Fees and Costs

Licence Fee (payable to the PCC)

- A reasonable starting point is £1,000–£1,500 per day of filming, subject to negotiation.

Legal Fees

- Preparing the Filming Location Agreement incurs legal fees of £500 + VAT, payable by the filming company.
- The company should be informed of this at the outset.

Utilities

- The Licence Fee does not include electricity, heating or similar usage. These should be charged separately if required.

4. Temporary Alterations

Any temporary changes — such as covering features, adding or removing furnishings, or any works affecting graves — must be approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

No alterations may proceed without this approval.

5. Information Required Before Referral

Before the matter is passed to the diocesan solicitor, the PCC or Incumbent should ensure:

- Dates and times of filming are agreed.
- The Licence Fee is agreed.
- The filming company accepts responsibility for legal fees.
- The company understands the need for script approval and the diocesan agreement.

Once these points are settled, the diocesan solicitor should receive:

- The agreed terms, and
- Confirmation that the PCC will comply with the diocesan conditions.

The solicitor will then prepare the Filming Location Agreement for signature.

Filming in the Church or Churchyard: PCC Checklist

1. Understand the Legal Position

- The church and churchyard are consecrated land.
- They fall under the Consistory Court's jurisdiction.
- The PCC, Incumbent and Churchwardens cannot grant filming rights without proper authorisation.
- A Faculty is normally required unless the simplified diocesan process is followed.

2. Check Whether the Simplified Process Can Be Used

Filming can proceed without a Faculty only if BOTH conditions below are met:

Condition 1 — Script Approval

- Obtain all relevant script sections (including scenes implying filming took place in the church/churchyard).
- Send them to the Archdeacon immediately.
- Wait for formal approval before progressing.

Condition 2 — Diocesan Filming Location Agreement

- Confirm the filming company will use the Diocese of Oxford's standard Filming Location Agreement.
- This agreement must be used unless the company insists on its own form, in which case a Faculty may be required.

If either condition cannot be met → Full Faculty application required (may take months; approval not guaranteed).

3. Agree Fees and Costs

- Licence Fee: Start negotiations at £1,000–£1,500 per filming day.
- Legal Fees: £500 + VAT for preparing the Agreement — payable by the filming company.
- Utilities: Electricity, heating etc. are not included in the Licence Fee and should be charged separately.

4. Check for Temporary Alterations

If the company proposes any of the following, DAC approval is required:

- Covering features
- Adding or removing furnishings
- Any works affecting graves
- Any other temporary alteration to the church or churchyard

No alterations may proceed without DAC approval.

5. Before Referring to the Diocesan Solicitor

Ensure the following are agreed with the filming company:

- Dates and times of filming
- Licence Fee
- Acceptance of legal fees
- Use of the diocesan agreement
- Script approval process understood

Then send the solicitor:

- The agreed terms
- Confirmation that the PCC will comply with diocesan conditions

The solicitor will then prepare the Filming Location Agreement for signature.

Document History This policy is to be reviewed annually

Version	Version date	Author	Date reviewed by PCC	Summary of changes
1	July 2026	Richard Carling	8.7.26	–