

STATEMENT OF NEEDS

1 BACKGROUND

The church dates from 1162, when Walter Gifford, Earl of Buckingham gave the church to Notley Abbey, Buckinghamshire.

Following the dissolution of the monasteries, Christ Church, Oxford became the patron.

The church today consists of chancel, north and south chapels, north vestry, nave, aisles, south porch and west tower. The vestry was added in 1857 and enlarged in 1883 (this explains the exterior window facing into it from the east end of the north (Vanderstegen) chapel)

There was also a gallery at the west end which was built in 1605 as a singers' gallery.

The twelfth-century font of Purbeck marble was immediately south of the pillar facing the porch, where today flower displays are placed.

The tower was partially destroyed in the civil war in 1643. It was rebuilt in timber and then replaced by the present tower in 1878. It contains a ring of 8 bells, the oldest (Fourth) bears the inscription 'Prayes God 1637'. The 1663 weathervane now resides by the Altar.

The south aisle was added in 1878, the pulpit then being rotated slightly to its present alignment.

In 1924 the chancel was extended ten feet and the south (Lady Chapel) added. The existing three-light east window was moved into this new chapel and a new five-light window installed in the extended sanctuary.

The restored south doorway is twelfth-century, with a small cross on its east jamb.

A set of glass doors was added to the main entrance in 2013 and new electronic organ was added in 2015, when two rows of pews at the front of the nave were removed to create additional space.

The church sits within an existing cemetery which is closed to new burials. The churchyard is still church property but it is vested in Reading Borough council to maintain it.

The church is usually considered to lie close to the historic (medieval) core of a settlement, suggesting that remains of this period or the preceding Late Saxon era may lie within the site.

A **Statement of Significance** has been prepared to summarise the church features.

The church is due to have its next Quinquennial inspection in 2019; it is intended that the architect who is awarded the re-ordering concept design should also provide the quinquennial inspection in 2019 and thereafter.

2 CURRENT USAGE

St Peter's church is an active and vibrant church which holds regular services both on Sundays and mid-week. It also hosts a significant number of baptisms, weddings, funerals and fund-raising events. The church has an electoral roll of approximately 200. The majority of the regular congregation is over 60 years old, although there has recently been an increase in the number of younger families.

The church normally has 3 services on a Sunday, comprising:

- 8.00 Communion (normally held in the Lady Chapel)
- 9.30 Communion
- 18.30 Evensong

Regular attendance on a Sunday is of the order of 120 people, but on feast days (such as Christmas) the church can be completely full with a congregation of approximately 400.

Children and young people are extremely welcome but we struggle to provide adequate space for up to 30 children during the service, whilst minimising disruption to the church worship. Currently the very young children play around the font at the start of the 9.30 service and then move into the Vanderstegen Chapel or Vestry for Sunday Club during the sermon. The current provision for young children is not ideal.

Music is very important in the church and it has an excellent church choir and new high-quality electronic organ. The church also hosts choir concerts and organ recitals. The church has a small kitchen at the west end which is regularly used to provide hospitality (drinks and cold foods) after festival services and concerts. There is also a small toilet area and a flower / storage room.

The church layout is provided in Appendix 1

3 MISSIONAL PLANNING

Since 2015 the parish, and all of its three churches, have been engaged in a missional process called Partnership for Missional Church (PMC). This teaches churches, through slow low-level culture change, to stop trying to 'do' mission and to start acting missionally in all that they do. The process is lay led, and teaches attention to spiritual disciplines to go alongside missional activity. Those disciplines are:

- Dwelling in God's Word so that it shapes our imaginations, intentions and actions
- Noticing the movement of God and announcing where we see the Kingdom being built
- Becoming alert and observant of the people in the world God sends us to
- Recognising where we are and how the Spirit of God is in us forming community within God's mission
- Attending to how we give and receive hospitality as a sign of engaging in God's mission
- Focusing our energy and attention on actions that move us further into God's mission

The first year of PMC invited us to undertake considerable study of ourselves as churches and our local community. We have published the results of that learning, which might inform our redevelopment plans at St Peter's at <https://www.ctmparish.org.uk/pmc/>.

The PMC process invited us in 2017 to create a small mission team who, alongside Methodist colleagues locally, have developed a project working with lonely and isolated people.

At the end of the 2018 the final tasks of the PMC process were for us to develop a missional vision statement and agree a long-range mission plan.

Our new parish vision is 'Becoming a Christ-like community'. We have further explained what this means to us at <https://www.ctmparish.org.uk/becoming-a-christ-like-community/>. The PCC has formed a mission group to oversee the delivery of the vision, and implementation of the mission plan.

