

St Nicholas' Church, Bathampton (Bath Deanery)

HEATING AND LIGHTING

(BRIEF) STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St Nicholas' Church lies in the Avon Valley between the Kennet and Avon Canal and the Great Western Railway, and it is visible from all the surrounding hills. It is of Norman foundation, and it has been a place of Christian worship for over 750 years. The current building was largely rebuilt by Ralph Allen about 1750, and other modifications were made in the mid-19th and 20th centuries. The church is built of coursed squared rubble and has pitched slate roofs with barrel vaulted ceiling to the central aisle and ornamental timber ceiling to the south aisle (Australia Chapel). The floor in the south aisle is marble from 1975 and the church makes use of flexible seating in this area, with all other areas having fixed wooden pews on raised platforms. In front of the south entrance is the grave of Admiral Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, which is an attraction for visitors from Australia.

The church is linked to an extension (comprising a large meeting room, kitchen, WCs, office and a small 'upper' room) which was added in 1992. Two gas-fired boilers provide heating to cast-iron column radiators and oversized pipework in the church and to panel radiators and fan convectors in the hall. There is both gas and single-phase electricity supplied to the site.

The churchyard contains some other notable graves (William Harbutt, the inventor of Plasticine; Walter Sickert, the artist; Jean Baptiste du Barry, the last man in England to fight - and lose! - a legal duel). The footpath from the western lychgate on Mill Lane across to the eastern gate on Church Close links The George (pub) car park with Bathampton Primary School, and it is heavily used by parents and children at drop-off/pick-up times, as well as by dog-walkers. A plan to develop an eco-churchyard is in hand.



The primary function of the building is as a place of regular Christian worship and, at other times, as a peaceful, quiet place of beauty and prayer, as attested by many entries in the visitors' book. It is recognized by many in the local community as the place where Christmas begins, as evidenced by multiple packed-out Christingle services, and this offers hope for outreach at other times of the year. There is potential for adaptation of the interior fixtures to provide for more flexible usage in line with contemporary expectations, but the focus of the present proposals is simply to restore adequate heating and lighting to make the building once again a place that is warm and inviting to both regulars and visitors.