

1.00 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHURCH AND PARISH

The church is the largest of three in the benefice. The others are Holy Trinity at Weston Lullingfields two miles away and St Mary's at Hordley six miles to the north.

The population of Baschurch is about 2,000, but the parish is larger, extending to include Yeaton and Walford probably giving a total of 2,200. Baschurch is an expanding village, and at the moment there are three housing sites under construction which will provide approximately 60 new homes in the near future.

Regular Sunday services in each month are two 8.00am communion services, weekly 11.00am services and one 6.00pm evensong. There is also a midweek communion service. General make-up of the regular congregation is predominantly middle aged with some young families.

There are 68 people on the electoral roll and the numbers attending an 11.00 service average 55. However special services such as Christmas, Remembrance Day, weddings etc can increase the number to between 250 and 300, the maximum capacity of the church. In 2016 there were 7 Baptisms, 5 Weddings and 12 Funerals

The church is open from 9.30am to 4.30pm six days a week. Entries in our visitors' book show people come from far and wide, often researching family history as we have a register of all the graves in the churchyard.

There is an active team of bellringers for services and who enter bellringing competitions. They also host visiting teams from across the country as the bells are considered one of the best sets in Shropshire.

Two local residential care homes for adults with learning disabilities attend weekly for worship, it enables them to feel very much part of this community and is something they enjoy engaging with.

Community groups that use the church regularly include:

The Lighthouse weekly club for 11-14 year olds.

Community lunch weekly.

Little Stars weekly mothers and toddlers group.

Messy Church for children quarterly.

The church is the Parish Church for the Royal British Legion Branch for Baschurch, Bomere Heath and District and the Rector is their Chaplain.

Other activities that take place in the church are:

Church events including a Flower Festival, a Christmas Tree Festival, a Winter Market & Fayre, Harvest and Spring Lunches, Supper Evenings and Quiz Nights.

Concerts by local choirs and orchestras.

Uniformed organisations attend occasionally for worship and other activities - badge work etc

The church also organises in the village an annual Village Fete on the village green and an annual two night Cabaret Show or Pantomime in the Corbet School hall.

The church is linked to The Church of England Primary School in the village that come to the church for their carol service, other special acts of worship and key stage related visits. It is also used for Christmas services by the Pre-School Group and the Corbet Secondary School in the village. Uniformed organisations, such as Scouts and Guides attend occasionally for worship and other activities, badge work etc.

Other community facilities in Baschurch are the Village Hall and the halls in the two schools.

The last Quinquennial Inspection by Tim Ratcliffe was in November 2011 plus a supplementary report on the tower roof in January 2016.

2.00 SUMMARY OF NEEDS FOR THE CHANCEL

To open up the front of the chancel by removing the low wall across the front of the chancel and having steps right across to make it more in keeping with 21st century for both the liturgy and concerts and primary school plays etc where it can be used as a stage.

At present the wall is frequently a hindrance to being able to set out several of the functions. The primary school often bring stage tables from the school as the only way of making a good presentation. For concerts, performers end up being partly on the floor in front of the wall and partly behind the wall where particularly with seated instrumentalists it can be quite cramped.

To carry out minor alterations to the choir and clergy pews to make them more user friendly. To relocate the font and lectern to suit the new arrangement and finally to coordinate the whole chancel flooring with new carpeting.

3.00 PROPOSALS TO MEET THE NEEDS

THE FRONT CHANCEL WALL AND STEPS

The main change in the proposals is to remove the low wall from across the front of the chancel and replace it with the steps extended right across the chancel. The wall across the front is much as when it was formed at the end of the 19th century when there would have been a more formal separation of the congregation and clergy. However opening up the chancel with steps right across removes this physical and psychological barrier between the congregation and clergy, more appropriate to the 21st century. At the moment the wall has



started to fail with loose stone joints that have also caused the inset glazed tiles to crack or drop out and the tiles would be virtually impossible to repair to the original state. The wall extends back at the left hand side of the chancel behind the clergy pew and has splayed stones on the corner. It is intended to rebuild this corner to remove the splay and extend the side wall by about 600 mm to the base of the adjacent column. With this it will be possible to cut in and reform a short length of the glazed tiles. This will also form a stop end to the new steps to prevent the gap to the column becoming a trip hazard.

The new stone steps right across the chancel will be on the line of and slightly in front of the removed wall. To assist those in need there will be two oak central handrails on metal standards with scrolled infill similar to the handrails removed from the wall. At the left hand end the steps will return adjacent to the base of the pulpit and the exposed end of the stone steps to the pulpit will be faced with timber to match the existing on the opposite face.

Heating pipes to the chancel convector heater run round the back of the wall to be removed and under the choir pew. These can be rerouted by extending the pipes in the trench in the Walford Chapel that already serve the adjacent radiator in the chapel.