Our mission plan is focused on the next three years, with the following foci:

Year 1: Hospitality – to build bridges between community and our churches and parish.

Year 2: Dwelling in the world – building relationships

Year 3: Announcing the kingdom - Telling stories about God, where God is at work.

Whilst years 2 and 3 of this have been left deliberately vague, Year 1 has been set as a year to continue to focus on the spiritual discipline of attending to our Hospitality.

We will:

- continue to walk alongside the lonely with Champions to end loneliness and coffee companions, supported by Reading Voluntary Action and Reading Borough Council;
- focus on making the most of 'occasional offices', baptisms, weddings, funerals with new preparation courses and involving laity with post-funeral pastoral care;
- work harder at accepting hospitality corporately as a parish or individual churches and becoming more aware and involved in what is going on in the community.

We will not abandon this work at the end of 2019, but will hopefully have built bridges with the community that will improve our wider relationships and our ability to be generous with our churches.

To us hospitality is far more than the quality of our refreshments or the welcome on a Sunday morning. But it is about how we engage with people wherever they find themselves, and how we open our lives and spaces to share them with the community around us. Sharing our lives involves responding to invitations from the community. Sharing our space involves inviting the community to join us in some way.

Inviting others to share our space at St Peter's is not sincere if our space is unsuitable. Our space needs to be as accessible as possible, facilities like toilets need to be available to all, those cups of tea and biscuits, and much more, need to be possibilities, a welcome needs to be clear and visible.

So far, our openness to people beyond our congregation has seen a significant growth in children and young people. In 2014 there were perhaps 6-10 regularly in church, now we

regularly have 25-30, including up to 10 small children and as many as another 20 up to 16 years old in our services. Most of them come to church with parents, so our age profile of the adult congregation has also lowered over this time.

We are a church that also has significant numbers of young children for baptism (usually 20+ a year), and the residential community around St Peters is one that people move to start a family. We usually also have 10-15 weddings each year in church, with all the potential for on-going connections with those couples and their families. Our hospitality now demands we look for proper spaces for all of this work.

God is alive outside our church, as well as inside. Responding to what God is putting in our hearts, we need to look outwards, while ensuring what is inside suits our mission to the community.

4 LONG TERM NEEDS

Overall

St Peter's church is an ancient Grade 2* listed building.

It has not been significantly modernised in recent times and has various shortcomings against the needs of a church in the 21st century.

Wheelchair access into the church has recently been improved by the addition of new glass doors and a wooden platform and shallow steps (A movable ramp is used to permit wheelchair access), but there remain significant differences in level in the west end.

The church is a member of the Caversham, Mapledurham and Thameside parish (which constitutes 3 churches). As a result, the church operates with a Church Leadership Team (CLT), which reports to the PCC. The re-ordering work will be the responsibility of the PCC, but the CLT will be the main interface with the architect during the project.

The church is engaged in a root and branch review of the current shortcomings and the future needs for the church. This is by its very nature a complex issue and requires the input from all affected parties including the parish and diocese representatives.

To date the CLT has held a number of meetings to review the long-term needs, including brainstorming sessions with members of the congregation and presentations at a number of church forums.

The reviews to date have identified that there are a number of areas to be addressed by the re-ordering process including:

- Meeting space for children and youth groups
- Provision for other community groups to meet
- Flexibility of worship
- Circulation space at the west end of church
- Improved hospitality area and kitchen facilities
- Improved accessibility (including wheelchair access)
- Car parking
- Audio Visual System

The consultation exercise is incomplete and the church is not in a position to quantify or justify many of the perceived needs.

For that reason, this initial phase of re-ordering work will focus on critical issues that need to be addressed urgently. This is defined as the Phase 1 work below. However, it is intended that even during the Phase 1 work some consideration is given to how the longer-term ambitions could be addressed.

The PCC is looking to the selected architect to provide innovative solutions to the issues faced by the church, whilst avoiding excessive expenditure.

Phase 1 Scope

The urgent issues to be addressed in the short term are as follows:

4.1 Survey

Undertake a survey of the whole church to establish the current status of the church prior to commencing the design of the Phase 1 scope of work.

It should be noted that the PCC is aware that there is asbestos in the existing flower room ceiling. This is currently being managed by regular audits. The PCC is planning a new asbestos survey of the church in Q1 2019, but if the architect prefers this asbestos survey may be incorporated into the architect's concept design work scope.

The flower room also has a basement which contains a redundant boiler, and there is a vault beneath the font location.

