

not he was on the electoral roll). The court invited further submissions from him. [Naomi Gyane]

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### **Re St Thomas a Becket, Salisbury**

Salisbury Consistory Court: Arlow Ch, 30 January 2023

[2023] ECC Sal 1

*Fonts – Canon F1 – requirement for a cover*

This significant, Grade 1-listed church has a Victorian stone font, with an ornate timber cover, in its south-west corner. The petitioners proposed to replace it with a modern timber and copper font at the west end of the central nave aisle, mirroring the design of a modern altar installed in 2020. The existing font would either be moved to a Roman Catholic church in Sussex, its cover remaining suspended in its current location; or be disposed of by sale, along with its cover.

The DAC did not object, although maintained concerns about the new font remaining uncovered. The CBC (which provided advice on customary and canonical issues as well as general advice) advised that removing the existing font would not be appropriate. The Local Planning Authority and Historic England had identified some harm to the building from the proposals, and the Victorian Society strongly objected to its loss from the building. Further, six local objectors raised concerns.

Applying the *Duffield* tests, the court determined that neither the proposed new location for a font nor the introduction of a new font would harm the significance of the building. However, removing the current font would cause harm to the significance of the building, given its historic and communal value, albeit that such harm would not be serious or substantial, noting that the special significance of the building arose substantially from its architecture and mediaeval wall paintings. The harm would be mitigated if the cover was retained *in situ*. The court considered that the harm was outweighed by the public benefit in terms of mission and liturgical freedom.

The reduction of harm by retention of the existing font would not be impossible, but would have a limiting impact on the space in the church and its activities. The court also referred to the 1992 House of Bishops' paper 'Baptism and Fonts', which stated that a second font in a church was generally anomalous. In terms of the disposal of the existing font, the court commended the sequential approach set out in *Re St Michael and All Angels, Blackheath Park* [2016] ECC Swk 13, preferring a disposal which would allow

its continued sacramental use, even if it meant the separation of the font from its cover.

Finally, the court considered the requirement in Canon F1 para 1 for fonts to have a cover. Despite examples of uncovered fonts, and the relative recency of the requirement (as identified in *Re Holy Trinity, Wandsworth*, Southwark Consistory Court, 4 September 2012), the court considered it was bound by the canonical requirement for a cover and could not approve by faculty the introduction of a font in breach of the requirement. Rather than refusing the petition, the court would grant a faculty, subject to conditions including that provision be made for a cover. [Jack Stuart]

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### **Re Chapel of King's College of Our Lady and St Nicholas, Cambridge**

Ely Consistory Court: Leonard Ch, 7 February & 2 April 2023

[2023] ECC Ely 1 & 2

2030 net zero target – solar panels

King's College, Cambridge has its own 2030 net zero target. This, together with the need to replace the lead on the Chapel roof provided the catalyst for this application to install solar panels on both the north and south sides of the roof of the Chapel, a building of exceptional significance. The court recognised the contribution of amenity societies and consultees to the work of the faculty jurisdiction, and set out their responses in some detail.

The court made the following observations. A large carbon-neutral generation scheme would strongly support the fifth mark of mission: 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth'. Because the project had been carefully planned and managed, it ought to act as an encouragement to churches and other public buildings to consider whether they can contribute to the net zero target in this way. As the scaffolding was already in place for re-leading the roof, the lost opportunity cost of not installing solar panels now and up to 2050 (the expected lifespan of the panels) equated to 410 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>; the cost of that scaffolding alone was £700,000.

Following amendments to the proposed siting of the panels, moving them away from the ridgeline and lower to the roof itself, there would still be some degree of visual harm, but that from most locations, the panels would be concealed by the parapet and generally only visible, if at all, through piercings and crenellations. The concerns expressed in some quarters about the reflectivity of solar panels was unconvincing. In terms of the *Duffield* questions, the harm to the significance of the Chapel as a building of special