

St John the Baptist Church, Frome

STATEMENT OF NEED

Proposal

to replace the current wooden inner West end doors with fully glazed doors.

Section 1. General information

Population

Town population: 27898 at the 2021 census.

Parish population: 7,234 at the 2021 census

Services

Regular weekly services: Sunday: 8.45am Zoom morning service
9.45am Parish communion

Regular monthly services: Frome Area Christians Together prayer meeting
Julian meeting

School services: St John's First School: at least one service per term (attendance 260+); Selwood Academy leavers: one per year (attendance 200); Frome College: one per year (attendance 300+)

Other services: baptisms: 5 services in 2023; weddings: 9 in 2023; funerals: 9 in 2023 (attendance ranged from 12 to 200). All the major Easter and Christmas services

As the historic parish church at the heart of Frome, many whole-town and civic services are held here, eg Royal British Legion Annual Service of Remembrance (100+); WW1 commemoration service; funeral directors' remembrance service at Christmas

Electoral roll and age profile

81 people on the electoral roll in 2023.

Provision for children

We have a permanent "children's corner" stocked with quiet toys and writing activities, and an informal basis for families popping in during the week.

Church opening hours

The church is usually open 9.30am to 3.30pm daily

Other activities in church

Social events: Tea Time @ St John's every month; PCC meetings, team meetings, Deanery synod; concerts; Frome Festival events (a 10-day comprehensive programme including an annual display by the local Art for Wellbeing group); exhibitions; fundraising sales and fairs including a monthly mini-market on the first Sunday of each month March to December; Open Doors once a month when people can come to discuss weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Section 2. What do you need?

1. We need people outside to know that we are there even when the inner doors are closed, and to be able to see what's going on inside and not fear it.
2. We need to provide a more welcoming aspect to people entering church, especially those not used to church buildings.
3. We need to provide a solid wind break/ heat break when we open the outer doors so we can keep warmth inside the building.
4. We would like to provide additional natural light to the west end of church and the fairly recently installed Ken prayer stone.

Section 3. The proposals

Our proposal to meet the needs identified in Section 2 is to replace the current wooden inner West end doors with fully glazed doors.

Section 4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

The current doors are solid wood. When they are shut, it is impossible for anyone outside to see what's going on inside – or even if there is anyone in there at all – and that can be quite concerning for some people. We never cease to be surprised by people who come in (very tentatively) and admit they've 'never dared' to walk into the church before ...

So we do our best to keep the doors open as much as possible – from 9.30 to 3.30pm every day and for every service during the summer.

But in the winter we have a dilemma: keeping the doors open and being welcoming to those outside or closing the doors to keep the heat in but providing those outside with a blank intimidating wall of wood!

Glass doors will solve this dilemma: keep the heat in and at the same time allow us to improve our welcome substantially and allow those outside to see in – at the same time providing additional natural light into the west end of church. As the main town centre church set in the heart of the town, we are a focal point, and we view welcoming allcomers – of any faith or none - as a crucial part of our mission and ministry. We would be thrilled to make that welcome even better

Why now? Simply because we now have the funds through a generous legacy! We would have asked to do it years ago if we had been able to financially.

Section 5. Justification

As described in Section 3 of our statement of significance, we view the impact on the Victorian interior of our church as low whereas the benefits to the vibrancy of the church and our mission – as described above – is, we feel, considerable.