

## Statement of Significance

### **St Peter and St Paul, Parish of Bishops Hull, Taunton Deanery, Diocese of Bath and Wells**

#### **Setting and role in the community**

The church is located in the centre of the old village with the parish extending southwards into the suburbs of Taunton and northwards into the countryside. The majority of the 67 worshippers on the electoral roll live in the parish. The Sunday and midweek communion services are attended predominantly by parishioners over the age of 50. Monthly coffee mornings are popular and beginning to attract non-churchgoers, as are events for children such as Pancake Day and Not-Halloween parties.

#### **Development**

The oldest part of the present church is the octagonal tower which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on a 12<sup>th</sup> century base. The north chapel is probably the next oldest but appears to have been repaired or rebuilt in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century when a new chancel was erected. The church then consisted of a nave with north and south aisles, side chapels and tower. In 1827 the church was enlarged by moving the south wall outwards, reusing the two existing windows. The vestry and west porch were added outside and wooden galleries

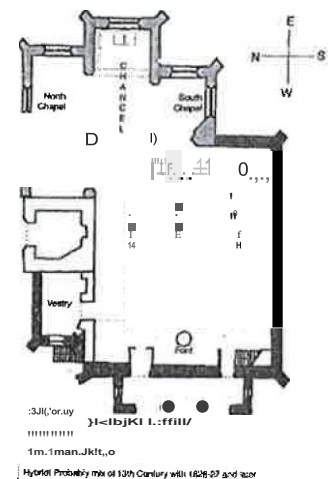


and west walls. The balconies in the north and south were taken down in 1923-24 but the west balcony remains, accessed internally by a wooden staircase and externally by a stone one. During this 19<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction most of the oak benches were replaced by deal box pews. In 1956 the west porch had to be rebuilt on new foundations and in the 1960s the north chapel also had to be partially demolished and rebuilt upon new foundations. The east window was rebuilt at the same time. In 1993 the floor in the centre of the nave began to collapse and had to be replaced with the present wooden floor. In 2012 suspected rot in the underlying floor led to permanent removal from the north chapel of the Victorian pipe organ. The 2012 quinquennial

reported the church to be in good condition but in 2014 signs of movement in the chancel wall raised new doubts about the foundations of the north chapel and the movement is now being monitored by structural engineers.

#### **Special features**

- Octagonal tower (13<sup>th</sup> century on a 12<sup>th</sup> century base) housing six 16<sup>th</sup> century bells
- In the north aisle: early 16<sup>th</sup> century oak pews with carved bench ends. Bench ends from pews removed in the 1990s are displayed at the back of the church, with two currently on loan to the Museum of Somerset.
- In the chancel: effigy of George Farewell of Bishops Hull manor who died 1609.
- On the south wall: Farewell family memorials
- In the south aisle: early 19<sup>th</sup> century box pews; pulpit partially created from sections of rood screen destroyed during 19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment
- Across west wall: early 19<sup>th</sup> century balcony



Photos from top right clockwise: exterior from the east; plan of the interior; interior looking west; Farewell Monument; interior from the balcony looking east; exterior from the west

**St Peter and St Paul Bishops Hull**  
**Statement of Needs January 2025**

**Section 1 - General Information**

The parish of Bishop's Hull is situated to the west of the county town of Taunton. The eastern end of the parish stretches towards the town centre and the northern edges into the countryside. There are nearly 3,000 residents. The centre of the village has the church, a Primary School (at capacity), a butcher's, a post office, a pub, a club and a hotel. There has been a significant amount of new housing over the past 50 years with nearly 200 new houses built in the last 10 years. There is currently a development underway of up to 3,000 houses in this and the neighbouring parish of Trull.

The traditional services are on a Sunday morning but there are services of alternative formats at other times of the week. There are also midweek communion services and seasonal celebrations and bi-annual quiet days. The average congregation on a Sunday morning is approximately forty people, most of whom are very regular attenders - approx. eight people at the 8am said communion and approx. thirty two people at 10am parish communion.

There is a fortnightly visit to the Primary School for "Open the Book". Midweek communion regularly attracts ten people. Other services include a monthly informal family celebration on a Sunday morning which attracts younger families from the village. Seasonal services can attract up to one hundred people (or more!) and quiet days have attracted as many as twelve people. In addition, as missional opportunities, the church hosts pancake parties and alternative-to-Halloween parties for the local school children; these attract up to sixty children plus their parent(s).

The Electoral Roll has 67 members (as reported at APCM 2024).

The church is usually open at weekends from 10am to 4pm but is not normally left open during the rest of the week at present. It is hoped to have the church open to the community throughout the week as soon as we can.

The church is regularly used by the local school and pre-school groups as well as a local choir for weekly rehearsals. It is also used occasionally for various community social events, including festivals, shows, concerts and anniversary celebrations: for example, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church bells was a 9-day long celebration for the whole community.

In 2022 the church was extended by the construction of a welcome area at the west end. This provides a meeting space, kitchen and disabled toilet. This replaced the old church hall which was a temporary wooden structure for which the planning permission had expired.

**Finance:**

Income currently is generally around expenditure and we draw on reserves when needed. However, we have no debts and our committed to, and have been able to, pay our full Parish Share each year although the Parish Share calculation is an ongoing debate with the Diocese.

**Quinquennial:**

The last report was in 2017 and did not highlight any significant concerns apart from the Guttering Project. However, since then some movement has been noted in the chancel area and is being monitored by the church architect. All routine maintenance is dealt with promptly.

Another Quinquennial report is due this year (2025).

## **Section 2- What do you need?**

### **Rainwater Goods**

The whole of the drainage pipes serving the church require replacement. The existing pipes are old and have been patched up over the years. Those repairs are failing and the capacity of the system is not sufficient to cope with the rain which hits the church roof.

## **Section 3 - The proposals**

The church architect, Mark Taylor, has prepared a drawing dated August 2023 which sets out proposals for the replacement of the rainwater gutters and downpipes. This has been submitted to the diocese.