

Holy Trinity Paulton Statement of Need

In Paulton we have a **rapidly growing congregation** and a range of community engagement activities, which has resulted in the need for a more flexible space in which to conduct public worship and other gatherings. The nave in Holy Trinity Paulton is dominated by long pews which leave only very narrow walkways. There is no suitable access or parking for wheelchairs or baby buggies, with congregants having to sit in walkways to experience the service.

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.

This is also the case with the weekly **toddler groups and cafe** that run during the week. These groups are severely limited by the lack of appropriate space within the church building and often have long waiting lists to attend. Any future activities we propose that are not conventional anglican worship attended solely by able bodied adults will face the same limitations.

By removing pews to create flexible space within the nave it will enable the building and activities to be fully **accessible** to everyone, meeting the important requirements for the Equality Act 2010.

We would also be able to accommodate more children and families and provide appropriate activities to support the development of their faith. We would also be able to configure the space for our other weekly groups and events to allow greater capacity and therefore reach more of our local community.

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 of circumstances and reaching out to people who may not yet access a Sunday service, to serve as a gateway to further engagement. Our main services are highly focused on engagement, using a wide range of media to allow people of all ages and abilities to feel at home within the worship. This includes a wide range of musical styles, slides and videos, craft activities throughout the service and other measures. Alongside this we make use of social media and streaming services to build community engagement and allow people to access the service remotely. This combination of elements is seeing real growth in attendance and community awareness, but means that we are growing faster than the current configuration of church can accommodate. This makes the need for re-ordering more urgent so as not to lose the momentum we have achieved.

Other than the cost of the development itself, there will not be any financial impact to this proposal as it does not affect the building infrastructure. There is the potential impact of increased maintenance, lighting and heating as a result of increased use, however this should be offset by an increase in contributions from new users. The congregation already has adequate capacity to support the increase in scope of worship and events, with many of these currently having to be set up outdoors. A more flexible and accommodating space will reduce the workload on volunteers and make activities easier to manage.

This project has been discussed by the congregation for many years, however the need to carry out the work has now become essential as our congregation is outgrowing the current available space.

The church building is geographically central to the village, and remains culturally important with regards to major Christian festivals. However, as mentioned above, in the past decade the population of the village has almost doubled due to large scale housing developments. These developments are ongoing and so the population is set to increase further in the coming decade. Much of this growth is in young families and social housing, with people moving from outside the area who are not familiar with the traditional events of the church life in the village. It is a prime opportunity therefore, for the church to offer a more **relevant and accessible worship** space that can attract and meet the needs of this growing population.

The planned development aims to retain and enhance all of the traditional features of the church building, allowing the historic architecture to be viewed more clearly, along with the retention of aisle pews to facilitate the liturgical narratives employed in pastoral services. The vision for the worship and the reordering is that the historic features and modern facilities would be coherently integrated so as to be complementary, allowing for the articulation of our historic forms of worship to a new generation of Anglicans.

The current proposal is a result of consultation with the PCC, broader congregation, and the wider userbase who access the church for groups and events. It is the culmination of many years of discussion around possible reordering considerations that have now been crystallized by the growing need for action.

In discussing this development the PCC used the mission objectives of the Bath and Wells diocese and their own benefice profile to shape their thinking:

Bath and Wells Diocese objectives:

To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do.

To re-align our resources towards mission.

Benefice objectives:

