

# Church Buildings and Halls Case Studies

Redeveloping Places and Spaces  
for Building God's Kingdom  
in the Diocese of Chester



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester

# **Church Buildings and Halls Case Studies**

Produced by

**Chester Diocesan Board of Finance**

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**Cover Photo: Holy Trinity Church, Blacon**

# Foreword - By Bishop Mark Tanner

## Building for God's Kingdom

*Here's the church and here's the steeple  
Open the door and see all the people...*

Our church buildings stand at the heart of our communities, with our communities, and for our communities. They are places of welcome, thin spaces where we worship and encounter the living God. They are launchpads from which Christians are sent out in mission, and they make space for everyone whether or not they are members of the congregation. They punctuate the landscape of the present, stand as witness to the faith and commitment of previous generations in following the Lord Jesus Christ, and point us to a hope-fuelled future as we pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.



I warmly welcome this booklet; it is a deeply encouraging account of the different ways in which congregations across the Diocese of Chester are developing their buildings to make them more fit for purpose in today's world. Here you will read inspiring accounts of how parishes are discerning a radical vision of how God wants to use his people to reach others with his love. You will discover really practical ideas for improving church facilities. You will learn something of how congregations have raised funding and managed projects. The churches represented here are of many different kinds, sizes and traditions, and from many different settings, so there will be stories relevant to you, whatever your own context.

These case studies have been collected by Emily Allen, the Church Buildings Missioner in the Diocese of Chester, who has been actively involved in many of these projects. Emily's post was initially part-funded by Historic England, to whom we are very thankful. More recently, the enormous value of Emily's work to our parishes has led us to fund her role entirely from our own resources.

As I write these words, we are still in an extraordinary period of time when a global pandemic has greatly restricted the use of our church buildings, and curtailed many vital community activities. These challenges have only served to underline the key role our buildings play, and how good it will be when once more they can act as living centres of our towns, suburbs and villages.

The psalmist wrote that *'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain'* (Ps 127:1). My prayer is that as you read these case studies, you will discover more of what the Lord is doing through his church today.

**The Rt Revd Mark Tanner**  
**Bishop of Chester**

# Foreword - By Judge David Turner QC

## Down Memory Lane

This fascinating booklet has allowed me a heart-warming trip down memory lane as I recalled, through its case studies, some real highlights of my, now 22, years as your diocesan Chancellor.

Long gone are the Statements of Significance and Need, the architects' drawings and reports, the letters of support and objection, the DAC advice, the Faculties granted. Here are the 'finished products' – living buildings doing their job in mission and ministry. They are a joy to behold!

Buildings valued only for their past cease to be historic. They cannot be removed from the flow of history. Yes, change needs to be managed carefully, especially in some of our finest buildings, but it need not be feared as a threat, rather welcomed as evidence of life and growth.

This booklet tells something of that story.

Our buildings not only provide physical space for church and community, they signal Jesus's neighbourly proximity, they speak of God's welcome, warmth and friendship – of the Gospel itself.

And 'first impressions' matter. Our churches are 'open for business'.

Here are some powerful stories from the diocese of vision, creativity, generosity and fruitfulness which you will enjoy.

Here is a lively summary of practical advice and shrewd tips, blunt warnings and confidence-building encouragement which may help the next project.

I remember Bishop Michael Baughen, a former bishop of Chester, saying of building projects (large and small) that the prayer should always be that 'the spiritual will out-match the material'.

These case studies show how that can work. Let's rejoice in them and thank the God who has made them possible.



**His Honour Judge David Turner QC**  
**Chancellor of the Diocese of Chester**

# Reflections on places of worship in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

During the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially timely to consider the benefit of places and spaces where many people may come together. Over the last year, we have re-discovered our humanity lies in meaningful connections with others. We have seen an increased appreciation of spaces for gathered worship and social interaction, as well as spaces for prayer, reflection or support as more people experience bereavement, loss, and/or poor mental wellbeing. National research provides evidence for this:

1. [Churches, COVID-19 and Community: experiences, needs and supporting recovery.](#) By the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture, University of York, March 2021. This shows that churches and their buildings have provided COVID-hit communities with crucial support in social care; well-being (in mind, body and spirit), place-making and heritage; and support for people suffering grief and loss.
2. [House of Good Report](#), by the National Churches Trust, October 2020. This ground-breaking report demonstrates the total economic and social value that church buildings generate in the UK.
3. The government-commissioned [Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant. A report for government by Danny Kruger MP](#), Sept 2020. This report advocates the government 'should be actively supporting the extraordinary work of organisations of all faiths' (p36).



*Just some of the role of churches highlighted in the University of York report.*

Read on to discover how places of worship can be spaces, alongside other places (online or physical), where God's Kingdom can be known in such a time as this.

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# Introduction

People and buildings are our biggest assets in the life of the church, as God invites us to go in the strength we have to unite with Holy Spirit and be part of God's Kingdom coming to earth as it is in heaven, all redeemed under Christ.

This publication focuses on one aspect of this – the dynamic of places and spaces, (church buildings and halls), within mission and ministry. It aims to provide learning and inspiration for parishes seeking to realise the potential of their buildings, and to rejoice in what we have as a Diocese and what can be done to cherish this resource as part of local and national life.

Case studies are written by each church as they reflect on what they did, why, the impact it has made and how it was resourced. They are grouped by the main type of capital works undertaken, although noting many of the stories involve multiple types of works. In addition to the case study themes A) to E), you may also be interested in these electrical works:

- For audio/visual equipment, see case studies 7, 11 and 14
- For lighting, see case studies 7, 13 and 14
- For heating, see case studies 7 and 14

For a list of contributing parishes and their page reference numbers, please see the Acknowledgements page at the back of this publication.

Reflections on the generic learning from all case studies are captured in the second half of the publication. This begins by exploring the extent to which investing in places and spaces contribute to enabling people to meet with the love of God in a myriad of ways. It continues by sharing the lessons learnt from these first-hand experiences, which may be illuminating for other parishes considering similar work in the future.

As you read stories worth sharing of how God is working in people's lives, we hope you too will rejoice in what God has done across the Diocese, as well as reflect on what God may be saying for your own parish. Together, let us further seek God's will for how best places and spaces can be used for making life-long disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, through the power of Holy Spirit.

'Mission, it's been said, is finding out what God is doing and joining in'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, [presidential address at General Synod in 2003](#).

# Raised profile, young generations and services

St Oswald's church, Bollington

## What was done?

In 2003 St Oswald's church had to step up from being the smaller daughter church to become the new Parish church; this was following the enforced closure of Bollington's former Parish church (St John the Baptist) due to structural problems too expensive to remedy. We therefore needed to make improvements to St Oswald's church building to match increased demands on its use both for worship and mission activities.

Following the installation of the 1907 oak altar and the War Memorial wall plaque reclaimed from St John's church, we replaced St Oswald's original rush-seated chairs with multicoloured upholstered chairs supplied by Rosehill, marking St Oswald's centenary in 2008.

We then set about the first phase of our building project- the extension and new entrance. The footprint of land surrounding St Oswald's is relatively small, so we had limited scope to extend outwards. Our solution was to take down the side porch and rebuild it, re-orientated from north to west-facing, (a 90 degree turn). This created a new space along the length (west side) of the building, housing three toilets and a store-room. A large glazed porch linked the extension with the church building. This formed our new main entrance, now fully accessible to all, with a new path leading to the entrance without any steps. This phase of building work cost around £184,000 and was completed in January 2013.

We commissioned a piece of artwork to fill the redundant side-porch doorway which now faced the main road. The external mosaic was a great community project with over 850 people placing individual tiles into the design, including Bishop Peter! *(See the full story on our website: [stoswaldbollington.org.uk](http://stoswaldbollington.org.uk))*



### Why do it?

Our new extension was designed to meet the need for St Oswald's to offer a more visible, accessible and welcoming main entrance, as well as to increase our storage space and toilet facilities (from a single loo to three).

The project was all with a view (for a future phase two) to maximise the available floor space at the west end of the nave, increase the influx of natural light and create better kitchen facilities.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

The new extension and level access entrance have given us the ability to raise our profile within the community and to open our doors more often to cater for a wider range of groups, such as the weekly After-School group for pupils in years 7 to 9 and our growing Praise and Play Parent and Toddler group.

We can also better accommodate larger services, concerts, festival events and social functions within the church (we do not own a church hall), ideally gaining some income from other users (if possible and appropriate) to help meet our maintenance/running costs, as well as aiming to serve a wider variety of evolving community needs.

We now open the church building all day on Wednesdays for people to call in for private prayer, putting the kettle on for refreshments if they wish, with personal reflection sometimes aided by thought-provoking displays, such as over the period of "Thy Kingdom Come". Imaginatively using our flexible space means we can offer Schools' Experience Weeks on biblical themes, reaching about 350 of our local primary school children each year.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

We are increasingly recognised as the Parish church of our community, with a considerable rise in the number of young families feeling more at ease in our refurbished building (greatly enabled too by our newly qualified volunteer Children and Families' Worker).

As we develop as an outward-looking congregation, our versatile space is ideal for Quiet Days and a range of social, charitable and artistic events, all expressing God's love for the world.

### How was it resourced?

The new seating was paid for by fundraising events and donations from individuals in the congregation.

Following careful PCC consideration, our little mission church, Holy Trinity Kerridge, closed in September 2009 with the express agreement that the sale proceeds fund the extension at St Oswald's.

The artwork was generously funded by an anonymous donor in memory of a loved one who had recently died.

# Case Study 1

## Next Phase

We are currently embarked on a “future phase” to make more space at the west end of the nave by re-locating the kitchen into the former main porch area at the southwest side of the nave (on the opposite side from the new glazed porch entrance). To do this, it has meant creating a new fire exit in a former window space on the south wall of the nave, which is nearly complete, and then we can block up the old porch door to create the kitchen space there.



# Welcoming all ages/needs and outreach

St Thomas' church, High Lane

## What was done?

The quinquennial report in 2009 and a subsequent survey of the tower recommended the need to repair the stonework of the tower, coping stones, windows and door surround. We also wanted to make improvements to the building to make it more accessible and usable. To date we have completed three phases:

Phase 1. Three-year project 2014-2016 total project cost £182,700

1. Repair/replacement works to spire including: stonework, weather vane, tie-rod, wooden cross-beam, hopper, pointing, waterproofing, bird netting, cast-iron bell frame and lightning system.
2. Repairs to roof stonework, pointing, spring-stone and parapet, apse string course, lightning system and roof vents.
3. Repair of four windows showing the highest level of deterioration namely three apse windows and one porch window. Repair of the front door stonework surround.
4. New works including disabled access to the front door including a sloping pathway, platform area and handrails; and relaying of the path from the front door and disabled access to the lych-gate.

### Phase 2. 2017 total project cost £15,000

Lowering of the floor in the North Aisle to make a multi-usable space that accommodates wheelchair users, child buggies and an area that is used for displays, events and group activities

### Phase 3. 2017 estimated project cost £15,000

Installation of a paved turning and drop area within the churchyard to alleviate hazardous stopping on a very busy A6 road.



### Why do it?

Our vision is 'St Thomas' is a living church in the community of High Lane where everyone is welcome, and our mission is to share the love of Christ with all.'

To fulfil this vision, St Thomas' had to embark on some major repairs and alterations to make the building fit for use for the present and future generations without the security of having all the funding identified.

The building structure is now secure and weatherproofed but the addition of a stone ramp in keeping with the original building has made it more accessible and visually more attractive.

Equally, having an accessible multi-use area inside the church enables far more activities to take place and not just on Sunday.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

The church has become more prominent in the village of High Lane. Commencing with lots of publicity, especially in our parish magazine telling the community about the repairs and enhancements, keeping a monthly running commentary of progression of the projects. The repairs were highly visible when the tower was covered in scaffolding.

The last phase with the addition of a paved turning and drop area allowed some landscaping that meant the church has a more visible presence from the busy main road.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

The survey in 2014 showed an attendance of 17,740, with a repeat survey in 2016 showed an attendance of 20,982. An increase of 18%. The increase is mainly due to opening the church to regular or occasional events during the week.

The project provided a focus and a kick start for missional outreach and a greater community involvement for St Thomas within the village of High Lane. Reaching out into the community was a first step in bringing people to Christ as well as making the church building available for use by the community for other activities and events.

The alterations to the building provided us with a larger space to hold a Messy Church



## Case Study 2

once a month on Saturday afternoons. We were able to offer the church as a venue for a youth club for teenagers with special needs – C.O.A.S.T (Chill Out at St Thomas’)- enabling a group of young people and their parents space to get together and interact outside their own homes. The provision of the easy access ramp and the removal of pews in the north transept is of great benefit to this group and it continues to develop and grow in number.

For many years it has been church practise to hold a Christmas Fair in the village hall, an event that attracts over 150 people, but with the alterations in church we embarked on a new venture “A Taste of Christmas “, with the event being held in the church, giving more people the opportunity to visit the church building. Other ventures have included a Crib Festival held over several days, a WW1 exhibition, several concerts and talks and a U3A Carol Concert.

Opening the church for greater use by the community has been a great thing to do and having a church that is well maintained and easily accessible is important and I can’t over-state how much everyone using the building values the recent work done to enhance and repair the building. The new entrance elicits many favourable comments and the work on the spire was closely followed by members of the community who have expressed their appreciation that St Thomas’ is prepared to maintain and improve this important building in the life of the community.

### How was it resourced?

**Phase 1:** mainly a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project which took three years of project management activities for design paperwork, money and permissions before any actual work could commence.

HLF grant	£118,700	65%
St Thomas PCC	£40,000	22%
VAT Recovery	£24,000	13%
Total	£182,700	

**Phase 2:** £13,000 was funded by St Thomas PCC fund raising activities and VAT recovery £2,000.

**Phase 3:** was mainly provided by a local building firm, George Cox Ltd, as part of their Foundation Trust and fund raising by St Thomas PCC £3,000.

# Hall refurbishment - Lifelong learning and wellbeing

St John's Community Centre, Buglawton, Congleton

## What was done?

St John's planned to refurbish the kitchen in the church hall, but God and our then Curate The Revd Lynne Cullens had other plans and led us on a new path which was much more challenging. This was now our mission... to show God's love by serving the community and church across the Parish of Congleton by transforming two weary buildings- a derelict schoolmaster's house and an under-used church hall, into a Community Centre, ran by St John's.



We first needed to make our church hall structurally sound. The 150-year-old iron nails were barely holding the roof slates in place, so it was a relief to find that most slates were in good condition. A vapour barrier (the Victorians didn't have such materials) was fitted and the slates refitted with copper galvanised nails. Cast steel guttering and down-spouts finished off the roof. Stone masonry was re-pointed, and all the old windows were replaced with heritage glazed units.

Inside, a huge steel girder now spans the building, creating a large mezzanine floor above the new kitchen space. The entrance is via a new glazed area, linking the renovated schoolmaster house to the hall, allowing access to the hall, kitchen or mezzanine floor without disturbing other groups using these facilities. There is under-floor and roof insulation, exposed original Victorian beams and facilities including high speed internet and an ultra-short throw state-of-the-art HD projector.