PULPIT STEPS

The Rector is concerned for safety as there is no handrail to the three steps up to the pulpit, particularly as they will appear more vulnerable when the wall in front is removed. It is proposed therefore to provide a handrail, similar to the ones on the main steps, on the choir stall side of the steps.

THE CLERGY AND CHOIR PEW ALTERATIONS



These alterations are to improve the situation for the clergy and choir. The front choir pews were designed for child choristers, but are now used by adults and the photo shows kneelers on the seat to improve legroom for the adults. It is proposed, to increase legroom by removing the raised timber floor in front of the seat and make the desks freestanding. This also means when more space is required for an orchestra, the desks can be temporarily removed from the chancel.

The second clergy seat between the back choir pew and the clergy pew on the right of the photo is to have the raised timber floor extended across to make legroom more comfortable by reducing the excessive height from the seat to the terrazzo floor.

The music stand is used by the choir master, but is at present a trip hazard for the clergy. To overcome this it is proposed to drill a hole in the desk behind and fix an oak block beneath to take the upper part of the music stand. A similar provision will be made on the opposite side of the chancel for an instrumentalist's music stand

The clergy desk will be refixed to its timber platform as it is out of square and not vertical at the moment. It will also have the undershelf widened as it is too narrow for books.

THE FONT

With the wall removed, the font will appear rather dominant and take up space at the top of the new steps. It is proposed therefore to move it to the centre of the area of stone floor between the column and the grill over the heating pipe trench. In its new position there will be space all round it for the Rector and baptism party. Historically the font has already been moved from the front to the back of the church several times. When the present chancel was formed in the 1890s, the font was at the back of the church and it was only moved to the chancel in the mid-1900s.

THE LECTERNS



At the moment the church has two lecterns. The original one is a large timber eagle lectern, however it is not popular with some shorter readers as even with a pedestal to stand on they cannot see or be seen by the congregation. There is also a more modern lectern which, a few years ago, was given to the church by the Methodists when their chapel in the village was closed. With the new arrangement it is proposed to continue to use the modern lectern which would generally be positioned at the bottom of the steps to the left hand side. However it is also easy to move to alternative positions to suit service requirements. With this it is proposed to sell or donate the eagle lectern to another church. Alternatively it could be stored on the second floor of the tower.

THE FLOOR AND CARPETING



covered in grey green carpeting where the

The chancel is terrazzo and altar stone steps mainly covered with carpeting, now looking slightly untidy as it stops at the front of the steps and has been badly fitted around the altar rail standards. With the new steps and alteration to the front choir pews it is proposed to fit new plain red carpet, similar to the existing, to the whole of the chancel and stopping at the new stone steps at the front of the chancel to provide a single coordinated appearance.

The aisle down the nave has the central stones covered in a red blue patterned carpet with cast iron heating trench covers either side. The cross aisle in front of the pews is partly stone and partly softwood boarding front row of pews were previously removed.

The Walford Chapel is partly stone slabs and heating trench covers and partly softwood timber boarding where there were pews facing the chancel before it was made a chapel. It is at present covered with a red blue patterned carpet to cover the mix of flooring beneath.

A NAVE ALTAR



The Walford Chapel showing the oak screen to the fire exit behind, the altar table and the removable altar rail.

The new arrangement in the chancel provides space in front of the chancel steps for a nave altar using the altar table from the Walford Chapel. The new chancel steps will provide space to pass round for people going to the main altar for communion. The nave altar would also enable those with disabilities to see and more engage with the communion service as much of their worship is through the visual medium rather than the written.

DRAWINGS OF THE PROPOSALS

The general design is shown on drawings:

- 51/1 1:50 Plan as Existing
- 51/2A 1:50 New Plan Set for Services
- 51/3A 1:50 New Plan Set for Concerts

On the next page is a photo of the chancel and a perspective sketch of the proposals from the same view.