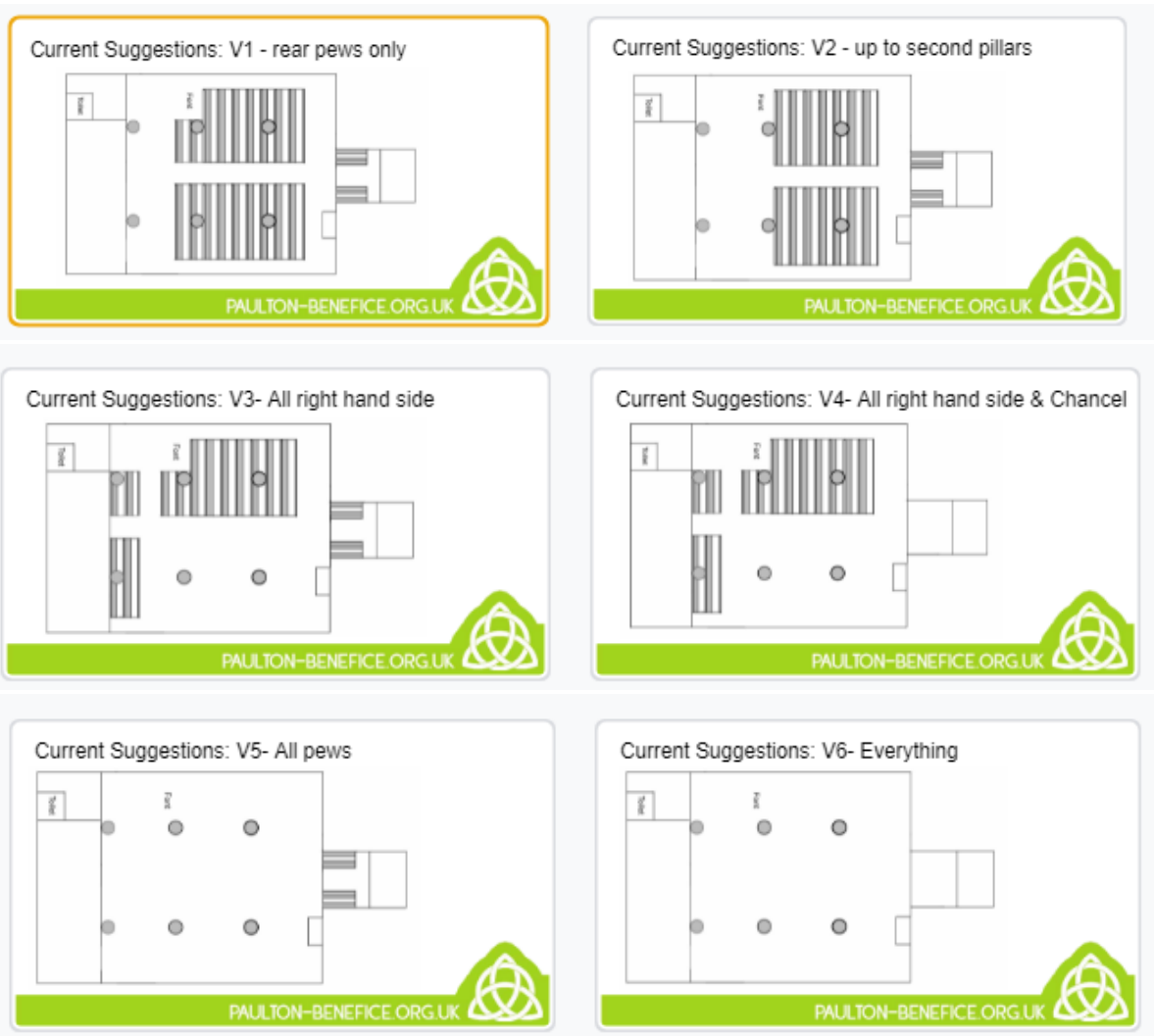
Engagement is essential. Our churches are seen as central to village life and important drivers of community activity.

Facilities improvement will underpin these developments, allowing more flexible and comfortable accommodation to welcome everyone.

The discussion of reordering was then structured around the following points:

- What is the traditional purpose of the church building?
- What are our priorities in using the building for evangelism?
- What characterises a comfortable and welcoming space?
- What community activities do we want to accommodate?
- What are our considerations regarding physical accessibility?