The Community Centre focuses on lifelong learning and all aspects of wellbeing (secular, charitable and Christian activities). This was achieved in a way that is relevant to the needs of the local community today, based upon research collated by us and our partners. For example, Cheshire East Council's Local Engagement Team provided support for a local survey, as well as statistics on Buglawton residents' economic, health and social deprivation. This research was foundational to ensure the Community Centre was tailored to meet these needs across all age groups.

### Why do it?

The vision has always been to love our neighbour as ourselves.

The aim of transforming two old weary buildings into a vibrant church-led Community Centre was to create a focus for the community and provide a point of access for services aimed at improving the wellbeing of all residents across Buglawton. Community needs and skills were at the heart of the process at all stages of the project, remaining in-keeping with our Christian principles.

The redeveloped St John's Community Centre offers the people of Buglawton and Congleton a bridge between the community we live in and the facilities and services offered by a range of charities, support agencies, local clubs and the church.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

When it was suggested by various people that we should have a Coffee-Church in the Centre, most thought this would be a really good way of engaging with members of the community who don't often come into church for Sunday worship. Some people thought that Coffee-Church would be best in the morning, others thought that the afternoon would be best...and in true British fashion, 'Tea-Church' was plucked out of the air!

Tea-Church opens conversations about Jesus and everyday life, such as one talk about who did the washing up in your house and why Jesus was so annoyed with those concerned about washing hands, and another on the Lord's Prayer. Everyone joined in a lively and interesting debate. Stopping the discussions was tricky but sandwiches, cakes and tea was an incentive; the catering team excel. Age ranges from 7 to 97. Food and refreshments bond people of all ages together with good fellowship.

We host a popular luncheon club every Friday. This is a most enjoyable time, as some of the guests don't get out without some encouragement. A lift to the Centre is provided free of charge; we hire the Congleton Partner 17-seater community bus, as many do not have their own transport. The meal always starts with grace said very differently by a range of people but always giving thanks to the God who provides all to his people.

St John's Community Centre opens its doors every morning to serve toast and drinks free of charge to all children and parents going to the primary school next door; this is well received. Cookery lessons for a small number of young families has helped with healthy eating as well.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

Volunteers are the bedrock of most of our mission objectives. Being a volunteer means giving time to help the Centre operate and more importantly giving time to sit and talk with people. We have about 30 volunteers from the Parish, other churches and residents who want to do their bit for the community and have a meaningful input that gives them the satisfaction that it's worthwhile.

## Case Study 3

Attendance so far to Tea-Church has been encouraging, with over 35 people attending on occasion. Numbers are growing. In 2017, about 250 people came to the Tea-Church, of which roughly 80 people were, as far as we know, non-church goers, so this was a breakthrough.

The luncheon club every Friday morning forms a successful bridge to Tea-Church. Normally we have about 10 volunteers on a rota basis, including young helper from the David Lewis Centre. Volunteers help prepare and serve a two-course hot meal to about 45 people. In the first year (2017), over 1,000 hours of volunteer time were given towards this worthwhile service...this is truly remarkable...God bless all our volunteers! We served 1,500 meals.

St John's Community Centre had a footfall in the first year of over 11,000 of which about 1/6 was led by or directly linked to church initiatives. This footfall exceeds the forecast used in our grant applications which was up to 10,000 after 5 years. We monitor the centre hours by a crude classification of activities...physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual...the spiritual number of hours was 100 in a total of 1,500 hours last year but is growing.

### How was it resourced?

Parish members kindly donated monthly and some gave surprising large lump sums, as they saw the work progressing and got the message that the project team were serious about the mission of loving our neighbours as ourselves.

Non-church members, the local Authority, Grant providers, WREN (being the largest), residents and a large legacy all helped to raise the £410,000 needed for the project from inception in 2012 to completion in 2016.



# Hall new build - Healthy Church vision

St Mary's Handbridge Centre, Chester

## What was done?

The building of a new Community Centre. The St Mary's old church hall was built in 1969 and in need of constant repair. The hall was used on a regular basis by members of the congregation for church activities and by members of the local community groups. Essentially, however, the hall was one large room with a Parish office, a small kitchen and toilets. A larger building was required with additional rooms to meet the increasing needs of the church and the local community.

church-based youth groups had flourished in the past, but they had declined, partly because of the lack of suitable accommodation and adequate facilities.

The stimulus to build not just a church hall but a full Community Centre started because of two requirements. Firstly, the need to replace the ageing building and secondly the results of a Healthy church event, which highlighted the need to reach out to other people. The vision was established for the church and a new Centre to become the active hub of the local community in Handbridge.

In 2014 the PCC took the decision to proceed with the building of a Community Centre.

## Why do it?

In 2014, the vision of the PCC was to: 'Build a Centre which will be the active focus of the community. The vision is to re-vitalise the life of the whole community and the work of the church in the Parish of Handbridge in Chester'.

The Healthy Church Day in 2014 revealed that, as Christians, we needed to reach out to support and serve the local community. With such a large project and funding challenge we moved forward in faith and with prayer that all will be well in achieving God's will.



## Case Study 4

Extensive consultation took place with the church congregation and the local community to determine what was required from a new building to meet the needs of both the church and people in the area. The results of the consultation led to the development of a design brief for the architect. At every stage during the planning of the Centre, people were asked for their views on the design. This ensured the building design matched the needs identified and our vision.

### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

So many people have worked together to raise money; evidence of their commitment to a development that will benefit the whole community. When the building was completed, over 250 people attended the opening of the Centre by the Bishop of Chester in June 2018.

From the interest and support already shown by people throughout the Parish, we believe St Mary's and the Centre is starting to become the hub of the community.

The Centre has a large hall and two community rooms. However, the actual hub of the Centre is a servery area that is open to all to make refreshments. This very much a meeting and social area. This is already seen as a very successful part of the Centre design and has a focus on addressing social isolation.

The rooms in the Centre have been named after people of Handbridge who lived in the 1800's on the site of the church before it was built in 1887. The family names are also mentioned on the First World War Memorial Plaque in St Mary's church.

The two delicatessen shops in Handbridge are also benefitting through events in the Centre that require catering. The local community Police Officer uses the Centre as a base and can use a small meeting room for private discussions.



### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

At the time of writing, the Centre has only been open for a year. It is too early to assess the full impact in terms of spiritual growth. When at the planning stage, many visits were made to other church halls and centres. One of the results from this research indicated that a new Centre often leads on to a growth in the congregation over time.

The Centre is regularly used for Baptism parties and funeral events. All the regular church-based meetings are held in the Centre. The Chester 'Churches Together' forum often use the Centre as a venue for their meetings. The building of the Centre is a visible witness to our Christian ethos at St Mary's to reach out, support and care for people in the Parish of Handbridge. Over fifty groups and organisations use the Centre on a regular basis and the Centre has become a hub for community activities.

For the first time, in addition to a Parish Office, the Rector has his own dedicated office in the Centre. This has provided the opportunity for the Rector to meet people of all ages when they use the Centre. During the first year the Centre has been managed by a group of dedicated volunteers from the congregation and the local community. This is a witness to their love and care for others.

On Christmas Day 2018, a group of people from the community provided a free Christmas meal and entertainment for seventy people who were on their own, students who could not go home and the elderly. This was a real expression of Christian love and met our vision of reaching out to the whole community.

With a building project of this size there will be many problems and challenges to overcome, but if you have faith, you will create a building to extend God's Kingdom.

### **How was it resourced?**

Fundraising began in 2014. We were fortunate in receiving several large donations. These included generous private donations of £250,000 and £100,000. The sale of the old Rectory raised £150,000 and £200,000 was donated from the Grosvenor Estate, Pledges from the congregation raised £100,000. With a build cost of £1,230,000 and fees of £250,000 this still left a substantial amount of money to be raised. The remaining money required was raised through applications to Trusts and Foundations, and fundraising events organised by many people over the four-year period. We were very grateful for the active help of the Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Razia Daniels and the Chester MP Chris Matheson in supporting fundraising initiatives.

A 20-year loan of £250,000 was taken out with Methodist Chapel Aid, so that building could start in 2017. (The repayment of this loan is through the income generated by the Centre).

A grant from the Big Lottery of £78,000 enabled the complete fitting-out of the Centre to be undertaken.

At the end of the first year of the Centre being open, the income covered the outgoing costs of running the Centre and the annual loan repayments.

# Hall and church synergy - families and older people

St Peter's church, Heswall

## What was done?

The project was to provide the Parish church of St Peter, Heswall, with modern, adequate facilities for its growing congregations in the 21st century. The vision was launched in 2003.

The major phase was to replace a small, antiquated, wooden hall built in the 1960s. The new St Peter's Centre is a 400m<sup>2</sup> modern multi-user facility, which fronts directly on to Village Road. This phase was completed in July 2007 and it is the focus of this case study.

There was a much smaller second phase that was carried out in the first half of 2011. The interior of the church was completely cleaned, repainted, rewired, re-lit and provided with audio-visual facilities, a crèche, a nave platform and disabled access.

## Why do it?

Our parish vision was, and still is, to be a church for the whole community of Heswall. St Peter's church is sited on the western edge of the town on a promontory overlooking the River Dee close to the older 'lower-village' which is a designated conservation area.

There was a 1960s small hall, hidden from view, between the church and Village Road. This wood-framed building was in very poor condition with antiquated facilities and inadequate space. The concept was to build a multiuser facility that fronted onto Village Road, enhanced the village environment and opened a view of the church behind it.



### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

The St Peter's Centre has become a key hub in the lower village. It houses the parish office (which is open weekday mornings) and the Rector's office.

There is a large, carpeted, welcoming foyer with round coffee tables in which a drop-in operates on weekday mornings. All the Centre's rooms and facilities are accessed from the foyer. The comfortable meeting room, hall and foyer have large full-length windows overlooking a lawn. The hall is equipped with excellent audio/visual facilities. It is linked to the large well-equipped kitchen by a reasonably sized annex to facilitate the serving of food and which also can be used as another meeting room. The fixtures and fittings are of a high standard appropriate for Heswall.

The entrance is on the same level as Village Road, so it is easily accessible for families and those using walking aids.

The building is in use seven days a week by church groups for both children and adults, uniformed organisations, local community groups, funeral receptions, children's parties and privately-run sessions for pre-school children and adults' fitness.

### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

The project has had very positive impacts in both spiritual and numerical terms on our diverse congregations. Church attendance includes many families as well as large numbers of retired people. So there is a broad range of Sunday services including an informal family service at 11am with music group and activities for children, a 9.15am common worship Communion service with robed choir and organ and BCP services at 8.00am and 6.30pm.

#### ***Impact on families***

On the 1st Sunday in the month the 11am service moves into the Centre for Café Church in which the whole family are engaged. On another two Sundays each month children move into the Centre during the service.

The audio/visual facilities in both the Centre and church building have given greater flexibility in modes of presentation (including use of internet and YouTube), thus creating services that are visually stimulating and relevant to families with little previous church connections. Using the nave dais in the church building has brought the leaders close to the people.

Facilities such as the glass-fronted crèche with A/V links, activities for younger children and the easy safe access have encouraged families to come.

Our church school attracts new families and now more are becoming committed. During the week there are many events in the Centre for children.

The foyer has created a pleasant, safe, welcoming and waiting area for parents.

## Case Study 5

### *Impact on the older generation*

During the week large numbers of our retired members have become involved in helping run the daily drop-in, weekly lunch club and other events in the Centre for the local community. These activities plus the refreshments there after church services have built up a much more caring, outward-looking, collaborative and welcoming church community.

The working together in the Centre, plus the use of service booklets related to the church calendar and use of audio-visual facilities in church, has created a stronger sense of togetherness at the traditional church services.

Home group numbers have increased, and many new people have become regular attendees at Sunday services.

However, overall numbers at the traditional services have not increased greatly over the past 10 years because new members are needed just to replace those who have passed on.

The midweek Communion service is now held in the warm, easily accessible meeting room in the Centre followed by coffee at the drop-in. This setting has created a welcoming environment.

### **How was it resourced?**

The major phase cost £850,000. It was primarily funded by an appeal, mainly from church members, which eventually raised £670,000.

The parish was successful in being awarded a BIFFA award grant of £50,000. The parish owned the original of an altar picture that was loaned to a museum in Liverpool and this was sold to a museum in Chester for £40,000. A small building on Village Road that had been used as the Parish office was sold for £102,000.

The £130,000 cost of the second phase was funded by donations and some surplus from the first phase appeal.



# Community café, outreach and worship

Holy Trinity church, Blacon, Chester

## What was done?

A kitchenette was installed in the south-east corner of the church building, to make it easier to run our popular community café, which previously was held in the nearby church hall.

Additionally, the worship space was altered, building a platform out from the chancel and removing three rows of pews, to bring the High Altar nearer the congregation and in effect shortening the nave a little. New altar rails were made to fit the platform, designed to be easily removable so that the space created could be more adaptable.

We also installed an accessible WC and ramp adjoining the choir vestry, so the building is now fully disabled friendly.

## Why do it?

To improve our connections as a church with the local community, we started our Outreach Project in autumn 2013. This proved to be very successful, and a popular community café became a central feature of the project, (alongside a parent and toddler group and a gardening club).

Initially the café was designed to be in the corner of the church hall, running alongside a GP surgery that also uses the church hall. Due to the success of our café, and the noise this generated causing disruption for the surgery, it became necessary to move the café into the church building. This proved to be even more popular!

However, we had no facilities for preparing or serving drinks or food in the church, and everything had to be set up from scratch before café sessions (and cleared away afterwards). This was very time consuming and heavy work for volunteers we would otherwise want to be using their time and gifts for other aspects of our project.





Another problem was the size of the church building was usually far too great for the size of the congregation. The organ and choir are at the back, so not easily possible to move the congregation further forward. Moreover, the layout of the sanctuary and nave was entirely based around formal Eucharistic worship. There was very little space to do more flexible worship. So, being able to make alterations to the worship area frees us up to consider more imaginative options for worship.

### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

Not only alterations, but new carpeting, repainting the walls and sanding the floor give effect of feeling as though we have renewed the whole church building. The quality of the workmanship, and the sympathetic way the woodwork has been done, has impressed most visitors. church members who were highly ambivalent about the works beforehand have spoken enthusiastically about it since seeing it completed.

The free Wi-Fi now available in the church enables us to become a venue for computer training. Additionally, we have now been able to start using a card reader to receive payments and donations, and we also now have the option of using online material during worship.

The accessible WC – as well as the more modern inviting feel of the building – has enabled other groups to plan to use our building as a venue. It also means that we regularly have people using mobility aids coming to church services or the community cafe.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

The biggest numerical growth has been in the fringe of the church membership. We have about 200 people coming regularly to our community outreach project. Additionally, many hundreds of people come to us to the activities we hold during school holidays. We have seen new members of the church join through these various activities. In addition, because of the new layout at the front of church, we have changed our worship pattern, including contemporary worship (using the platform created at the East end of the nave) which was previously not possible. This new service, which has only just started, is much more seeker-friendly and we hope will attract more young people.