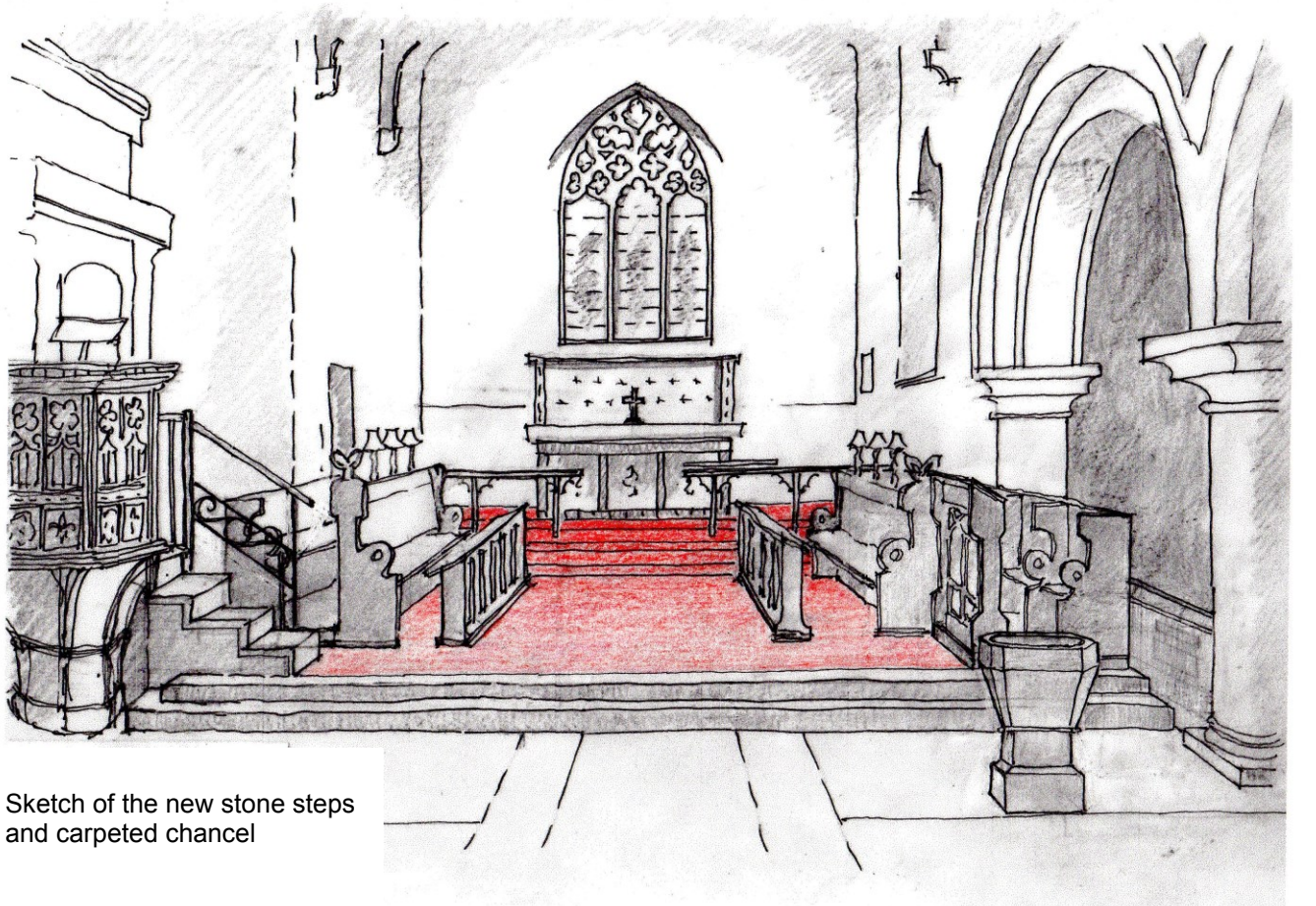
Further detailed drawings for completing the work are

- 51/4A 1:20 Plan of Steps and Wall
- 51/5A 1:10 Section of Steps and Wall
- 51/6 1:20 Heating Pipe Alterations
- 51/7A 1:5 Choir Desk Alterations
- 51/8A 1:10 Pulpit Steps Handrail
- 51/9A 1:50 Carpeting Plan

There is also a Schedule of Works for Chancel Alterations



Photo of the chancel showing the low front wall



Sketch of the new stone steps and carpeted chancel

4.00 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

Before settling on this scheme the PCC considered other proposals, but rejected them as this scheme would involve the least disruption to the church and would be the least costly. The other proposals were:

- To extend the level of the nave further out either partially or right to the front of the nave pews. Rejected because of the loss of the cross aisle which provides good circulation at the front of the church. It would also be considerably more costly.
- Removing the front row of pews in connection with extending the chancel. Rejected as it would mean removing the front row in the Walford Chapel as well to look right and would make the clergy more distant from the congregation.
- Raising the main level of the chancel by one step to the level leading to the vestry door. Although it would slightly improve the sight lines, it was rejected because of the extra work in forming the new floor and having to lift and refix all the choir and clergy pews.
- Removing all the choir pews, which are more decorative versions of the nave pews, and having chairs instead. Rejected as it would make the chancel look weak compared to the pews in the nave and it would be more costly.

5.00 CONSULTATIONS

On 20 February 2012 representatives of the DAC and English Heritage visited the church and preliminary sketch proposals were reviewed. After that alternative proposals as above were considered and the PCC agreed the one finalised in this statement.

The scheme agreed by the PCC was then displayed to the congregation with a letter from the Rector Jules Wilson in November 2014 and the proposals were generally accepted. The scheme has also been explained in detail to the choir and they also agreed with it.

