

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC)

Delegation Visit Report 21st June 2022
Parish Church of Holy Trinity Paulton
Grade II* Listing No 1320745

From the DAC

George Chedburn
Jill Channer
Julian Gibbs
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Consultees

Caroline Powers (BATHNES)

From the Parish

Revd Adam Pitt
George (churchwarden)
Kathy (churchwarden)
Kate May (Lay Dean)

Mark Taylor, appointed Architect

Purpose of Visit
An initial delegation visit to discuss the churches proposals for by removing the nave pews.
Background
<p>The Church of the Holy Trinity dates from 1757 and 1839, the latter by John Pinch. Characteristic aisled interior in Perpendicular tradition- exemplified by the central nave and aisles separated by tall columns that exaggerate the feeling of height within the interior and complement the lancet windows. The description also notes the complete set of poppy-headed pews. Since the church has been periodically enlarged on an incremental basis during the 19th century.</p> <p>Holy Trinity has a rapidly growing congregation and range of community engagement activities, this has resulted in the need for a more flexible space in which to conduct public worship and other gatherings. "The incoming congregation is primarily families with young and primary school age children who have already filled the room at the back that is intended for 'children's work'. If we are to continue growing we will need to make additional appropriate space available. The church has been operating with Covid restrictions since the new incumbent arrived in March 2021, but has still managed to grow from a worshipping community of 25 to 75, with new people joining us weekly."</p> <p>This is also the case with the weekly toddler groups and cafe that run during the week. These</p>

groups are severely limited by the lack of appropriate space within the church building and often have long waiting lists to attend.

The village has a current population of just over 5000 people and is rapidly expanding through new housing developments. The community has four other meeting spaces available at present: Methodist Hall, Village Hall, Football club, Scout Hall

All of these venues are heavily used and have little surplus capacity. There is therefore considerable demand for additional space for community events that the church could help to accommodate where appropriate.

The vision for worship within the church is one where all ages and abilities are able to participate equally and where children and families can be as integrated as possible within all aspects of the service. It is therefore not desirable to increase the capacity of a separate space within the church, but to create a communal environment in which all people can worship and learn together. The PCC also has a vision of the church being more central to the life of the village, allowing the space of the church to communicate the gospel in a wider range

The Church has established a clear vision for the future sustainability of their historic church building and have produced a good initial Statement of Significance and Need.

Holy Trinity Church is in active use for worship with a growing congregation. The church has identified their needs for mission and outreach and critical for securing the building's future as a community hub, with a clear vision focusing on children and family engagement. There is a need for change and adaptation of the interior to meet the needs of the growing congregation.

Summary of advice

The delegation was warmly welcomed and listened to the mission of the church, taking into account the needs of the parish, together with the ambitions to create a flexible community hub space. The DAC supports the desire of the building to evolve to meet current the need and aspirations; and welcomes this initiative.

Impacts and recommended actions:

- The current draft of the Statement of Significance should be further developed to include an assessment of the church's interior character and the level significance including the church's fixtures and fittings, spatial character and plan.

Nave works including pew removal, level floor

- The delegation discussed the proposal to level the floor to improve accessibility and the importance to understand what the floor looks like and what it holds.
- It is recommended that a full inspection of the floor and further physical investigations beneath the pew platforms to understand the nature of the floor. Including the composition of the pew decking and underfloor areas that will be exposed and how they will be treated. Archeology is a key issue and needs to be understood.

- The church should undertake an access audit and space audit as a supporting document, to identify what space is needed for the various activities and by which user groups.
- The architect should prepare more detailed drawings for the nave including different arrangements of existing and new seating and any proposed changes to the floor. It should also include proposed storage for new chairs.
- Information regarding the number, scale and size of new chairs and tables to be submitted for consideration as part of the faculty application.
- The delegation advised that generally the statutory consultees do not encourage wholesale replacement of pews where retention, adaption or reordering is possible as presently the poppy-headed pews form a positive contribution to the aesthetic quality of the interior but acknowledge whilst the pews are not of the finest quality they do add to the character. Therefore, the Statement of Need should be further developed to fully convey clear justification for the need for total flexibility to remove all the current fixed seating in favour of a hybrid form of traditional and new seating arrangements.
- The pews currently obscure the pier bases and should be investigated.
- There are no current plans to reorder the Chancel or remove/alter the pulpit.

Temporary Licence (TMRO)

- The delegation suggested that the church may wish to consider a TMRO to temporarily remove the bank of two short pews and frontal piece at the rear of the church to ease current congestion and accessibility issues to the under gallery hospitality and kitchen area and to examine use of space to support justification for the larger proposed reordering.

Heating & Net Zero

- As part of the overall proposals to re-order the interior, it is understood that there is a future aspiration to update the current heating installation, which may include underfloor heating. The church should consider its current heating arrangement and to accommodate a future heating plan aiming for a net zero solution whilst any works to floor and seating is being considered, including archeological considerations.
- It is recommended completing the national 'heating checklist' to develop a full understand of the usage pattern of the building, which will enable a successful solution to be found.
- The architect to advise the church on the suitability for installation of any renewable solutions and these options to be submitted for consideration.

[Church of England Heating Guidance](#)

[Church of England Renewables Guidance](#)

Emma Brown
Church Buildings Adviser
21st June 2022