Because of the layout of the building, we have also been able to introduce a spiritual element to the community café, with a dedicated prayer space.

### How was it resourced?

We had quotes for the building and joinery work which came to almost £40,000. By the time 'extras' had been paid for with the building project, (such as trimmings which had not been in the original designs for the kitchenette, including a dishwasher and installation of Wi-Fi in the church) the total spend was about £54,000. We are a relatively small church in a deprived urban estate (only a minority of church members can gift aid, for example). So, although in the scheme of church alterations that amount of money does not sound very great, it is enormous for us.

At the start of the process, we received a payment of £2,000 from Rowlinsons (building developers who had been working on new housing opposite the church and had temporarily placed their site office on our grounds) which the PCC decided to set aside for the building project.

We received £7,300 in private donations from church members, and fundraising (through Christmas Fair, pancake day etc) raised £1,400.

We would never have been able to attain our target without the support of grant making bodies. We received a total of £41,000 in grants, therefore the total raised before the start of building work was £51,700. Grants were promised or received from the following organisations:

Dame Susan Morden Charity	£20,000
National Churches Trust	£10,000
All Churches Trust	£1,250
Beatrice Laing Trust	£2,000
Ursula Keyes Trust	£2,000
Rylance Smith Trust	£750
WO Street Trust	£5,000
TOTAL	£41,000

# Seven-day-a-week ministry

St Michael and All Angels church, Macclesfield

## What was done?

What started out as plans to refurbish two existing toilets in the Parish room resulted in a nationally recognised award-winning scheme, both for the church and our Architects, Barlow Wright and Phelps of Buxton.



St Michael's church, located in the heart of the town of Macclesfield, has been a place of worship since the end of the thirteenth century. By 1997, its fabric and facilities spoke of a past age. What was needed in the eyes of the church council was a complete "makeover" to the whole of the interior if we were to continue in our mission, worship and service in making known the unchanging message of the gospel of Christ in our town today.

So began a five-year period of appointing an architect, visiting various churches for ideas, feasibility studies, refurbishment plans, liaising with Chester Diocese, the Consistory Court, raising funds and campaign launch until tenders for the proposed project were issued and the contractor appointed in 2003.

The project was to completely refurbish the west end of the church, with the Narthex (welcoming area), supporting two floors above, providing rooms for meetings and choir practice, while at ground floor level the plan allowed for a modern kitchen, additional toilets, the installation of a lift and new oak staircase, and office space for the administration staff. The interface wall between the Narthex and upper floors and the Nave was divided with bespoke cut-glass panels by Pilkington Glass, giving dramatic visual views from both sides.

The whole of the interior stonework was cleaned, new lighting and sound systems installed, along with new electric cabling. The old heating system updated together with a new boiler. The organ console moved, the organ pipes cleaned in the worship areas, the existing wood block floor polished and sealed, carpets laid in the Narthex and the meeting rooms. The old parish room was refurbished into a Youth Centre adjacent to the Chancel. On completion, a new octagonal platform was placed in the centre of the Nave for the communion table.

## Case Study 7

Overall, a very challenging twelve months contract period both for the contractor and the church family. While the works were being carried out between the summer of 2003 and 2004, the congregation were grateful for the invitations to use the Town Hall and Methodist church for Sunday worship. Throughout the planning and building stages, the foundation of the project from start to finish was underpinned with prayer and faith by the whole of the church family and friends.

### Why do it?

Although the existing church with its great historic fabric was in a prime location in the town centre, it remained locked for most of the working week. The inside lacked many modern facilities as well as being dark, gloomy and not very inviting.

From our many meetings and discussions, it became obviously clear that there was a great desire not only to provide modern amenities for the present and future congregations but to “open the doors” to share the Good News of Christ to the wider community. There was a great need for a seven-day ministry especially to those being in town during the working week and weekends, whether they be shoppers, office staff, tourists, as well as providing a friendly meeting place, suitably equipped for those wishing to host events.

Our refurbishment plans had to achieve their aims of transforming a forbidding interior into an open, accessible, warm and well-lit environment with modern, well-equipped facilities, with volunteers on hand to welcome people in and to provide the resources to meet their needs.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

For the building, we have contributed to its general long-term maintenance. Now the better access and the introduction of the three storey Narthex with staircase to the two upper floors has increased the viewing of the many stained-glass windows, but most importantly the refurbished church has increased greatly the footfall especially during town centre events such as Treacle Market Sunday and Barnaby Week. There have been times when we have been overwhelmed by the numbers coming into church. The building is now capable of accommodating concerts, festival events, meetings, training and counselling sessions, as well as being a brighter and friendlier environment for younger people or Mums and Toddler groups which are a weekly feature, as are our evolving contacts with various schools.

We now open seven days a week with refreshments served every morning enabling the public to visit the historic features and the many interesting and inspirational exhibitions, along with the opportunity to meet informally with members of staff to discuss any spiritual or emotional concerns. Two excellent and well-received exhibitions were by an artist displaying modern icon paintings, and a collection of light alabaster sculptures illustrating the feelings of grief and loss. Any income received from events helps towards our running costs as well as serving the needs of our wider community.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

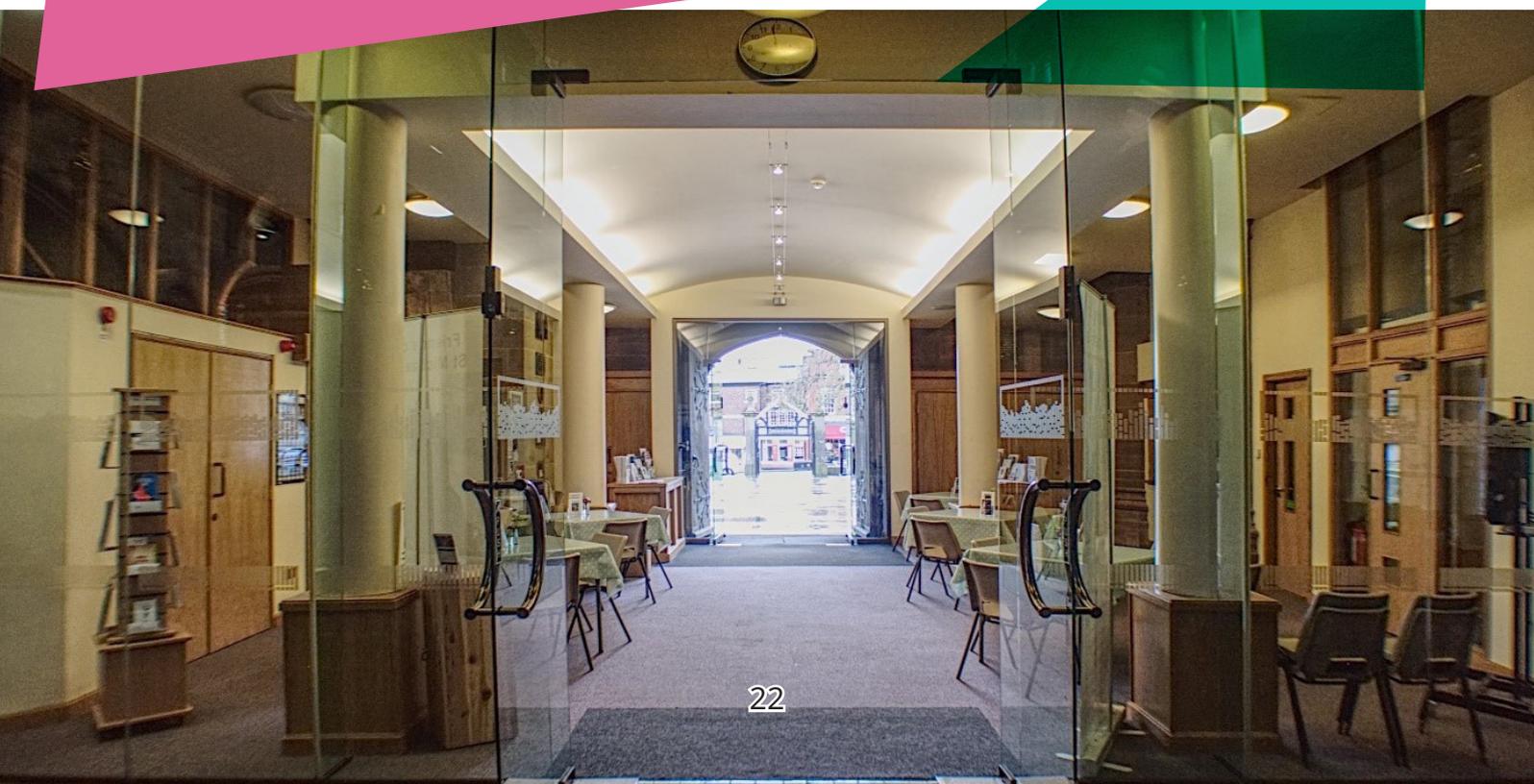
We have all been amazed with the increase in numbers who now visit St Michael's since the completion of the project. Opening the doors to the wider community with a newly-refurbished interior with acceptable amenities, has enabled us to provide much needed facilities for mother and toddler groups, a friendly stopping-off environment for morning shoppers, a meeting place for events, as well as a challenge for widening the church's ministry.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of young families using the building both on Sundays and during the week, as well as the increase number of schools who regularly attend services and various activities.

However, the main change has been from our own congregation who have accepted their wider role in being more welcoming, outward-looking, confident and more responsive in taking out the unchanging message of our Lord to the more challenging areas in our town.

### How was it resourced?

The overall project cost was in the region of £1.5m including professional fees and interest charges from Charity Bank for borrowing a loan, which enabled the project to go ahead in 2003. Without the loan we would more than likely have had to defer the building works for the best part of another year, which with inflation could have added an additional £50k to the overall costs.



## Case Study 7

From our Treasurer's notes, the sources of income are divided as follows:

1. Legacies	27%
2. Gifts – Pledges and	39%
3. Sale of Property (the sale of the Parish Office on Churchside)	17%
4. Gift Aid Refunds	8%
5. Events	2%
6. Bank Interest Received	6%
7. Sales of goods and services	1%

It was the decision of the church council members, backed by the overwhelming majority of the congregation, not to seek funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We had received a grant from English Heritage prior to this major project for repairs to stonework but with the amalgamation of English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund we had no alternative but to apply for funds from the newly-named Heritage Lottery Fund for work in repairing our lead roofing on the Chancel and part of the Nave in 2013.

One long-standing member of the church, who had seen all the improvements and outcomes take place, stated "You know, the biggest change which took place when all this [work to the inside of the church] was done took place up here", pointing to her head. She had recognised that prior to 'Open Door' the church community had been contentedly meeting together and using the building for worship. Although 'Open Door' was intended to be a means of welcoming people INTO the building, it also had the effect of helping the church members see OUT and recognise God's call to serve our neighbourhood.

St Michael's church is now at the early stages of 'what next?' The church is open every day of the week, and used and appreciated by many more people than before any of the above work took place. As a fellowship we are also acknowledged to be an interested and committed 'force for good' within our part of town. So what next? How can we further develop our sense of mission? What additional opportunities are there and resources do we need?

Building on the experience of 'Open Door' we are returning to the process of discernment under God: "Who is God calling St Michael's church to be?", and from that then "What do we need to do as a community and to our building to fulfil that sense of God-given vocation?". To be continued ...!

# Mid-week growth and welcome

**Holy Trinity church, Little Bollington, in the United Benefice of Rostherne with Bollington, High Legh and Over Tabley**

## What was done?

Holy Trinity is a small church built in 1858 and situated on the outskirts of the village of Little Bollington and next to the local Church of England Primary School. The strapline of the parish magazine is 'Church and Community Working Together' and in 2010 it was decided that to further that vision the two vestries at the west end church should be re-ordered to provide an accessible toilet and kitchen, and that the font which was sited between them should be moved to the front so as to provide space for refreshments after services and other church and community activities.

As part of the re-ordering it was also decided to create ramps to the north porch from the car park and the road. Although Holy Trinity is not a listed building, the desire of the congregation was that the re-ordering should make as much use of the existing fabric of the vestries as possible in the construction of the new facilities.

A Faculty and planning consent were granted in 2012, work commencing shortly afterwards. Except for electrical wiring, and the laying of tarmac, all work was undertaken by volunteers from the congregation and community. That meant the construction took longer than it would have if a contractor had been employed, but the financial saving was significant.

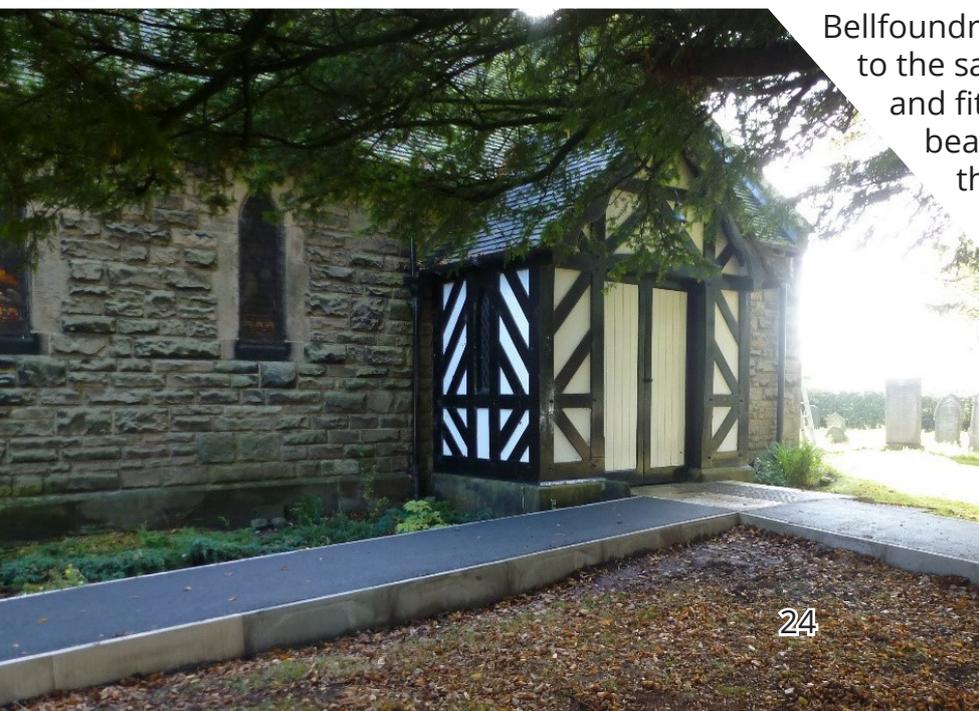
During construction the wiring had its regular inspection and was deemed unsafe. Therefore, the whole building was rewired, and the opportunity taken to install new lighting. Asbestos in the boiler room, discovered during the rewiring, was tested and found to be the least harmful variety. It was removed by members of the congregation and disposed of by a licenced operator.