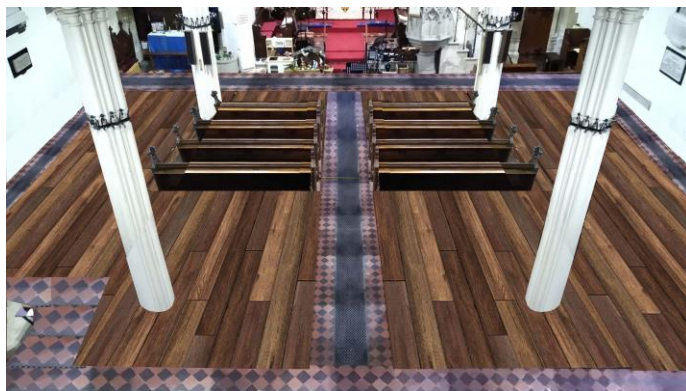
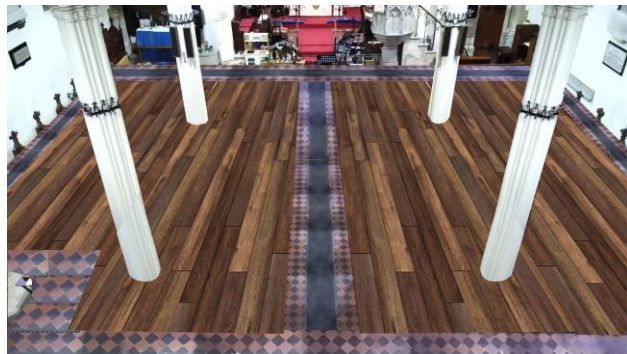
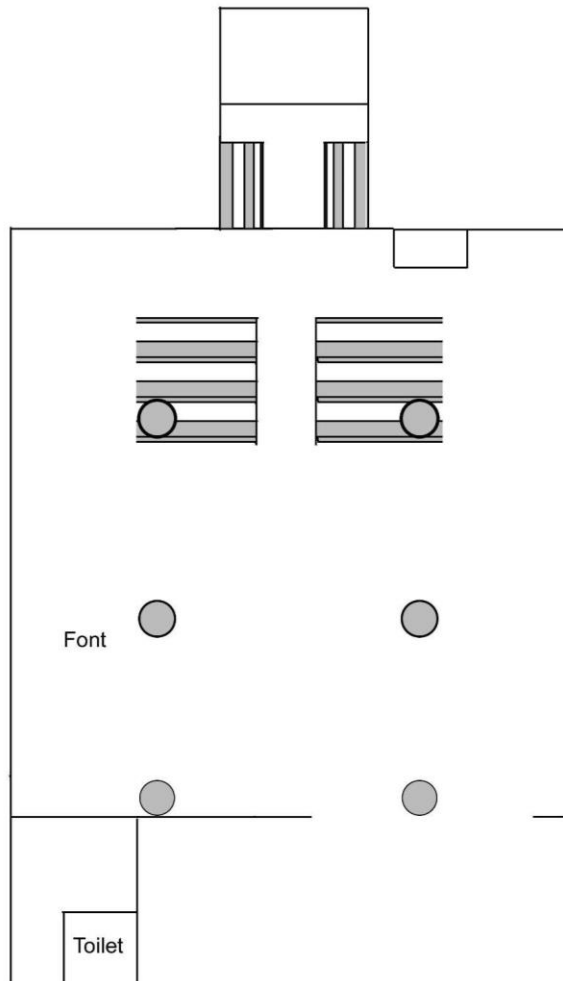
From this the PCC have considered a wide range of options (displayed below), each having benefits and disadvantages. The final configuration has been chosen to offer the most flexibility whilst retaining and enhancing the historically significant features of the building.



These options have now been drawn up in detail by the Church architect Mark Taylor: see attached files

The final design was presented to the congregation at the 2021 APCM for discussion and approval.

Holy Trinity Paulton: Final reordering proposal.



These plans have now been drawn up by the Church architect Mark Taylor, shared with the DAC delegation on their recent visit and have been turned into design drawings ready for work to begin once we have approval.