The Statement of Significance (ref: Appendix 2) notes that Archaeological investigation should take place prior to any intervention in the flower room, due to the 12th century remnants (primarily the Norman window) in the room. The architect is to recommend how this should be addressed as part of the survey.

4.2 Toilets

The church currently has two small toilets (one provided with a baby changing table). Neither is currently suitable for accessible use.

The architect is requested to include in the concept design ideally 3 toilets of which one is an accessible toilet. Baby changing facilities are also to be provided in one toilet.

The toilets should be accessible directly from the church level without compromising the kitchen or flower room functionality, and without impeding access to the bell tower.

4.3 Steps and Trip Hazards

Access down into the church and then up into the kitchen/toilet area is via steep steps.

These changes in level at the west end compromise wheelchair access and also provide a trip hazard (particularly for the movement of food and drink from the kitchen to the main church level). The architect is requested to suggest how the church can reduce these tripping hazards and make it more accessible.

The concept design should also recognise the potential requirement for staircase access to the gallery above the west end.

4.4 Flower Facilities & Storage

The church currently has a large flower room where the flower arranging basin, worktop, vases and other equipment such as ladders, chairs are stored.

For the flower arranging functions our estimate is that the church needs a minimum area of approximately 2m x 3m (including space for storage of flower arranging equipment), a Belfast sink and approximately 12m of shelving.

The concept design must include purpose designed storage space for the miscellaneous storage (e.g.: ladders, chairs, cleaning equipment) in the west end of church that is not associated with flower arrangement.

4.5 Kitchen Facilities

Hospitality is a key element in church life. The church regularly provides refreshments after services (inc. weddings and funerals) and after fund raising events (such as concerts, organ recitals and fairs)

The existing kitchen is cramped and is currently accessed up 3 steps which presents a hazard.

The concept design should include catering facilities to be able to serve up to 130 people. The facilities should include: oven/hob, microwave, dishwasher, fridge and sink (H&C water) plus storage space for crockery/glasses.

There should also be a serving area

4.6 Electrical Safety and Heating facilities

The church currently has electric heaters in the pews which are controlled by a 24/7 time clock. The heating is programmed to come on in advance of the services and at other times when the church is occupied (e.g.: cleaning)

There are also 14 high level wall mounted radiant heaters which are controlled manually to provide additional heat in the Vestry, Vanderstegen Chapel, Lady Chapel and at the West end. Unfortunately, these radiant heaters overload the power supply to the church and have caused a number of trips and main fuse failures.

As a result, the church has isolated some of these radiant heaters whilst an investigation of alternative heating arrangements is carried out.

In view of the urgency of resolving this before the winter 2018/2019 a member of the church is currently investigating short term heating control options; the results of this investigation will be made available to the architect.

The church is also engaging an electrical engineer to conduct a condition survey and electrical safety review to confirm that the electrical distribution systems are fit for purpose.

However, the Phase 1 architect concept design should include recommendations for efficient and economic alternatives to the heating system in the west end which could be applied in future to the whole church.

4.7 Young People Provision

As described in Section 2 above, there is a desire to provide a more suitable space for 10 or more young children to be able to play with their parents in the west end of the church, and to consider whether better facilities could also be provided for 20+ other children in older age groups.

4.8 West End Gallery & Flower Room Window

Since the organ speakers were removed in 2015, the west end gallery has been unused except for miscellaneous storage.

Although there is no specific requirement to include the gallery in the re-ordering plans, we recognise that once the re-ordering work is completed it will be very difficult to retrofit any access to or refurbishment of the gallery.

For this reason, we request that a review of the gallery is included in the Phase 1 re-ordering.

Also, we would like the architect to consider whether we could expose the Norman window in the current flower room (as this is one of the key historical features of the church).

4.9 South Porch and Church access

One of our considerations is to investigate whether we can leave the church (or at least the entrance porch) open unattended during daylight hours or even 24/7.

The porch has recently been greatly enhanced by the new oak external doors and the inner glass doors, but we consider that the porch is an under-utilised asset. The architect is requested to consider how we could improve the overall impact when entering the porch and create useful space here for displays, seating etc. We also want to consider how we could more usefully use the side door from the porch into the church.

4.10 Future Phases

Whilst the Phase 1 work is focused on the west end of the church, we anticipate that there will be later phases of re-ordering which will cover the whole of the church and possibly the churchyard.

We would ask the architect to consider how the Phase 1 works could be integrated into a wider re-ordering and consider the access requirements for implementing the later phases.

Attachment 1