The organ is unusual in that it is the village memorial to those who served in 1914-1918 War. It was decided that we have it completely rebuilt in time for the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.

The bellcote needed repointing so we took the opportunity to remove the church bell which had been cast by Taylor's Bellfoundry in 1877 and take it back to the same foundry to be restored and fitted to a new headstock. New bearing blocks were fitted into the stonework of the bellcote.

At the same time a new weathervane was made to match an image in an original painting of the church.

A new gate to the churchyard was commissioned and installed.



## Case Study 8

The ceilings of the chancel and nave have been renewed using insulation backed plaster board and scaffolding was used to make repairs to degraded areas of plaster in the church. The scaffolding was paid for by a donation and the materials were paid for by the congregation.

### Why do it?

The reordering was intended to make Holy Trinity accessible to the congregation and to encourage increased use by the community. It was also intended to make the church accessible to the school next door which has close links with the church.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

During the design and Faculty process, some members of the congregation expressed doubts about the need to change a building that they had known and loved for many years. At a public meeting to explain what we proposed to do, there were some interesting comments! However, as we continued to explore the way forward, people began to catch a vision of what was possible.

The construction phase, which lasted 18 months, was well received and a vehicle for community cohesion. The place of Holy Trinity church in the community has been enhanced, and the role of the church increasingly recognised. Sub-committees of the local Parish Meeting have met in the church when their usual venue was unavailable. As one of only two fully accessible churches in the United Benefice (four churches in three parishes), Holy Trinity now hosts amongst other events: -

- A midweek 'Communion and Cake' for people from across the Benefice who, for various reasons, are unable to attend Sunday services.
- A monthly school assembly where groups from all year groups take turns to ring the bell before the service.
- Flower festivals and a 'Songs of Praise' during the annual Little Bollington Festival.
- Special events for children at Easter and Christmas.
- An outside vigil service around a fire at Easter.



### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

There has been slight growth in the numbers coming to Sunday services. The main impact of the project has been the increased number coming to midweek services. Having a fully accessible building makes it a great resource.

### **How was it resourced**

The reordering, rewiring and new lights were paid for by fundraising events and individual donations.

All the labour was given by members of the congregation and community.

A local farmer gave free use of a mini digger to install new drainage and the water treatment plant. A local landowner gave a corner of the field adjacent to the churchyard for the water treatment plant so that it did not take up space in the churchyard.

The organ restoration was part funded by a grant from the War Memorials Trust, the balance being paid for by the congregation.

The bell was restored by a local family in memory of their daughter on what would have been the year of her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

A local blacksmith made and donated the weathervane and made a railing for the ramp which was designed to match the wrought iron balustrade on the stairs to the pulpit.

# Church in the community

St Thomas' church, Stockton Heath

## What was done?

Our Quinquennial report in 2008 identified major restoration and renovation work required to restore our church and tower. We also wanted to make improvements to the building. So far, three of the five phases are completed at £250k each:

Phase One, 2009, urgently addressed dry rot in our roof, replaced the central roof valley and roof over the organ loft and Vicar's vestry, re-routed and replaced water goods and downspouts.

Phase Two, 2011, replaced the north and south roof slopes, restored failing masonry to the south porch and installed a sloping floor for disabled access.

Phase Three was our most ambitious project. It involved re-roofing and extensive restorative masonry work to the historic Tower, renewal of louvres, renovation of the clock combined with the installation of a ring of ten bells. We also redesigned our dated kitchen and toilet facilities to include facilities for disabled visitors.

## Why do it?

Situated in the heart of the busy village of Stockton Heath, our church strives to be a 'church in the community' with a focus on bringing God's love to this community. Our church has opened daily for over 10 years, with volunteers on hand to provide a listening ear, comfort and refreshment.

The projects were based on the underlying belief that 'church' means this happy mix of theory, theology and practicality with a pastoral thread throughout, making God visible in our community through hospitality, welcome and generosity.

To achieve these aims we therefore needed an open, accessible, weatherproof, warm and well-equipped place to welcome people into.





### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

It has preserved our beautiful church building for generations to come.

The project has also improved the internal space, facilities and comfort. There are no public toilets in Stockton Heath; therefore, fully accessible toilet facilities were important. The improved kitchen has helped run our community café and provide refreshments for services and groups.

Our restored and improved building has meant we can serve the community in different ways, including Foodbank Warrington, Credit Union Weekly, Pathways to Recovery (a service for drug and alcohol misuse), children's groups, hosting health open days, concerts, art, school visits and services, accommodate Melody Makers a Community Choir. We set up a quiet prayer corner for visitors.

Our historic bells were salvaged and restored, and we developed our own band of bell ringers, some of whom are drawn from the community. We were delighted to host the Annual Meeting and meal for the Cheshire Guild of Bell ringers.

### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

These large, challenging projects have fostered a spirit of collaboration, self-belief and achievement through faith amongst our existing congregations.

'Open Church' is valued and well attended by the community and the improved amenities have enhanced this. Being at the centre of Stockton Heath, Open Church has made St Thomas' more a centre of community. Ten years ago, we were open only on Sundays and Thursdays- now our Open Church 'welcomers' make St Thomas' a really warm and welcoming place for prayer, refreshment and quiet 24/7.

It is difficult to make a correlation between our enhanced building and numbers who come to church. However, we are maintaining numbers which bucks the national trend and in some areas our numbers are increasing (this Christmas we had more attending than ever before in the last 10 years and our usual weekly attendance went from 185-233 from 2008 to 2014.) We are a popular wedding venue with 11 weddings in 2017. We have a new bell ringing band of 8 some of whom are new to church.

Our families and children's ministry have grown through *Story Church*.

## Case Study 9

### **Story Church**

A versatile area at the back of the church building has created space to grow our children's ministry. Realising there was no provision for pre-school children other than a crèche at our main Family Service, and a real need to draw in young families into our church, a group of volunteers set up *Story Church*. They meet for half an hour at the back of the church building every third Sunday and each Sunday during August. Since its beginnings in 2014, it has grown from a small group to over twenty little ones. They have welcomed parents and carers from all backgrounds and nationalities.

*Story Church* has provided a link between our church primary school, pre-school activities that run during the week, and fills a natural bridge so that little ones can slowly be integrated into our Sunday School.

Some of our regular parents are now joining our church. We have had several baptisms and a church wedding from among our little congregation.

Older members of our congregation are taking an interest and often come early to join in; this intergenerational mix has strengthened our church family.

It is no coincidence that *Story Church* had helped to influence the congregation to support the appointment of a full-time Parish, Youth, Children's and Family Worker.

### **How was it resourced?**

Grants from the then English Heritage (Phase One -£199,350 and Phase Two £199,350) and latterly Heritage Lottery Fund GPOW Phase Three £202,700).

Phase Three bells- Cheshire Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers (funding and advice), The Sharpe Trust and Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust. National Churches Trust gave a small grant towards structural work.

On each occasion we undertook an internal financial appraisal to determine the Parish contribution to the works and likely fundraising possibilities. Considerable and generous contributions from our congregations and the local community. During the first two projects we had a dedicated 'Fund Raising Action' group, which managed to raise approximately £10,000 per year. We also established a Friends of St Thomas' group to try to encourage external support from the community and those who attend church for Baptisms/ Weddings.



# Care and welcome

St Peter's church, Waverton

## What was done?

A small extension was built onto the church building. It is in the external space that existed between the west wall of the South Aisle and the Boiler Room. This extension comprises an easy access toilet and a small kitchenette. Additionally, this facility has an external door which allows a second exit from the church.

## Why do it?

The PCC has, over several years, discussed the need for a toilet at the church.

Increasingly, the pressure from members of the congregation to seriously address this issue grew.

The closest toilet facility was at the Burley Hall, some 200 yards away. Whilst this is an excellent facility, there were numerous occasions when the distance of these toilets became a source of acute embarrassment and discomfort to our congregation and other users.

These difficulties were compounded by the fact that the church had only one door and there were circumstances, such as at funerals, when the exit through this door was a very slow process.

Additionally, the recent strategies for growth at St Peter's resulted in more and more young families with children attending regularly. It became clear that a baby changing or feeding facility would be a very useful addition.

The inclusion of the small kitchenette was possible in the space available and the intention is to use it following church events, such as Carol Services.



### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

The provision of an easy access toilet has been of considerable advantage to the pastoral well-being and comfort of our parishioners. An advantage that is equally appreciated by the many occasional visitors to the church.

One or two elderly members of our congregation who had stopped coming to our Sunday services for the want of a toilet have now returned and are clearly delighted that this provision now enables them to fully engage again with worship at St Peter's.

### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

The growth in regular attendance at Sunday services, particularly by young families, some with very young children, is testament to the wisdom of making this provision.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, there are members of our congregation who have returned to regular attendance, secure in the knowledge that they will no longer suffer the discomfort and embarrassment as hitherto.

### **How was it resourced?**

The funds were provided in the main by a donation from the Horace Burley Trust, a Trust which is solely dedicated to St Peter's church. An additional private donation of £10,000 was used to supplement this major donation.



# Community, mission and hospitality

St Philip and St James' church, Alderley Edge

## What was done?

Our 2010 Quinquennial Report gave us the unwelcome news that there was rusting ironwork in our Victorian spire, causing "bursting" of the stonework inside and out, potentially hazardous to passers-by and to the stability of the spire itself. Rectification is now (2018) complete, but for reasons outlined below it took us a considerable time to tackle the rebuilding of the upper section of the spire, removing all the existing ironwork and inserting new stainless-steel reinforcement where necessary. We also had the tower below fully re-pointed, with the replacement of eroded stone blocks and carved features.

Taking full advantage of the Heritage Lottery Fund's extra "new works" offer of up to 15% under their Grants for Places of Worship scheme, we set up a new community area at the rear of the church building, now known as the West End. This entailed a detailed consultation about removing the existing pews and then agreeing the layout and design of new toilets, a kitchen facility and adaptable space. The oak timber from the pews was reworked to form the kitchen enclosure and a range of full height cupboards, incorporating a television screen for talks and presentations.

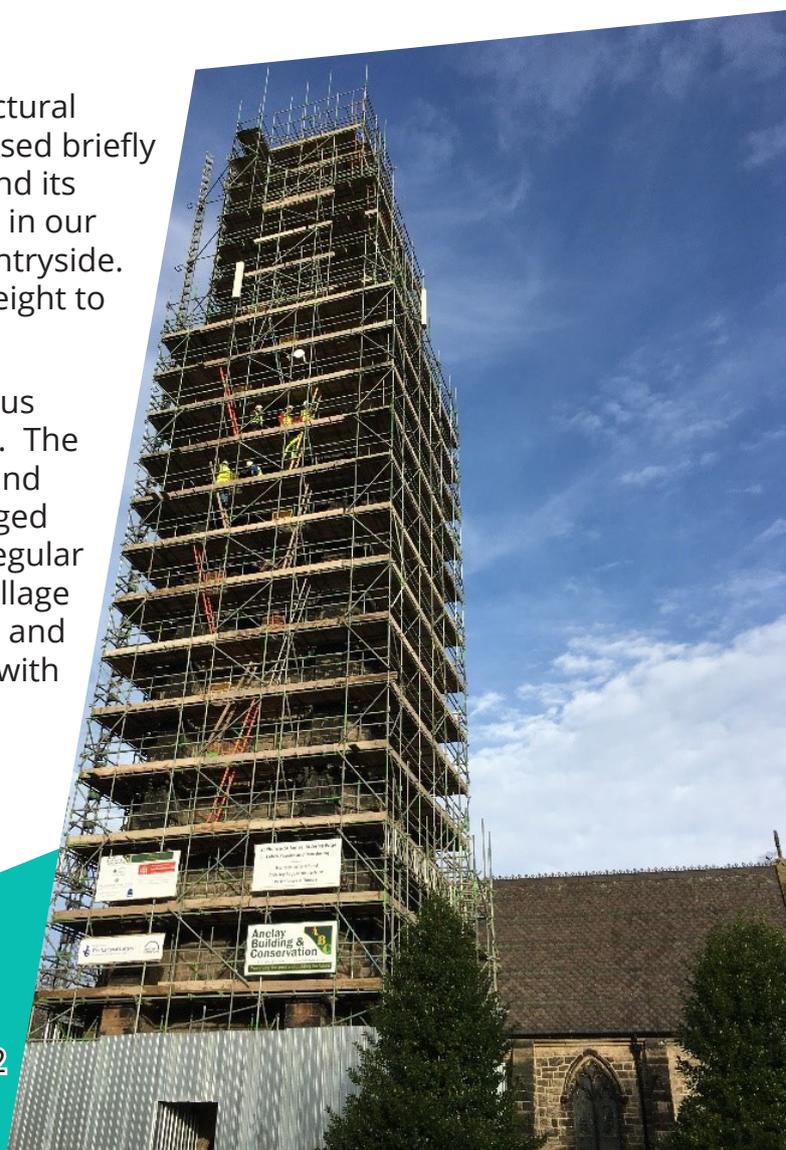
The entire project reached completion in mid-2017 and was duly blessed and declared open by Bishop Peter on Sunday 30 July.

## Why do it?

We had no alternative but to tackle the structural problems in our spire. The question was raised briefly "Why do we need a spire?" but our church and its spire are very much a feature and landmark in our village and in the surrounding Cheshire countryside. Also having Grade II\* Listed status added weight to the restoration requirement.

However, we did not at first see the enormous benefits that we would win from the project. The mere fact of having a fully scaffolded spire and the stonemasons' yard next door to it, engaged great interest with the wider community. Regular features and reports on the Alderley Edge village website kept the local community informed, and were helpful with fund-raising, for example with our "Re-gild the Cockerel" campaign for the weather vane.

The re-ordering of the West End has led to a whole range of contacts and involvement with the wider community.



## Case Study 11

We set to work with the local History Group and as a result we now house their archive and artefacts, acting as the only local Heritage Centre and providing facilities for meetings and lectures. An art class meets in the West End, as does a dementia-friendly singing group, a bereavement support group, a film club and an after-school drama club. The facilities are available for post-baptism and funeral gatherings. We hold concerts and discussion events, with post-event refreshments using the new facilities. The church is kept open every day and overall, we feel confident that we are offering a warm welcome to visitors, whatever their reasons for calling in.

### **What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?**

The fabric of the spire and tower are now in good condition for many years to come.

The interior of the church has been transformed by the creation of the West End facilities. Our church community was consulted and was almost unanimous in approving the many changes made, and there is now very wide support for what has been achieved.

Many of the congregation now stay on for coffee, biscuits and a chat after Sunday services. Mid-week communion is followed by well-attended informal lunch. The wider community is increasingly aware of all that we have to offer; attendance is good at our concerts and other public events and we have launched a greatly improved website to keep people informed.

