

The Church of St James, Burton Lazars Meeting Room, Toilets and Improvements



The village of Burton Lazars is 2 miles South-East of Melton Mowbray with a population of around 450.

The name records the most important lazar (or leper) house of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, founded 1138 to 1162 by Robert de Mowbray. It lay 350 yards west of the church and the layout is still traceable today.

St James is a Grade 1 medieval church situated within the village. It is part of the Melton Mowbray Team Ministry.

What was your vision and goal for the project?

Our mission statement is: to share the love of Christ with the people around us and make the Gospel more relevant to today's world.

We needed a building fit to invite people into for things other than just church services because we want to reach the village for Jesus.

How would you describe the project?

We needed:

- an effective heating system for winter months; our storage heaters were condemned and we had only had overhead radiant heaters
- better lighting – the lighting in the Chancel and Nave was very poor
- a mains water supply and a servery; we had to carry the water in for refreshments
- an accessible toilet in the church
- a separate meeting room



We needed a separate space for people to have confidential conversations. Our vicar does not live in the village. We also wanted a room for the DCC to meet.

We created an enclosed meeting room and a toilet and servery and gathering area at the west end of the North and South Aisles.



How did you start?

We invited the DAC for an early site visit. We had thought we should start with the Chancel, but the DAC told us to look at the whole vision. We benefited from their guidance.

We appointed an architect and developed a list of things that we needed to change. We also asked the DAC heating advisor to visit to advise us. The Project kept growing.

We approached Gill Elliott for advice about funding and she suggested applying to the Capital Fund. We went through the process of fundraising alongside working through the Faculty System. We did have to make some changes to our plans along the way

Did you have any partners in developing and implementing this project? If so who were they?

No

What was the total cost of the project?

Estimated cost was £191,500. Actual cost was approx. £196,000

What was the funding strategy? / How did you raise the funds?

We formed a small working group of people with the right skills (including an electrical engineer, a mechanical engineer and a person experienced in applying for grants). The group met about once a month (or more frequently when needed).

We raised £50k from community fundraising.

We used The Diocesan Funding Directory to create a shortlist of potential funders. We also approached local businesses, and they offered a variety of support for the project.

How long did it take from start to finish – from the initial proposal to the building being completed and opened? What lessons were learned?

The project took six years

Early on we went on a diocesan course which inspired us to do a community consultation.

All through the project we have tried to build a sense of ownership for the project within the whole village. For example when milestones were achieved we said '*haven't we done well as a village*' to recognise everyone's contribution. We invited people to see what we have achieved together.

The church had regular open meetings to keep everyone informed. The aim was to bring people with us. It was important to demonstrate that we are not trying to compete with the village hall.

We had lots of fundraising events in the village, using a wide variety of different approaches in order to provide opportunities for as many people as possible to get involved. We developed a project overview to send to grant bodies which was based on the Statement of Needs.

It is really important to thank people and trusts when grants are donated.

What lessons did you learn that you would like to share with others?

Keep it simple! Control panels on heating and lighting system should be easy to operate.

Domestic dishwashers have a very long cycle so it is better to use a commercial one.

There will be unexpected issues on the way so make sure there is a big enough contingency.

A good working relationship with the contractor is really important and there does need to be someone from the church to be the key contact.

Take photos of each stage of the works and these can be used to update funders.



What were the particular Successes and milestones along the way?

We had a donation of 10k in the early stages of the project and getting the Capital Fund grant early was a huge boost.

Allchurches Trust gave a grant because of the Capital Fund grant.

What, if anything, would you have done differently?

We needed to change our plans for the lighting scheme because it was too expensive and our needs could be met by a simpler system. Simpler controls are better

What has changed about the life of the church as a result of this project?

(E.g. numbers, deepening faith, community service etc.)

Now the village people come in. We had an open church event and 40 people came. There were over 40 people at a recent coffee morning and over 100 at a concert. It is early days, but we are getting enquires from new groups wishing to use the building.

How are you looking to sustain what you have achieved in the long run?

The church will only be sustainable if people are involved. Everyone should be encouraged to play a part. It doesn't matter if they are church members or not.



Are there any future plans for the building?

We want to encourage people on a spiritual journey and are beginning to explore how we might do this.

We hold a monthly event in the Village Hall, which now attracts over 40 people. We are hoping to build on these relationships and have started a coffee morning in church which we have invited these people along to, with very encouraging results.

Everything we do we aim to do well. For example, we use good quality coffee and bake homemade cakes.

We would like to start something for the children and young people in the village.

Architect: *Peter Rogan, Peter Rogan & Associates Ltd*

Church website:

www.melton.leicester.anglican.org/Groups/161301/St_Marys_C/About_Us/Our_Parish_Churches/St_James_Burton/St_James_Burton.aspx