At the request of the DAC the drawings and documents have been passed to our Quinquennial Inspection Architect - Tim Ratcliffe for comment before applying for the Faculty and he has confirmed agreement with the proposals.

6.00 ESTIMATE OF COSTS

	Cost	VAT @ 20%	Total
1 HEATING PIPE ALTERATIONS as schedule of works section 1 Quote from MANT Ltd 27 April 2016 Note MANT installed the present boiler a few years ago.	940.25	188.05	1,128.30
2 EXISTING FRONT WALL TO THE CHANCEL as schedule of works section 2 Quote from Mark Woolley 18 April 2016	899.00	179.80	1,078.80
3 CARPENTRY, JOINERY AND GENERAL WORKS as schedule of works section 3 Quote from Davies & Fisher 9 April 2016	4,924.00	984.80	5,908.80
4 CARPETING as schedule of works 4 Quote from ADT Carpets 1 March 2017	1928.33	385.67	2,314.00
Totals	8,691.58	1738.32	£10,429.90
Less VAT reimbursed under the LPofW Grant Scheme for items 1, 2 & 3, all the works except the carpeting		1,352.65	-1,352.65
Final total cost of quotes			£9,077.25
Add contingency			£922.75
Total 2016 budget cost			£10,000.00
Increased budget for the work to be carried out in 2018 now including stone steps and handrails			£14,000.00

Notes

- 1 HEATING PIPE ALTERATIONS: MANT Ltd. who quoted carried out the gas boiler installation some years ago and are familiar with the system. This quote is reasonable and I would be reluctant to use a firm not familiar with the heating system. They have also recently carried out work for the Corbet School.
- 2 EXISTING FRONT WALL TO THE CHANCEL AND NEW STEPS, masonry work: Mark Woolley has been recommended by James Shute of Shropshire Stone & Granite Ltd of Baschurch. It is proposed to obtain a second quote from Diggory Dalton who carried out the repairs to the wall by the lych gate in 2016.
- 3 CARPENTRY, JOINERY AND GENERAL WORKS: It is proposed to obtain further quotes from J Thomas Ltd of Oswestry who carried out the installation of the oak screens and audio cupboard Phillips & Curry Ltd of Llyncys Oswestry who have recently completed the tower roof repairs
- 4 CARPETING: It is proposed to obtain further quotes from local firms Shropshire Carpets and ADT Carpets.
- 5 VAT is recoverable under the LPofW Grant Scheme for all the work except the carpeting.

The chancel alterations would be paid for out of from the Richard Wall Fund. This was a bequest in about the year 2000 and currently stands at £18,500.

7.00 TIMETABLE

It is anticipated all the works could be carried out within four weeks. This means the main altar for services would not be available for services on two to three Sundays. This would mean choosing a period when there are no major church festivals or weddings. During that time services for a normal Sunday congregation in the order of 50 could be held in the Walford Chapel.

8.00 JUSTIFICATION

The proposals represent another of the gradual changes that have taken place since George Birch's work in the 1890s in reforming the chancel and the front of the church. The changes were:

- 1906 Removal of the gallery and the 1712 Renatus Harris organ at the west end of the church and installing the new organ in the chancel recess. The Renatus Harris organ was one of ten originally built for various churches in the City of London.
- C1970s In the chancel the second clergy pew was removed, the pulpit moved closer to the organ and the font moved from the west end of the nave into the chancel. Later the chancel flooring was carpeted. The second clergy pew is retained behind the altar rail on the left-hand side.
- C1980s The front row of pews in the nave and south aisle were removed and replaced with a timber board floor, to create a wide cross aisle. A chapel was also formed in the south aisle by removing the pews facing the chancel and replacing them with a timber board floor. The altar was provided with a curtain screen to conceal the door in the east wall and there is a removable altar rail. The floor has been substantially carpeted to unify the mix of stone and timber flooring.
- 2009 New lighting in the church with the chancel more brightly lit and with uplighting to the decorative timbers to the roof above the chancel.
- 2011 A new panelled altar screen to replace the curtain screen and to conceal the altar frontal chest in the Walford Chapel.

These new proposals are therefore another evolution to the chancel to attend to the front wall and carpeting which are looking slightly tired and to carry out the minor alterations to the choir and clergy pews to make them more user friendly. Finally the main visual change of having steps right across the front of the chancel will remove the barrier that the wall creates between the clergy and the congregation. The arrangement also makes the church more attractive for concerts and the Primary School plays etc to help link the church with the community, an important factor for the 21st century.

Michael Randall

Revisions February 2018

These are to address the comments from the DAC in Form 2 dated 2 February 2018. They cover:

- The new steps across the front of the chancel in stone in lieu of carpeted timber.
- The new handrails to the steps and pulpit steps on simple metal uprights with scrolled infills.
- Relocating the font to provide space around it for a baptism party.

The visual effects of these changes are shown in the sketch on page 5.