### **Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?**

The project and its extended implementation period brought together several groups within our church community, helping to plan and manage the many aspects of the repair work, the fund-raising and the exciting new facilities. This process was harmonious and enormously valuable. The mere fact of being involved brought a great sense of teamwork in often difficult and demanding situations, particularly as our previous Vicar moved on to a new post part-way through the project.

Having a space at the back of church for welcoming people and socialising has made our fellowship feel central to our life as a church. This strengthens us as a body of Christ and also demonstrates to new-comers what being part of the body of Christ might mean to them.

Being able to organise non-church events inside the church building draws people into the building who might not otherwise enter and also serves to break down mental barriers people might have about entering the building and engaging with what goes on inside it.



## Case Study 11

Having activities taking place within the church building that are clearly meant to be of service to others and yet do not place on people an obligation to join us for worship has helped us to get across to the community that we seek to love them for who they are in the name of a God who loves them for who they are.

The gentle decline in our overall membership and worshipping numbers has been halted and many of the new people joining us get to know us via activities which we are only able to organise because we have this new facility.

### **How was it resourced?**

We went through a very substantial learning experience in coping with the project and in funding it. Our initial application to English Heritage (EH) was partially successful but they advised us that our remedial work proposals were less than satisfactory. At their suggestion we then moved on to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which was at that time taking over from EH with grant awards.

Our first attempt with the HLF failed but we were given very positive feedback and advised to explore further how we would engage with and benefit the wider community beyond our regular congregation. Building on this advice we tried again with the HLF and were delighted to be awarded £286,100, subject of course to fulfilling the various stage requirements imposed with the grant.

We were also most grateful for awards from the Alderley Edge Institute Trust, the All churches Trust, the National churches Trust and the Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust. In addition, we raised some £140,000 from generous individual donations and a variety of fund-raising events, and we were of course fortunate to be able to reclaim almost all the VAT payable (through the Listed Places of Worship scheme). Inevitably we experienced a diminution in our regular income from donations and collections, making it harder than usual to meet the demands of the Parish Share and other day-to-day costs and overheads.

# Town centre church vision

St Peter's church, Congleton

## What was done?

St Peter's Congleton is one of four churches in the Parish of Congleton. It is a Grade 1 listed Georgian church, listed chiefly for its interior.

In 2010, St Peter's congregation (c. 60 people) developed a vision for how the church and the adjacent graveyard could be developed to provide a facility for carrying forward the worship and mission of our town centre church. This we saw would involve major fabric repairs, updating the internal facilities, re-ordering parts of the interior and possibly building an extension.

Our initial sketch ideas were given shape by the quinquennial inspection of 2012, which identified the need for major fabric work: replacing the roof, repairing or replacing 14 gallery windows, repairing or replacing all the ceilings, repairing parts of the stone floor, and repairing parts of the tower. (We had previously installed a disabled toilet and a small kitchen in the north and west porches and replaced two large cast iron windows in the west gallery).



## Case Study 12

As we came to terms with the scale of this list, we followed the advice of our architect and sought wider advice from English Heritage (now Historic England), DAC and Church Buildings Council so we gained a picture of what might be possible, given the restrictions of our site and our heritage listing. In retrospect, the first critically important step was to run a tendered process to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced architect.

We saw from the example of St Michael's in Macclesfield that it would be wise to bring together a team to manage the project, to include our vicar but not to be run by him so that his voice would always be heard but he was otherwise free to prioritise his parish responsibilities. We used the project team to share the different aspects of the project: bid writing, publicity, visiting other churches running projects, contacting advisory bodies, faculty writing, with the team leader liaising with the other members and the architect.

Our first major decision was to phase the work, to assist with fundraising and people's other commitments. We produced brief updates for the congregation, including a four-page A5 leaflet, "Key to the Future", which described our vision for the church and the stages by which we hoped to achieve it.

### Why do it?

Church buildings in good condition and attractively presented are a silent witness to the gospel and its resilience through changing times. As the "Key to the Future" booklet describes, we aim to have a town centre church which will be open to the public and part of the community. It will be a sustainable resource for both the worshipping congregation and our mission to the wider community. It will continue to function as the town's civic church. The congregation will be showing a sense of responsibility towards the heritage they have received.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

So far, we have replaced the roof and are currently replacing the nave ceiling. The building with its Georgian interior and civic memorials from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is now water tight and has dried out. Original timbers in the roof space and under the galleries are now safe. The risk of a disastrous ceiling collapse has been averted. The building is on Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk Register' and is currently closed while work on the nave ceiling is completed.

The congregation has a sense of achievement, confidence in our own resources, of pulling together and of waiting for and accepting God's timing and provision.

In the wider community, organisations and civic authorities have seen and responded positively to our work and our involvement in the town. They trust us to cope with events and see that we are worth supporting. They have invited us to be part of town events and individuals have come forward and volunteered to help maintain our site.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

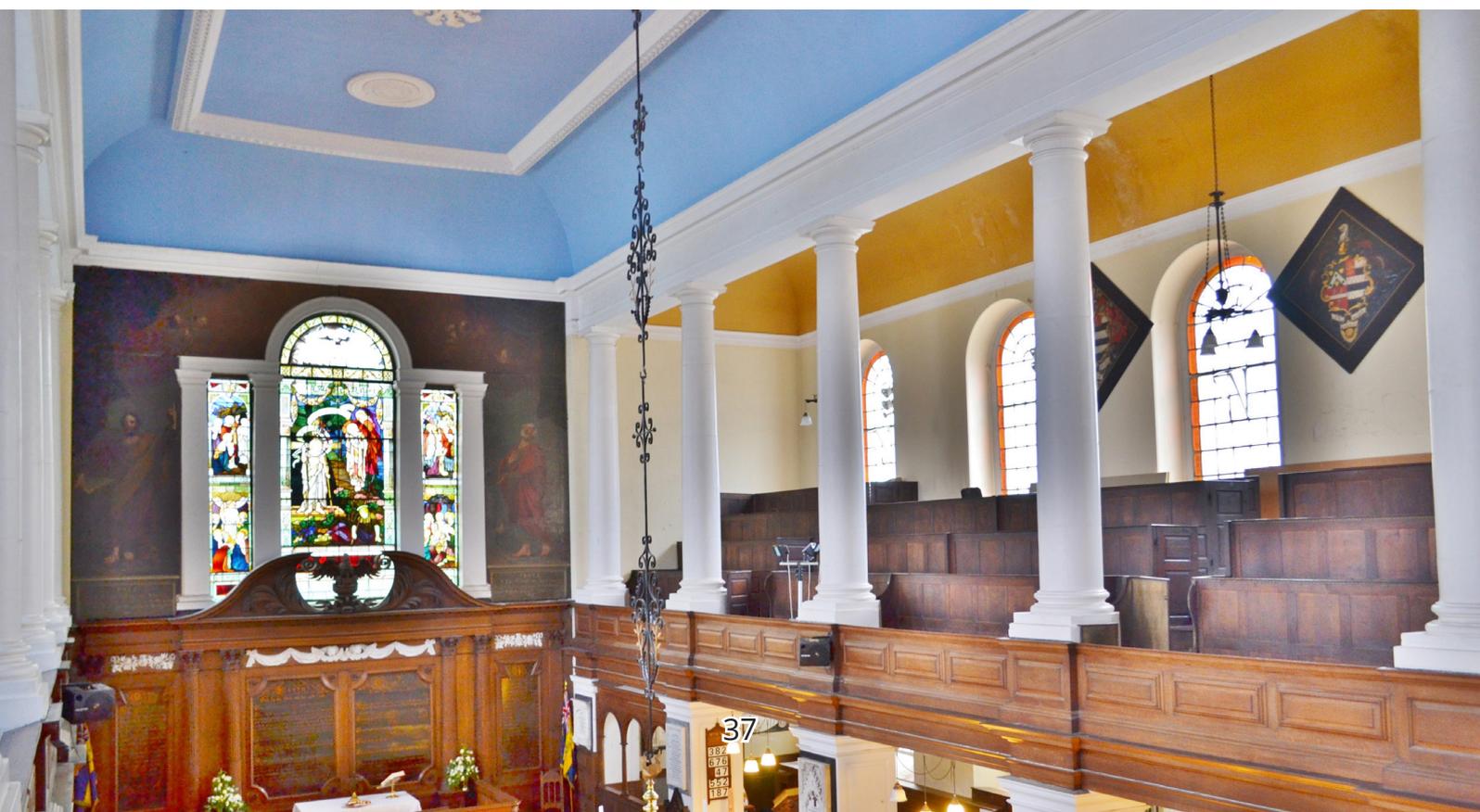
We have seen no numerical growth, in fact deaths and removals have shrunk our congregation. Spiritually we have come closer to trusting in God's leadership through a complex and long-term project. We have got to know our neighbouring congregations better during our period of closure while work on the nave ceiling was completed. This coincided with a Pastoral Scheme has made St Peter's one of two parish churches in the parish. We are still seeking ways in which all of our buildings can be developed and used to meet the aims and needs identified in the parish vision documents. The feeling of stepping forward in faith has been reinforced during a sixteen month period of vacancy. We feel reassured by the unexpected gift of a very large legacy, by the support and advice from diocesan and heritage organisations, most recently by contact with the Support Panel of the Major Churches Network, and by the time given in COVID-19 lock-down to review our plans.

### How was it resourced?

The largest slices of finance have come from English Heritage (now Historic England), and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We obtained a large grant for the roof work from WREN, and smaller grants from other national and local organisations, including the Local Authorities.

However, we also fundraised among our own members and the local community. We raised 3% of the total cost from a slate signing on two Saturdays in the town centre and the church. This meant that the congregation were actively committed to support in terms of time and money. Finally, 14% of costs were gained by reclaiming eligible VAT through the Listed Places of Worship Scheme. We publicised our project and individual events in the local papers and on BBC local radio.

Our chief resource was to ask people to remember the project and the team in their prayers.



# Connecting with communities

## St James' church, New Brighton

### What was done?

Two phases of repair work have taken place to our church building designed by Gilbert Scott.

Phase 1: The church faced a critical challenge when, in 2013, it was discovered that its 52 metre (172 feet) high stone spire had become unsafe and presented a danger to the public. The recommendation of the specialists was clear; the spire should be dismantled and rebuilt. Consequently, over the period September 2015 to April 2016, the top 60 courses of stonework were taken down, each stone was examined and either rejected or retained, and the spire was rebuilt using a mixture of original and newly-quarried stone. Stainless steel cramps were used to replace the corroded iron ones. A new cross-tree was built into the reconstructed spire.

In addition, the architects took the opportunity to reinstate much of the decorative carved stonework that had been stripped away during previous "restorations." At the end of 2016, the National Churches Trust deemed the rebuild to be England's best restoration project of the year, and the architect was awarded its gold medal, partly for the forensic work involved.

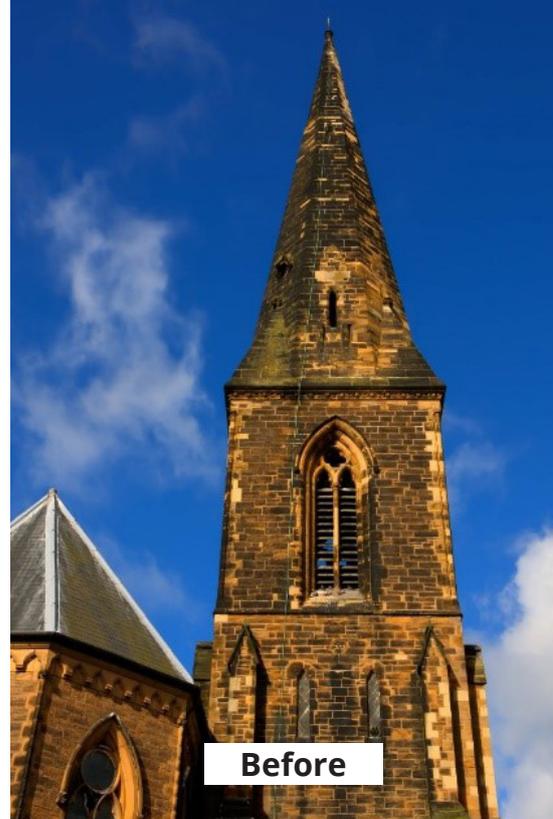
### Phase Two

Tower masonry repairs were required. In some areas, repairs were needed due to previous repairs had been made in cement mortar. Other repairs were due to erosion, such as some arch stones, eroded quoins and corner shaft stones and the louvres to the Bell Chamber openings.

One of the main problems that had been encountered was the failure of the existing gutters and water drainage goods to cope with even moderate amounts of poor weather. Replacements and improvements were made.

Improving safe access for the maintenance of the gutters was achieved through installing an oak door access to the gutters and new access ladders and platforms were fixed in position.

Further work included the chancel arch and roof, internal repairs in the tower, vestry roof, conservation of the Angelus bell, and we installed new LED lights inside the Clock level and Bell level. The lighting is a great help inside the 50 step spiral stone staircase!



Before



During

### Why do it?

The prime motivation was simply a question of public safety, which had to be achieved within our responsibilities for maintaining the architectural integrity of a listed building. However, because a 172-foot spire being dismantled and rebuilt was visually so prominent an activity in New Brighton, and became such a talking point, it gave us many opportunities to gain press and radio coverage and to speak with people in the community. It demonstrated to townspeople that St James' was indeed "open for business", was investing in its future and was a living active church.

The need to fund-raise stimulated us to organise a wide range of social events and concerts, which in turn brought many new people into the building and reminded others that the church was at the heart of their community.



After

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

- Preserved the safety and visual impact of our building.
- Increased an awareness in the community of the significance of this building in their midst.
- Established a reputation locally for the provision of social and cultural events.
- Enabled us to provide a home for the New Brighton Heritage and Information Centre in the building, which means that it is now open to visitors six days a week.
- Provided a target and common purpose around which the congregation can coalesce
- Community engagement has significantly increased. In Phase 2, 2018, guided tours have been very effective. Also, history talks, exhibitions, presentations and demonstrations were advertised to people using the *Wave Café*, which was recently established. Also, a new display area has been created. The first exhibition, in collaboration with the *Wallasey Historical Society*, showed late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century local photographs.
- Social action work and families. We have begun a weekly holiday meals club for local schoolchildren (and their parents). Craft activities relating to a spiritual/ biblical theme take place with a story and quiet time, similar to Messy Church. This is the main example of a growing relationship with two local schools.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

In Phase 1, the project appeared to have had a neutral effect on spiritual and numerical growth but bear in mind that most of the work took place during a lengthy and difficult interregnum. However, the project has certainly raised the profile of the church locally and has increased its use as a venue for cultural events and concerts. Within our congregation, the mood progressed from negativity and “what a waste of money” and “it will never get done” while we were fund-raising and applying for grants, to enthusiasm and pride when everyone could see the spectacular work in progress. The key to this was great internal communications, which has resulted in a more united congregation and positive outlook for the future.

