

The Church of St Bartholomew, Kirby Muxloe

Accessible entrance, toilet, servery & multi-purpose space



Kirby Muxloe is a village approximately 5 miles west of Leicester in the District of Blaby. The population is around 5000.

St Bartholomew's is a Grade II* church situated within the village. It was built as a chapel of ease and later became a parish church.

What was your vision and goal for the project?

Our vision was to make the building welcoming to all who come to worship, visit or use the church and to open up the building for the whole community.

How would you describe the project?

The original main entrance involved negotiating 3 steps down into the church.

We created a new accessible entrance by building a porch extension to the North West corner, which also accommodates an accessible toilet and a kitchenette.

We removed several pews at the west end to create a multi-purpose space and raised the floor. The heating system was replaced, the lighting improved and an audio-visual system installed.

What was the total cost of the project?

£250k (excluding VAT)

How did you raise the funds?

We had about £100k in the bank and the remainder of the fundraising took about 18 months.

A fundraising committee was set up which included people from the village who were not regular church attendees. We had 12 successful grant applications and 49 applications were either not viable or were unsuccessful. The team wrote a template letter which contained all the relevant information. This was then used as a guide for people as they worked on different applications.

A spreadsheet was used to manage all the information. The timing of applications is important as some organisations will only accept applications once 50% funding is in place.

We received £68k from the Diocesan Capital Fund. Other funders we received grants from included The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Rank Foundation, Allchurches Trust and National Churches Trust, Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust, Alan Evans Memorial Trust, Florence Turner Trust and J R Corah Foundation Fund.

We ran many fundraising events; for example 'Starbarts' invited people to donate the price of one coffee a week for a year and raised £3.5k.

A fundraising pamphlet was sent to everyone in the village and some individuals offered the PCC loans of £500 for 2 years.

We reclaimed the VAT from the listed Places of Worship Scheme (<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>)



New porch with accessible entrance



Porch design sympathetic to the historic building

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

The project ran between early 2012 and Easter 2016. We had already had some funds to use which made a big difference

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

The villagers have a strong sense of ownership of the historic church so it was important that changes proposed were considered to be in sympathy with the historic building.

The lighting contractors we used were really sympathetic to what we were trying to achieve (K A Brookes). This made a big difference to the final design.

There is always going to be a difference of opinion. Crystallise what you want to achieve and don't have large committees. If there is a majority vision go for it e.g. the majority were in favour of having refreshments after the services.

Include a sensible contingency (i.e. 10-12% minimum) in the budget. We did not anticipate finding vaults outside when the porch foundations were being dug. This cost us an unanticipated additional £12k.

The PCC needs a representative to be available to respond to matters arising whilst the contractor is on site. They will need to work closely with contractors and have a flexible approach as the project progresses on site.

People like to know how the work is progressing, particularly when the contractors are on site, so a variety of approaches were used to keep people up to date. Milestones along the way included, when the porch was built, when the wall was knocked through and when the new floor was completed.

Expect ups and downs!



New kitchenette in the porch



New internal entrance via porch

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

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

Some members of the congregation who had not been able to attend because their health had deteriorated were able to start attending services again.

It has challenged people's perception of what church is about. It is a warmer, more welcoming atmosphere.

Our experience is that people stay much longer after the services now and this enables relationships to be built.

There is a feeling of pride at what had been achieved. We opened for viewing at the weekends. People were interested in visiting, and were keen to volunteer to show visitors around.

The changes have led to the building being used more by the local community.

We have held various tea afternoons, music concerts including a Summer Proms, choirs and even a fashion show.

Messy church is much easier in the church now because there is more space.

PCC meetings are now held in the church. We have prayer breakfasts.



Looking east towards the chancel



New flexible space at the west end

**The Church of St Bartholomew,
Kirby Muxloe**
Accessible entrance & multi-purpose space

Are there any future plans for the building?

We are using the new facilities to try to grow the church, particularly through messy church and hope our work with the youth of the village will also attract them into the church.

We plan to continue to open the church so the village can use it. The project has made people want to experiment with new ideas. The challenge remains of the church situated on the edge of the village.

This is not the end of the work to the building. The church needs some repairs and re-decoration.

Architect: *Hannah Crawford, Pick Everard*

Church website: <https://www.stbartskm.org/>