

Waterless Toilets in Churchyards

In 2010 a National Churches Trust survey found one third of churches did not have toilets available. Conventional toilets need both a water source and sewage disposal to operate; for rural areas or older buildings this makes provision of toilets more complicated. There is now a range of odourless waterless toilets which are not only water saving and avoid the use of chemicals, but also deal with sewage efficiently on site.

How does a waterless toilet work?

Some toilets are **composting** and complete the whole process from use to compost within the container which takes around 6-12 months. The result is a safe compost that can be used for gardening.

Others are **compost** toilets and require the contents to be transferred to a separate compost bin with carbon material (e.g. sawdust) away from the toilet. Urine is diverted to a soak-away pit and odours are taken out through a vent pipe. A small fan can run off a solar panel and battery.

Considerations?

- Is the toilet accessible for wheelchair users?
- Will a new path need to be laid to access the toilet? If so, this can be included in the faculty application for the toilet.
- Will the toilet be available for use by the public or just unlocked for services and events?
- How near to the church will the toilet be? It is important that the toilet does not obstruct a window, impact the view of the church or be positioned underneath a waterspout.
- Make sure to leave a gap around the toilet shed so that maintenance can be easily carried out.
- How often will the toilet be used and by how many people? This will dictate the size.
- Will the toilet blend in with its surroundings? What colour will it be?
- Will the toilet be lit with a solar panel and battery?

Costs?

- The cost of the toilet equipment and shed (some sheds need to be bought separately).
- The installation cost. The equipment supplier does not usually install itself but has a list of approved installers.
- The cost of planning permission (if required).
- The cost of archaeological input (if required). A PCC undertaking work in a church or churchyard is legally a 'developer' and is required by law to be responsible for the costs of any archaeological work which may need to be done including observations which must be made before, during or after the works.
- The cost of an access path (if required).

A toilet and shed costs between around £1,500 and £9,000.

Which grant providers can fund waterless toilets?

[The Benefact Trust](#)

[Garfield Weston Foundation](#)

[The Geoffrey Watling Charity](#)

What permission do we need?

The installation of a waterless toilet in the churchyard will require a faculty.

An application should include the following:

- A hand-drawn sketch of the churchyard and photos showing the proposed location of the toilet.
- An image of the toilet.
- Details about access, i.e. will there be a path and can wheelchair users use the toilet?
- PCC minutes approving the proposals.

If you are not registered with the Online Faculty System you will need to do so [here](#) before opening a faculty application.

For full guidance on the Online Faculty System please click [here](#).

The requirement for planning permission varies and therefore it is important to check with your local planning authority. Even if a faculty is granted, if planning permission is refused then the installation cannot go ahead.

Waterless toilet suppliers:

[NatSol](#) For a video tour of a NatSol waterless toilet click [here](#)

[Woo Woo Waterless Toilets](#)

[Wee Hooses](#) (an accessible shed will need to be bought separately from elsewhere).

Some examples of waterless toilets in the Diocese:

- All Saints' Church, Freethorpe NR13 3AH
- St Andrew's Church, Wickhampton NR13 3PB
- St Peter's Church, Kimberley NR18 9EY
- St Peter's Church, Clippesby NR29 3BJ
- St Peter & St Paul's Church, Brockdish IP21 4JJ



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