In Phase 2, we have established an excellent foundation on which to grow the number of people who will visit and appreciate the building and its facilities in the years ahead. Our main Sunday congregation has grown through different church initiatives and mission and we now have a church building that is safe to use. Our building is used significantly more by the community for a wider range of activities and is increasingly being viewed as a real community asset. And we have increased the number and geographical spread of visitors who come purely to learn of the history and heritage of St James' church. More recently we have worked on a prayer area in the lady chapel, which is being used.

### How was it resourced?

#### Phase 1:

The total cost of the project was a smidgen under £450,000. Grants received of £250,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and almost £75,000 VAT recovery from HMRC's Listed Places of Worship scheme. About £15,000 was raised through special appeals (including a “Sponsor a Stone” scheme), and about £5,000 from social events and concerts. The balance (approx. £105,000) came from the PCC's unrestricted reserves – although much of this had been built up through appeals, pledged giving and donations in the two or three years prior to restoration commencing.

#### Phase 2:

The final cost of Phase 2 was £271,604.47. We were indebted to funding from grant sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund (£250,000), Garfield Weston (£10,000) and Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust (£1,000). Our own fund raising continued, including an organ recital by the internationally renowned organist Professor Ian Tracy, several church fairs, a concert with three choirs and a concert by the *Cheshire Police Band*, *Heritage Open Day*, church guided tours, art exhibitions and *The Wave Café*.

# Worship, witness and welcome

St George's church, Poynton

## What was done?

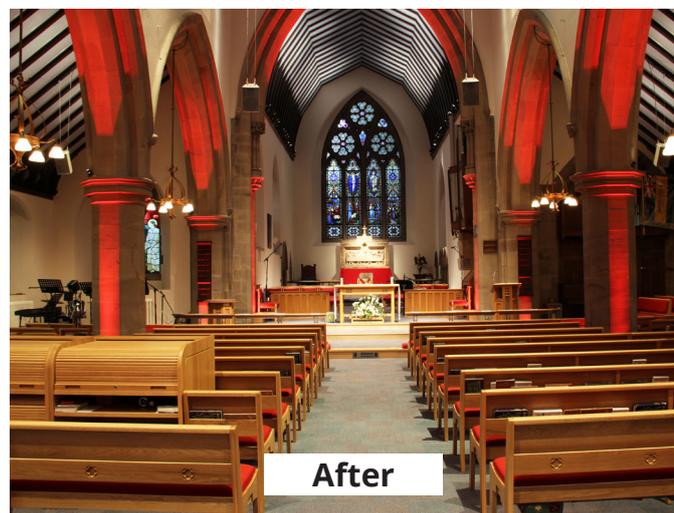
In Phase 1, the previous vicar was keen to replace the rather inadequate church hall with something much more fit for purpose. At the same time, he realised the church building needed a development programme. So although the church hall was the felt priority, before that in 1998 there was Phase 1 of the church reordering, removing choir stalls, pulpit and screen to have a clear raised area with upholstered seats and new front-of-church furniture in oak. The doorway entrance was also transformed with glass doors, a glass vestibule, and welcome desk/cupboards in oak.

In 2005 there was a new vicar and we set our minds to phase 2. The uniting motivation was the remarkably uncomfortable pews. At the same time, it seemed timely to include other aspects of reordering, so the project included new heating, new lighting incl. LED uplighters, new flooring, new wiring/electrics, new AV screens and digital sound system, as well as new seating. It took until 2011 to line up the specification as, for instance, there was disagreement about the replacement seating. Half wanted upholstered chairs, half preferred modern wooden pews. The impasse was solved through the discovery of padded oak benches from Irish Contract Seating, which ticked nearly all the boxes and enabled us to maximise our capacity for large services.

The architect was chosen because he understood us and our purpose, although we would not have been half so successful without an able and hardworking team, each with an expertise; for example, heating, lighting/sound, project management and quantity surveyor. We set ourselves to pay for the sound system/screen out of reserves (because there was some disquiet in certain quarters) and raised the rest (£375,000) by donations over four years, mostly standing orders, about £20,000 fundraising. The congregation was committed and generous and the pledge day; it covered over half of the total, giving us confidence to go ahead.

We have before and after videos on You Tube, which you can find here:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=cdavemc+st+georges](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=cdavemc+st+georges)



### Why do it?

We needed to enable everyone to sit comfortably, worshippers, concert-goers and the rest. It was previously very uncomfortable. The only opposition came from people who did not sit on the pews but who walked by outside.

The vast improvement in lighting and sound/vision has helped the development of a 'screen culture' service (meaning we reach more people on Sundays than with our 'book culture' service alone).

Festival services are much more effective Christian witness and we have seen ever growing numbers at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance, helped by the more pleasant environment (especially the lighting) and use of sound/vision system.

### What difference has it made to the building, church community and its impact in the wider community?

The building is the same on the outside but transformed on the inside.

The 'book culture' service is glad of comfortable seats, clean walls and pillars, excellent lighting, and has welcomed the extra screens in Phase 3. Phase 3 was Easter 2018, and consisted of 3 additional LED screens (one in the chancel and two in the Nave) and 2 video cameras to provide live streaming to all 4 screens in church. Everyone in church can now see at least one screen, no matter where they sit. The 'screen culture' service has grown well. The local community is generally very happy as the quality of festival services has improved and concerts and school events are also much happier. The reordering allowed a good quality High School production of Christmas Carol to take place in church, with seats in the round, and full houses for four nights.

### Has the project impacted your church in terms of spiritual and/or numerical growth?

The numerical growth of our screen culture service was very good in the four years following the project. The project itself was a united time and gave us more confident witness and happier fellowship.

### How was it resourced?

The great majority of the cost was met by pledged giving from members of the congregation and other supporters. A part was resourced from PCC reserves. Four years later we had paid it off.



# Reflections on key themes and lessons learnt

The following reflections provide greater depth to the key themes identified in the case studies, paraphrasing the responses to provide a more succinct summary. Full answers are provided in the appendix.

## Five Marks of Mission

The five Marks of Mission may be one framework to understand the reasons why the churches in the case studies completed their building projects and the impact made. The Anglican Communion defines 'Mission' as the Five Marks of Mission, which are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.' ([Anglican Communion](#)).

It is not straightforward to identify which mark(s) of mission are mostly strongly evidenced in each case study and generally, as the impact is often wide ranging and overlapping.

It is clear, however, that responding to human need by loving service, along with teaching and nurturing disciples, (interpreted here as life-long discipleship), are strong motivations and impacts throughout. These marks of mission are achieved both through the process of undertaking a building project, which sees greater teamwork and unity of vision. Also, after its completion, as an often more adaptable, welcoming and accessible space enables greater mission and ministry for a wider range of people, especially at mid-week services and activities.

The remaining three marks of mission are evidenced, for example, in creating a better worship space, audio-visual equipment and more family-friendly spaces to preach the Good News. Improved facilities enable social action work, such as meal clubs, to transform societal injustices, plus better enabling people who are disabled, have limited mobility or special needs to participate through a more physically accessible building. Also, environmental sustainability improvements have reduced the carbon footprint such as installing LED lighting, draft exclusion measures and energy efficient heating systems.

## Why the churches in the case studies decided to undertake their building projects

- **To be reach out to support, serve and connect with the whole community**, making God visible through hospitality, welcome and generosity. Greater engagement with the local community, sometimes phrased as loving our neighbour as ourselves. A spirit of 'open doors' to share the Good News of Christ with the wider community, being more open during the week as a seven-day ministry to all. Encouraging increased use of the building by the community, groups and organisations. Enabling more ways of 'being church' for greater involvement in the community.
- **Better access for all, welcome and care**, being open, warm, well-lit, well equipped, better facilities and more flexible space, improved hospitality, removing physical barriers for people attending, fit for the purpose God intended as a 21<sup>st</sup> century church.
- **Better first impressions** of the church exterior to give a more positive welcome, raise the profile of church, being more visible, being more open and looking 'open for business' to change a negative perception.
- **Preserving the heritage**, as well as its 24/7 witness to the permanency of God.
- **Health and safety** reasons to make the building structurally safe and watertight so current services and activities can continue.
- **Better opportunity for fellowship** in the congregation.
- **Better operational running** of the church, such as better able to run services, better storage etc.
- **Making the church sustainable** both now and in the future.
- **Expand church young generations work.**

## The difference the building project has made to the church building, church community and its impact in the wider community

### Enhanced building

- Better condition of the building and its artistic and historic features.
- Improved health and safety.
- Improved visual impact of the building.
- More accessible for all.
- More welcoming space.
- More family and schools-friendly space.
- Improved internal space, facilities and comfort for better pastoral care for all.
- Addressed practical needs in the running of the church, such as storage, managing large services and events, pastoral support etc.
- Improved long term maintenance.

### Enhanced use of building

- Building more regularly open throughout the week.
- Wider range of people using the church building- members of the community, groups, organisations; also, greater range of ages, interests and needs.

- Established or enhanced role in the locality.
- Improved and/or increased role of hospitality and welcome.
- Beginning new and different activities for the church, schools and wider communities; for example, concerts, events, café, art group, young family groups, social justice projects, fellowship gatherings, services, baptism and funeral gatherings, and so on.
- More imaginative engagement with people; for example, using art, Fresh Expressions of church, exhibitions, concerts.
- More mid-week services held.
- Growth in attendance at mid-week services.
- Growth in attendance at events and activities, especially mid-week.
- Growth in attendance by young families.
- Growth in schools' engagement.
- New relationships developed or strengthened with community leaders, organisations and groups- a good witness and stronger links for joint working.
- More bookings/use of the space by community groups, organisations and members of the community.
- Raised profile of the church in local community, increased awareness locally of the significance of the historic building.
- Better operational running of the building, such as accommodating larger services and events, children's activities, hospitality, suitable space for pastoral support etc.
- More financially sustainable as a better used building increased regular income, such as from events.

### **Impact on congregation**

- Fellowship increased, for example, chatting over refreshments after the service.
- Unity of spirit enhanced through closer teamwork and focused vision
- Removing some of the physical barriers to people participating in services such as improved access and providing toilet facilities.
- Greater faith (reliance, trust) in God.
- Raised confidence levels.

## **The impact of the church building project on spiritual and/or numerical growth**

### **Spiritual**

- Spirit of unity strengthened in congregations during the project through greater team working.
- Increased confidence to focus on new missional activities.
- Growing in discipleship through active service, increasing volunteer satisfaction and commitment.
- Raised enthusiasm and pride in the congregation, which lead to more unity and a more positive outlook.
- Cultural change in the congregation accepting wider role of being more welcoming and outward-looking, confident and responsive in sharing the Good

News.

- More creative freedom to express God's love in numerous ways; for example, hosting quiet days, events, art exhibitions.
- Drawing closer to God, increased faith in the congregation, trusting God more

### **Numerical**

- More people attending mid-week services.
- More people and wider range of people attending activities and events, especially older people and young families. Also, wider range such as more visitors- families, shoppers, meeting place for events, wider ministry.
- More young families, increased attendance at Fresh Expressions aimed at families; for example, Café Church on Sunday and mid-week activities. Increase, (for some, considerable increase), in young families on Sundays as well as during the week.
- Increased use by specific groups such as schools, weddings.
- For some, difficult to ascertain if project led to growth but our congregation is growing.
- For a small number, none (or occasionally slight) growth in attendance at traditional Sunday services.
- Raised the profile of the church locally.

## **How the project was financially resourced**

In reviewing how each capital project was resourced, all required multiple funding sources.

**The largest percentage of funds contributing to capital works** was split between donations (for 6 parishes) and grants (for 7 parishes). One parish required an even mix of multiple sources.

**The fundraising mix** included donations from churches and individuals such as appeals and legacies, (particularly mentioned by 11 parishes), fundraising events (by 7 parishes), PCC reserves (5 parishes), funds through sale of land/goods (5 parishes), loans (2 parishes), in-kind support such as volunteer time and free equipment hire was particularly mentioned by one parish. Grants were also mentioned throughout.

**The total financial value of the fundraising mix**, where this information was provided, in descending order was: Donations £1,887,300, Grants £1,787,200, Sales £292,000, Loan £250,000, PCC Reserves £160,000 and Fundraising events £51,400. In-kind support, (such volunteer time, free materials or labour), was also a contributing factor, although often unstated.

**The most frequently mentioned grants** were the National Lottery Heritage Fund, (formally known as the Heritage Lottery Fund) (6 parishes), Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust (4 parishes), Landfill Communities Fund (3 parishes), National Churches Trust (3 parishes); also the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme for reclaiming eligible VAT was frequently stated.

Parishes received financial support from the following grant-making trusts and organisations, listed in alphabetical order:

Alderley Edge Institute Trust  
All Churches Trust  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
Cheshire Diocese Guild of Bell Ringers  
Dame Susan Morden Charity  
English Heritage  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Heritage Lottery Fund  
Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust  
Horace Burley Trust  
Landfill Communities Fund  
Listed Places of Worship Scheme (VAT)  
Local Authorities  
National Churches Trust  
Rylance Smith Trust  
The Sharpe Trust  
Ursula Keyes Trust  
War Memorial Trust  
WO Street Trust

## **Learning points from case studies that may help parishes considering similar projects**

Each case study was asked to reflect and respond to five learning questions in relation to their first-hand experience of planning and managing the building project:

1. What went well?
2. What went less well?
3. What have you learnt that would be useful to share with others?
4. As a result of the learning gained during and after the project, have you now changed any aspects of your approach/work? Please explain.
5. General reflections

A summary of the responses to each question are given below. Full responses to the questions are given in the appendix.

### **Q1. What went well?**

- Right appointment and positive working relationship with the architect and the contractors, (for a small number including archaeological oversight), producing high quality work.
- Good project team in the church, with the right skills, sufficient time and a positive team-working spirit, good conversations in the PCC.
- Financial provision.
- The building work- high quality of work and/or completed on time/budget

- Good community relations and support, including from key people in the community.
- Early understanding of the needs and opportunities through consulting with people.
- Good relationships and feedback from consultees, including DAC.
- Good relationship with grant making trust.
- Support and encouragement of the congregation.
- Good communications.
- Enhancing the work and impact of the church.
- Considering the potential opportunities during the building phase.
- Clear vision for the project.
- Considering how best to use all the church building and land assets.

## **Q2. What went less well?**

- Taking longer than anticipated.
- Challenges with grant funding and fundraising in general.
- Design elements not considered at planning stages, or, did not meet expectations.
- Challenge of co-ordinating around usual church life.
- Pressure on team members.
- Underestimated costs or lack of funds.
- Changes in the team.
- Poor communication, or lack of clarity on roles.
- Less community involvement than anticipated.
- Challenges with agreeing the vision.
- Appointment challenges.

