

Filming in churches and churchyards

Churches are popular film locations and Cornwall is a highly desirable location for film companies from the UK and abroad.

Although you can register your church building with a film location company, many of our parishes get called up out of the blue with filming requests.

Careful planning is essential. We recommend that you get in touch with your archdeacon and the diocesan communications team before confirming permission for filming. This is because we want to make sure you are comfortable with what is being requested, that it is a suitable project in keeping with the Church of England's ethos and aims and that you have the information you require to ensure the safety of your church, community and those filming.

It is important to remember that you are perfectly within your rights to say no. While you cannot stop a news crew from standing on a public footpath outside with the churchyard as a backdrop, you do have the right to refuse permission to film on church land.

The following guidelines are to assist incumbents, PCCs and churchwardens in the Diocese of Truro to decide whether to agree to a filming request.

Points to consider when responding to filming requests:

Is it appropriate?

Ask whether the filming is for drama, feature film, news programme, documentary, etc. Request a synopsis will give you an overview of the finished programme and allow you to determine if it's in keeping with a place of Christian worship or contradictory, or otherwise prejudicial or whether or not it is harmful to the Church. If filming is likely to be lengthy with a lot of action in the church, you may also want to see the actual scripts.

Time

Ask how long the church is required for. Broadly speaking, a news item where the subject is a Church of England matter and the editor simply wants to use the church as background would not take more than half an hour. However, a feature film or drama will need to light and possibly rig the church before filming could start and it could need de-rigging. The word 'day' is often used. You should be clear about what constitutes a day, so you can charge if the company overruns its time. You can also specify time slots or times and days when filming would not be allowed.

Facilities

Does the production company need to use other facilities such as the hall or car park? If filming is likely to be lengthy or for drama, you need to discuss toilet facilities, dressing room areas etc. Use of your hall or car park for such things can be used as bargaining tools when you negotiate the fee. Do ask the production company what they have organised for

parking. If it is on a street with restrictions, they will need to have gained local authority traffic department approval.

Supervision

It is advisable to ensure someone is present during the filming. If it is a day-long shoot, or longer, two people may be needed. They need to know what agreements you have made with those filming.

Layout

What changes are proposed to the way the church is laid-out? You have the right to refuse requests that you are unhappy with or are excessive. If fixed items need to be moved, you are likely to need a faculty. If in doubt, please contact the DAC.

Documentary makers often wish to film a service, for example, a baptism or marriage, for a package they are putting together. In the case of such services you will need the permission of those involved. The company should have their own consent forms but you may also wish to get participants to fill out a church consent form. A film crew will often offer copies of the film in lieu of a fee for the couple. Under those circumstances you are still entitled to a fee.

For any service you need to agree what is to be filmed and where the cameras will be positioned so that the congregation is not distracted. You also need to ensure that you inform the congregation that the service is to be filmed and how individuals can make it clear they do not wish to be filmed.

Insurance

You must ensure the PCC is insured against damage or accident. Your own insurance policy may not cover you. If you are looking at a substantial amount of filming, it would be prudent to ask the Diocesan Registrar to look over the contract. Do carry out your own risk assessment and ensure all fire regulations are adequate and up to date. Ensure you have asked the production company for a copy of their insurance and a copy of the risk assessment. Most film companies should have insurance that covers public liability.

Contract

It is advisable to draw up a contract - it does not need to be lengthy, however it is advisable to ask the diocesan registrar to look over the contract especially if there are copyright matters. The contracting party for the church should be the PCC. This is unlikely to be needed if the filming is for short news type pieces.

Fees

Time and type of programme are the two main factors determining a location fee. A scale of minimum daily fees to negotiate with (starting with the lowest) are:

- News piece to camera (PTC) - Free
- Documentary PTC - £300 per day (usually per hour)
- Documentary Drama Reconstruction - £600 per day



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DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
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- Daytime Drama - £750 per day
- High-End Drama - £850 per day
- UK Feature & Photography - £900 per day
- Co-Production Feature - £1,000 per day
- Tri-Production Feature - £1,250 per day

Recommended film location companies

[Creative England](#)
[Location](#)
[PartnershipFilm](#)
[Locations](#)
[Heritage4Media](#)