## **Q3. What have you learnt that would be useful advice to give to others?**

- Building design tips- shared in more detail in the appendices.
- Honest, open and full consultation and communication- ask, listen, share, reflect, revise, regularly update and enthuse. Ongoing communication needs careful planning for monitoring of progress and discussion/decision-making.
- Establish a strong team; know the skills required; set up clear roles and responsibilities- building team and fundraising team.
- Take time at the vision stage and establishing the project structure. Carry out a feasibility study for large projects.
- Make a wise choice of architect, quantity surveyor and contractors and keep in regular touch.
- Above all, keep in touch with the Diocesan Advisory Committee throughout the project. Their help is invaluable.
- It takes longer and involves more paperwork than anticipated.
- Carefully plan the budget, possible overspend and cash flow. Know the exact costs.
- Gather and collate evidence of need.
- Be ambitious and keep a broader vision.
- Write a clear and detailed (specified) plan.

- Think through and manage risk.
- Pray.
- It's character building! Look after one another.
- Involve communities in appropriate ways.
- Share success stories.
- Plan for ongoing maintenance.

**Q4. As a result of the learning gained during and after the project, have you now changed any aspects of your approach/work? Please explain.**

- Project management
  - o Managing contractors- more firm, better communication and collaboration.
  - o Project manager needed.
  - o Project team- encourage more young members to join, careful selection of members of core team to ensure they can stay for the long haul.
  - o Managing volunteers to be more realistic in what's possible.
  - o Appointing an architect through competitive tendering process, has required level of qualifications and re-writing the brief.
  - o Timeline needing careful planning.
  - o Retain some funding in the accounts in order to fund research/plans before permissions are granted and the church can apply for further funding.
- Keeping the vision of the church as a serving church and resource for the community, and now a greater ambition and vision for the future.
- No change, as present circumstances are different.
- Re-applied the learning, although now with greater confidence.

**Q5. General Reflections**

- We are left with a very fundamental question – is it right that so much of our collective energy and funding-raising, over a period of several years, has been dedicated to building maintenance rather than to making the most of our Christian values and outreach efforts? Fortunately, the HLF grant structure led us to create our new West End which is helping us to fulfil what really matters to us.
- Listen to all the people involved in the project and give them time to air their views, as the many are wiser than the few...the few being the project manager... me.
- Simple is often the way...don't go the hard way because you think you know best.
- Authority sometimes hides behind a veil of regulations, which tries to cover every eventuality but stops sensible and simple ideas dead. Challenge those that need challenging if common sense calls for it!
- Do not give up when you hit a wall...have a glass of red wine, pray and in the morning the sun will be shining!

# Appendix - Full responses to lessons learnt questions

## Q1. What went well?

- **Right appointment and positive working relationship with the architect and the contractors**
  - We had an excellent architect and maintained very close and good relations.
  - The architects were linked to churches and so understood church needs and they took notice of our proposals. We chose the builder well and the site engineer was very capable and experienced.
  - We had skilled, flexible, amenable building contractors.
  - Our Architect and professional team were excellent and helped us through the crisis of a bankrupt main contractor, without any increase in the overall project cost.
  - The craftsmen on the project were enormously committed and hard-working, and stayed with the job almost uninterrupted, in spite of the bankruptcy.
  - A good architect who worked closely with the construction team.
  - The initial choice of architect with whom we developed a very close working relationship. His professionalism set us a high a high standard to work to.
  - The appointment process, resulting in excellent consultants.
  - The tendering process, resulting in an excellent main contractor.
  - The Quantity Surveyor maintained good records that allowed St Thomas and the Contractor to keep broadly within budget.
  - Good working relationship with the new architect who accepted the constraints of the low funding during the Development phase but which would be recovered during the Delivery Phase.
  - Good working relationship with the selected contractor.
  - The builders were clearly very experienced with work on church buildings and their workmanship is evident for all to see. The archaeological oversight was helpful and very informative.

- **Good project team in the church, with the right skills, sufficient time and a positive team-working spirit**
  - We learned to work as a team, to consult widely on key decisions, to explain and illustrate what was being done, to seek out and make use of specialist skills within our congregation, and to be very patient and understanding.
  - Working as a team: the division of tasks between team members, sharing ideas, having a wide range of consultants as sources of advice, later widening the team, learning to trust one another, holding team meetings with agendas and notes(minutes?), not waiting till we had unanimity.
  - In all phases of the project using congregational members with relevant experience and appropriate project, technical, fundraising and business knowledge. Their advice and involvement (some became sub-contractors) was critical to the success of the project.
  - We were blessed with having a retired Professor of Civil Engineering in our congregation who kindly and expertly oversaw our extension project on a voluntary basis, including preparing the ground for the PCC to make properly informed decisions; steering through our faculty applications; liaising with DAC/Victorian Society/local authority planning officers; and, whilst referring major decisions to the PCC, he was the principal contact person for our architects/ surveyors/ builders/ stonemasons. We were also blessed with having a Community Mosaic Artist in our congregation from whom we commissioned the feature mosaic, involving 846 people from the community in its creation.
  - Creating two committees- one to run the project (43 meeting in total over 4 years); one facing outwards that included interested agencies.
  - Internal organisation; the committee structure worked well.
  - The team overseeing Phase 2 was excellent and made up for any weaknesses in the architect's approach.
  - The debates in the PCC and the consideration of plans as submitted by our architect. By general consent we now have a beautiful addition to the church.
  
- **Financial provision**
  - The giving was generous and good, thanks to the Lord and because the aspects of the project were all tangible to the congregation.
  - We seemed to be very successful in obtaining grants.
  - Small team to write Grant application.
  - Fund raising: the roof phase costing £237,000 was met and completed on time and within budget in a period of less than two years, 2012-14. We have raised £304,000 for the ceiling work, which is due to finish on June 29<sup>th</sup> 2018.
  - The HLF grant application (the maximum possible grant was obtained).
  - Most aspects of fund-raising – particularly “Sponsor-a-stone”.
  - The high level of usage by the community as well as the church has enabled the Centre to be self-funding in maintenance terms
  - St Thomas PCC had sufficient funds available to cover the bills until grant instalments or VAT was recovered.

- **The building works**

- The physical works – a structural and visual success
- The lighting was initially thought by many to be rather costly (£60,000) but since opening everyone agrees it was worth it.
- We fitted lots of extra wiring for the future (which seemed a little over the top), and already we have been very glad we did.
- It was chosen/built to last and six years later it still looks well.
- The carpets were hardwearing office carpet tiles and have withstood floods and a lot of wear and tear, while still looking good.
- Creating specialised storage: specific storerooms for chairs and for tables off the hall plus a room (off the foyer) with 20 lockable storage cupboards for regular users, which limited their space on site and helps keep the whole building tidy.
- High quality repairs to the Spire Roof, Windows and Doors stonework that will last for generations.
- Additional essential work identified and repaired broadly within the budget.
- There was a substantial amount of woodwork needed (screens on kitchenette, handrails and plinths for lectern and pulpit, shortening altar, new altar rails) and the quality of the work has been very high, so a major feature of the works.
- Repainting the walls, ceiling, and sanding the parquet floor has given a major uplift to the building.

- **Good community relations and support**

- The generosity of our community who rallied round supporting fundraising events, donating money and volunteering labour (for the bell installation).
- Forming good links with the various agencies: Town and Unitary councils, Councillors, Police, Community Group, Pub, Housing Association, Choosing a relevant Architect.
- Victorian Open Day with all agencies, a free BBQ and sticky dot exercise to prioritise what was important to the residents and church members.
- Holding two public slate signing days: raised more money than the target, brought people into the church building, and involved a wider group of church members to manage them.
- The leading stonemason demonstrated his craft at our local Primary School
- Friendly and skilled stonemasons demonstrated a good relationship with the local community.
- The project provided a focus and a kick start for outreach and a greater community involvement.

- **Early understanding of the needs and opportunities through consulting with people**
  - Survey created by the Council to establish the needs and public interest
  - Importantly we were pleased to invite and receive input of ideas from our congregation and wider community throughout the whole process, and this has proved invaluable in creating better local “ownership” of the changes, as well as increasing the subsequent footfall across our new threshold.
  - The early consultation with current and prospective users, with the Heswall Society and other interested parties plus keeping written records of these meetings because they were essential when applying for grants.
  
- **Good relationship with consultees or grant provider**
  - The willingness of the DAC to accommodate changes during the construction process.
  - Once we were through the early stages, and had won our HLF grant offer, we were greatly helped by the HLF’s project management structure. We appointed our new Architect by competitive tender, and also set about strengthening and forging new community contacts – both of these as the result of the HLF’s requirements.
  - Good working relationship with the staff of Heritage Lottery Fund; they really want you to have a successful project outcome.
  - The advice at every stage from the officers of the Diocesan Advisory Committee was much appreciated.
  
- **Support and encouragement of the congregation**
  - Our congregations were kept fully informed and were hugely tolerant of disruption and supportive financially and through hard work (cleaning, helping at fundraising or community events) and by general encouragement.
  - The willingness of the volunteers from the congregation and local community to be involved.
  - The congregation has been loyal, adaptable and supportive.
  
- **Good communications**
  - Our congregations were kept fully informed\*.
  - Weekly photo update of progress to all parties once work commenced.
  - Internal and external communications, which were well-planned and organised.

- **Enhancing the work and impact of the church**
  - o High profile and visible part of the project, the installation of the Disabled Ramp, has provided a significant enhancement to St Thomas for use by the wider community.
  - o New initiatives for community involvement were pursued.
  - o The survey showed a marked increase in the number of people visiting St Thomas.
  
- **Considering the potential opportunities during the building phase**
  - o Interestingly, the need to move services out of the church during construction phases was very beneficial. The less formal environment in the church school encouraged more people to take leading roles in the family service, increased congregational involvement and eased the exploration of different service formats.
  - o We had to worship in the church hall during the alterations (over about 6 weeks). Being on chairs in a smaller building, members of the congregation sat next to those they were not used to, and the sense of fellowship was enhanced.
  
- **Clear vision for the project**
  - o After an earlier aborted attempt to replace the old hall we spent a considerable time developing a detailed vision before going back to the architect with a functional plan.
  
- **Considering how best to use all the church building and land assets**
  - o The use of adjacent land in the Rectory frontage reduced the cost by providing a site establishment area.

## Q2. What went less well?

- **Taking longer than anticipated**
  - o Grade II listed building regulations and conservation requirements halted progress for clarification reasons that added to the time and materials
  - o There will always be delays in the building phase. Our main delay was the delivery of the wrong colour bricks and it could have been shortened by more frequent on-site visits by the architect and QS.
  - o Our main contractor, although a long-established and very reputable business, went bankrupt at a critical stage in the project. The bankruptcy caused delays, leading to winter working and much lost time because of bad weather. The delays meant that scaffolding around our porch was still in place for weddings which should have been “scaffolding-free”.
  - o Delays and falling behind schedule
  - o Our first application to the HLF was not successful
  - o Due to the compressed timescales, the Faculty and the Local Authority

planning application could not be progressed until the approved drawings were available.

- o The intended building timescale of 4 months was not met. The building programme took 10 months to complete.
- o It all takes a long time
- o The heating system took twelve months of follow up to get right but we stuck at it until it worked for us.
- o Trying to get the community involvement parts of the programme completed took longer than expected resulting in requesting a four-month extension to the project completion.
- o The amount of time involved to liaise with the builders over the work they were doing, and make small decisions about aspects of the work was far greater than anticipated beforehand. Our Treasurer was on site most days to do that.
- o The alterations have had a knock-on effect on other things, which will take a while to sort out. So, there were many small tasks we decided to do ourselves, and those have taken far longer to complete than the original work. The nature of the building alterations has meant that the sound system has needed work doing, and the hearing loop was also damaged during the works. It has taken a very long time to have the necessary work done to put that right. Also, various pieces of furniture were moved out of the church to give space for the works, and we have decided we do not want them to return. A faculty will be needed to dispose of them, and that will take time. In the meantime, furniture is piled up in the choir vestry and the Rector's garage.
- o Dealings with the local Planning Authority were very time consuming. The Service providers, Gas, Electricity and particularly water and drainage were very slow to respond to requests for assistance. Probably this was the most frustrating aspect of the whole project.

- **Challenges with grant funding**

- o Bureaucracy in dealing with HLF, and the length of time it took them to take decisions, give permissions etc.
- o Timing of the various grant funds flow
- o Concrete dates that had to be met to receive grant milestones payments
- o Moving from English Heritage to Heritage Lottery Fund as our chief financial support. The latter's processes are very slow which gives the impression to outsiders and members of the wider congregation that nothing is happening. The processes are also very time consuming and sometimes repetitive, adding to the frustration of working with them. However, individual consultants appointed to our applications have proved very co-operative, helpful and reliable
- o Disproportionate amount of time spent on delivering the HLF's Activity Plan requirements (although the end results were good).

- **Design elements not considered at planning stages, or did not meet expectations**
  - In hindsight we might have asked our architect to:
    - Add another door from our new glazed entrance porch to give access out into the rear garden;
    - Design a less heavy main door and add a small external canopy above it to give shelter from the rain for key-holders unlocking the church;
    - Consider increasing the height of the original internal doors leading into the nave (to allow easier access for shouldering of coffins).
  - We found our architects were great on what you see but poor on the internal acoustic environment. We funded a report on the hall as it was similar to a sports hall. As we expected, it required a lot of sound absorption to create a pleasant environment. The architect assured us the carpet tiles and curtains would solve the problem elsewhere. They did not. So we had to organise the fitting of sound absorption ceiling panels in all the other rooms.
  - In hindsight the controls for the lighting should have been based on manual switches making the system “as simple as possible” due to the great number of people using the church, rather than having a system which can be used with “touch button” controls. With the volume of space to heat, especially in the Nave and Chancel, we should have installed underfloor heating rather than just upgrading the existing Victorian pipe system. Although at the time it would have been very challenging to raise the additional cost with fundraising or extending the loan borrowing from Charity Bank. So maybe we were correct to just leave it on the “wish list”.
  - Overall, the main disappointment with the whole project has been the lighting, the lack of impact the system allows, the fact we are consistently having to upgrade the system, although that said unfortunately our scheme was installed just before the revolution in fittings, LED and longer lasting cost saving bulbs.
  
- **Challenge of co-ordinating around usual church life**
  - Dirt and disruption meant constant cleaning before every service, funeral and wedding and required coordination and many volunteers
  - Coordinating work around the ‘business’ of the church- for example, work ceasing for funerals
  - It was not attractive for wedding couples when shrouded in scaffolding
  
- **Pressure on team members**
  - Internally, huge workload on very few individuals
  - An element of worry about safety, fundraising and general finance
  - It can sap your strength and enthusiasm for other things
  
- **Underestimated costs or lack of funds**
  - The complexity and overall cost of the project were, at first, greatly underestimated
  - Initial project costs were based on working to a budget and didn’t take into

account conservation techniques. This resulted in a complete dismantling of the spire instead of some of the repairs being performed insitu. The consequence was a significant escalation of costs.

- o Due to limited finances, we had to scale down our original ambition to include kitchen improvements, but this has now been embarked upon as our next phase

- **Changes in the team**

- o Having to change architects because our first choice architect left the practice with which we had a contract. We have, however, more clearly learned what to value in an architect.
- o The project coincided with an eight-month interregnum period – but we were lucky that this period was not longer.

- **Poor communication, or lack of clarity on roles**

- o Phase three was a challenge in that we had two contractors- masonry and building contractors *and* bell contractors, who did not always communicate or collaborate as we would have liked
- o Utility connection and responsibility divisions for public building safety issues

- **Less community involvement than anticipated**

- o Although we engaged with local schools very successfully, this went less well with a local FE college – the students were enthusiastic about getting involved but there were frequent staff changes and a loss of continuity.
- o Some of the intended community involvement initiatives were not realised. Low numbers of Guides and the children's club meant these folded.

- **Challenges with agreeing the vision**

- o Agreeing the wider long term aims of the project, some of which are still being debated. Planning for re-ordering has been approached by us, by the architect and by the Sheffield graduates.

- **Appointment challenges**

- o Not having a Conservation Accredited Architect engaged at the start of the Development Phase. Nearly half the 12-month programme had elapsed before the architect started work.

### Q3. What have you learnt that would be useful advice to give to others?

- **Building design tips-**
  - A large foyer, with comfortable tables, chairs and kitchen access, at the heart of a building sets the tone and atmosphere for the whole building.
  - Consider carefully the acoustic environment in each room. All rooms and halls have hard sound reflecting surfaces on floors and walls ... curtains and carpet tiles have very little sound absorption. So the reverberation times will be too long thus creating a noisy environment with multiple conversations impossible.
  - Have someone who understands acoustics to consult with architects and absorption material providers. There is a simple model based on the ratio of the room's volume and the total sound absorbing surface area. Usually covering around 50% of the ceiling with quality sound absorption material is sufficient to create a pleasant environment.
  - Include a dedicated table store off the hall to house stacks of chairs with a chair lifter. Do not use a trolley as they are too heavy to move.
  - Include a dedicated cupboard with compartments or shelves for storage of tables.
  - Create a storage room (which is easily accessible at all times) with plenty of lockable storage cupboards for regular users.
  - Think carefully about installing a gas cooker as safety regulations keep getting stricter which can cause extra expense when replacing a gas cooker.
  - Install a top-loader dishwasher to remove the need to lift heavy baskets of crockery.
  - Good lighting makes such a difference to the finished effect
  
- **Honest, open and full consultation and communication with church, community and consultees - ask, listen, share, reflect, revise, regularly update and enthuse**
  - Maintain open, honest and full communication with the congregation. They have provided the majority of the additional funds and support required, and never ever fell short
  - Take a lot of time to consult and discuss with the wider church membership.
  - Communicate to the congregation regularly what is happening where the project is up to, highlight problems being encountered and define any contingency plans which may have to be implemented.
  - Be as transparent as possible with the congregation exploring the reasons behind embarking on any project and involve the wider parish community to enable proper discernment of the way forward. Don't be afraid to think outside the box!
  - Keep the PCC informed in writing, and refer to it to confirm major decisions, but avoid discussing undecided issues within the PCC, as far as possible.
  - Consult with the congregation, using illustrated questionnaires and asking specific questions but with space for comments and new ideas.
  - Report back to congregation and to the wider community regularly – donors appreciate knowing how their money is being spent.

- o Hold reviews, revise the process, listen..... and be completely open to advice.
  - o Good internal communications are crucial; keep everybody informed at every stage, generate enthusiasm and a sense of ownership by the congregation.
  - o *Enthusiasm of the ....Church Council, Steering Group and the Congregation.*
  - o Take time in the planning stages, involve the whole congregation, making them fully aware that their total support is required throughout the project. And remember after "handover" – is the final project what was envisaged? The use and maintenance will be with the church for a long time.
  - o Have courage, stick to your vision, and listen to everyone but do not expect to please everyone. Some church members wanted radical change, others wanted to have nothing at all altered.
  - o Engage with all necessary parties at an early stage and establish their interest
  - o Ensure, through active surveys, that there is a mandate for the project before doing anything
  - o Consult the DAC at an early stage (we had a visit from them early on, and they helped us with thinking about what was possible)
  - o Above all, keep in touch with the Diocesan Advisory Committee throughout the project. Their help is invaluable.
- **Establish a strong team; know the skills required; set up clear roles and responsibilities**
    - o Ensure as early as possible that your professional team are up to the job and that it is not outside their experience; take advice on this from the Diocese and from other churches which have tackled similar projects.
    - o Set up a small project team, seeking out relevant skills within the congregation and, if necessary, from outside it.
    - o Have a good quality team to oversee the plans and the work
    - o Have a group or team with a leader to manage the project. Include the clergy with the proviso that their involvement will be limited by their parish commitments and therefore there will be points of proceeding without their say so. This should be understood from the beginning and not through a crisis part way through.
    - o Appoint a Chairman and Project Steering Group with each member having a clear defined role and responsibilities and capable of working together with a commitment to seeing the project through. (The steering group of course are ultimately responsible to the church council who ultimately have the final decisions).
    - o Appoint a dedicated project treasurer, also one individual to manage on-line applications, particularly to the HLF which needs a very consistent and determined approach.
    - o Make sure you have someone on your team who has high attention to detail!
    - o Have people waiting in the wings to succeed key personnel who might move away or become incapacitated.

- **Take time at the vision stage and establishing the project structure**
  - o Spend time developing a solid process: identify and agree your current situation, agree, in general terms at least, where you want to be, and be completely flexible about how you get there.
  - o Spend time at the suggestion of a project, meeting and discussing what is required and then produce your “Statement of Needs
  - o Develop clear plans of what is required as dealing with changes during tender / contract stages can be expensive.
  - o Appoint your Architect who will be involved with the project, once clear plans of what is required is agreed.
  - o Visit other projects with the congregational members who have relevant experience and appropriate project, technical and business knowledge.
  
- **Make a wise choice of architect, quantity surveyor and contractors and keep in regular touch**
  - o Choose your architect and contractors wisely
  - o *Vision of the ....Architect.* Choose your Architect carefully, they must, as well as being capable and good communicators, be able to share and understand “the vision of the proposed project and the enthusiasm being generated by the whole church”
  - o *Integrity of the ....Main Contractor.* Again, they should be capable of providing the necessary management and work base skills and of handling all aspects of site health and safety requirements, and have the ability to liaise and be a key member within the Team.
  - o Timely engagement of a Conservation Accredited Architect
  - o Ensure a good working relationship is established
  - o Don’t assume that your project is the architect’s and the contractor’s top priority. Be a nuisance! Keep on their backs!
  - o Ensure you have engaged a Quantity Surveyor to keep detailed analysis of the contractor’s work and get best value for your money.
  
- **It takes longer and involves more paperwork than anticipated**
  - o When you estimate the time and effort required to achieve the goal...double it!
  - o Dealing with a vast number of people and organisations, obtaining consensus and agreement can take a lot longer in time than planned. Timescale planning is made so difficult!
  - o VAT reclaims under the Listed Places of Worship Scheme take at least twice as long as advertised and this can cause cashflow problems
  - o Be patient – it takes a long time to raise the funds, to have plans drawn up, to obtain a Faculty. We started work 3 years after first plans for the alterations had been drawn up (and that was for relatively small changes, in an unlisted building).
  - o If dealing with the HLF, be prepared for a high degree of reporting and bureaucracy at all stages.

- **Carefully plan the budget, possible overspend and cash flow**
  - Ensure there is at least 50% funding for the professional fees in the Development Phase [if undertaking a Heritage Lottery Fund project].
  - Ensure estimates are based on conservation repair techniques.
  - Do not underestimate [costs], as unforeseen problems do arise but if the problems are not severe then there is scope to absorb repairs as they are identified.
  - Expect to exceed your budget. We aimed for £40,000 and raised in the end £51,700 – but thank goodness we did, as otherwise we would have had to cut corners on many important aspects, like the carpeting and the decorating costs.
  
- **Be ambitious and keep a broader vision**
  - Be ambitious with your plans – we have done far more than we originally envisaged, but the net effect has been wonderful!
  - Maintaining the vision is paramount. Our PCC never lost sight that all the projects were about God and His kingdom, making Him known in the world. There was never a time- no matter how tough it got- that we lost faith or thought about walking away
  - Do not accept that authority or the establishment should always have the last word!
  - We have a lovely church hall and daughter church buildings, which have needed work also during this period
  
- **Write a clear and detailed (specified) plan**
  - Plan and clearly define the scope of work to enable budget costs and timescales to be clearly understood.
  - Have clear plans on where to go for services and meetings, should the church be closed for a period of time while the work is being carried out.
  - Agree the specification clearly in advance and don't let the contractors add things to the original estimate.
  
- **Think through and manage risk**
  - Assume and plan for the project getting behind schedule and/or running over budget.
  - Understand and manage risk as the client, attend progress meetings while the work is being carried out.
  - Manage the project when problems and issues arise

- **Pray**
  - Pray about the works; make them an integral part of the daily life of the church
  - Above all, commit the whole project from start to finish to Prayer. Prayer is critical and vital at every stage, so is waiting and patience for permissions, funds and agreements.
  - Pray at all times. Test God. Read about Gideon. Read about the people who trusted God in Hebrews chapter 10.
  
- **It's character building! Look after one another**
  - Accepting from Day One that a faith project compared to a secular project needs a great amount of patience and commitment by everyone involved and that any faith project, as mentioned previously, must be underpinned by prayer at all the various stages.
  - Commitment and competence are required but perseverance and thick skin is essential!
  - Do not underestimate the time and intellectual effort that will be demanded of those church members leading the project.
  
- **Involve communities in appropriate ways**
  - Innovative fund-raising opportunities – concerts and 'sponsor a stone'
  - The project provided a focus and a kick start to greater community involvement for St Thomas.
  - Do not expect too much of 'Friend's groups' or those outside the worshipping community
  - Make your church freely available for the use and enjoyment of others
  
- **Share success stories**
  - When you have been successful, share it
  - Good publicity is helpful. Work with local newspapers, magazine
  
- **Plan for ongoing maintenance**
  - We have found an annual 'touch up' by a small parish working party has kept the Centre looking fresh.

**Q4. As a result of the learning gained during and after the project, have you now changed any aspects of your approach/work? Please explain.**

- **Project management**

- **Managing contractors.** If we ever have to work with two contractors again, communication, firm management and collaboration will be to the fore from the outset. Other than that, not really.
- **Project manager.** We have recognised that the scale and range of work in our next phase mean that we will have to take on a professional project manager.
- **Project team.** Apart from minor adjustments in the presentation in our “paperwork” which has become more or less electronic, our template for planning and implementation of projects seems to work. It has been tested out on the refurbishment of our Youth Centre and the first phase of the replacing of the lead work to our Chancel, Legh Chapel and part of our Nave roofs. The approach work for any faith project should be always open to review and change, as well as to embrace and mirror advancements in projects being carried out in the secular world. Although the team managed well to see this major project through for future projects, we would hope to encourage new capable and hopefully younger members to join the team.
- **Managing volunteers.** We found that although many members of the congregation may volunteer to help with different aspects of the project, very few of these in practice are prepared to put in the necessary time and effort when it comes down to it. Managing volunteers is not like managing a business! In Phase 2 we will adjust our horizons accordingly.
- **Appointing an architect.** We have to re-run the appointment of the architect process as the aims and complexity of this phase are different from the previous ones. We are moving to following what was originally suggested by the consultant from the Church Buildings Council. The brief will be different.
- **Appointing an architect.** We have now engaged a Conservation Accredited Architect as our regular church Architect.
- **Time management.** Construct a careful timeline for the project.
- **Funding.** Try to keep some funds in the account in order to be able fund reports that will be needed for the applications to major donors, planning authorities and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

- **Vision**

- **Fundraising and vision.** There are still two phases to complete, grant sourcing is not getting any easier, we have to work with what is available and adapt. Keeping the vision of our church as a serving church and resource for the community will stand us in good stead.
- **Greater ambition and vision.** We now have an appetite to continue the process of modernising the church – and church hall – buildings, and so we have ideas about other alterations which could be done.
- No change, as present circumstances are different

- o Projects on the scale of the one we have now completed, occur (we hope) relatively rarely in the life of our church. Thus next time around the people involved will no doubt be different. Leaving clear records and an appraisal/ evaluation document for the project should be helpful for the future.
  - o We were pleased with the preparation and execution of Phase 2. We have started Phase 3 but are taking our time and doing one ingredient at a time, due to a less able team and the further improvements being seen by members of the congregation as less necessary
- **Re-applied the learning, although now with greater confidence**
    - o Since the completion of phase one of this project, we have gone on to work with the DAC obtaining the necessary faculties/ Archdeacon's permission for the installation of a replacement sound system, much improved lighting and very recently the replacement of our well-worn pipe organ bellows. Alongside this, we have managed to complete quinquennial stonework repairs, all funded largely by various events and local appeals. As a result, we feel more confident as we approach the next phase of our internal building improvements, and as a congregation we have been concurrently refreshing our regular financial giving commitments (bolstered by our new links too across the local community). We trust that all our efforts, to improve the building itself and to give renewed heart to the congregation, will combine to create a truly sustainable worshipping and witnessing community of service and outreach here in Bollington.

## **Q5. General Reflections**

- We are left with a very fundamental question – is it right that so much of our collective energy and funding-raising, over a period of several years, has been dedicated to building maintenance rather than to making the most of our Christian values and outreach efforts? Fortunately the HLF grant structure led us to create our new West End which is helping us to fulfil what really matters to us.
- Listen to all the people involved in the project and give them time to air their views, as the many are wiser than the few...the few being the project manager... me
- Simple is often the way...don't go the hard way because you think you know best
- Authority sometimes hides behind a veil of regulations, which tries to cover every eventuality but stops sensible and simple ideas dead. Challenge those that need challenging if common sense calls for it!
- Do not give up when you hit a wall...have a glass of red wine, pray and in the morning the sun will be shining!

# Acknowledgements

With many thanks to the parishes included in this publication who have kindly shared their experiences of church building and hall projects, for the benefit of all:

Alderley Edge, St Philip and St James' (p32)

Blacon, Holy Trinity (p17)

Bollington, St Oswald's (p2)

Chester, Handbridge, St Mary's Centre (p11)

Congleton, St Peter's (p35)

Congleton, Buglawton, St John's Community Centre (p8)

Heswall, St Peter's (p14)

High Lane, St Thomas' (p5)

Macclesfield, St Michael and All Angels (p20)

New Brighton, St James' (p38)

Poynton, St George's (p41)

Rosthere with Bollington, Holy Trinity (p24)

Stockton Heath, St Thomas' (p27)

Waverton, St Peter's (p30)

These are stories of what God is doing in the places and spaces we intentionally use for the glory of God. We hope reading them has been a source of encouragement and inspiration. As we draw ever closer to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, may we use our resources wisely to make Christ known, either for the first time or in deeper ways, as part of God's great reconciling work to redeem all under Christ.

Every blessings as you go forth in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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