

Report and action on Mark Lidster 's (Diocesan Building Adviser) visit to St Peter's, Evercreech on the 6th March 2025 to discuss the Faculty removal of two pews. Also present were Jacqui Carreira-White (DAC Secretary), Alison Stonehouse (Churchwarden) and Geoff Hamlet (faculty petitioner).

During discussions it became clear that while the DAC are supportive of us running a mother and toddler group in church – encouraging families into church and the need for storing toys they were concerned that the current method of storage was visually detrimental to the religious atmosphere of the church and wished us to find a solution where the toys, tables and chairs currently stored could be dropped below the level of the pews and more sympathetically stored and possibly covered.

During the meeting we discussed various ways that this could be achieved. Mark's suggestion that we should enlarge the current storage area by turning the existing pews through 90 degrees, lining the wall and north isle, allowing the toys, tables and chairs to be stored below pew height – appeared to be the best one. This would be in line with the DAC policy to utilise existing church furniture and as the pews are just being repositioned, it was explained that no faculty would be necessary.

On Mark's advice today we spent some time re-arranging the pews trying the various options and feel that we have come up with a solution that is both practical in terms of storage, visually acceptable and remains within the architectural history of St Peter's. The new layout also allows for a fabric cover to be made that will run over the top of the toys and tables additionally adding to this discreet organised area.

In the repositioning of the pews, it was decided that it was better to use the two pew frontals as the outside wall of the storage area – these are solid all the way down so will prevent toys etc finding their way out into the isle. This could happen under the pews and would prevent people catching their feet on the middle struts that the pews have, so would be much better from a health and safety point of view. They also have ornate backs which will enhance the storage area visually and mean that the carpentry is not lost.

Currently we have used pews to show the effect for the photos as the frontals need refixing into the screw holes to make them stable and we did not want to do this until we have your agreement.

As requested, we have attached photos of the storage area and pew frontals and hope that you feel that we have come up with a good solution that is practical, workable, visually acceptable and in keeping with the DAC thinking and requests.

Despite our best efforts this still means that there are two surplus pews and we would like you to still consider our faculty application to remove them as to continue to store them in our Prayer corner gives a cluttered and visually detrimental feel to our church. Which would be a shame as we have now sorted out the visually poor storage area.

We welcome your comments on the new arrangement and hope that we can now move forward with our faculty and a solution that everyone is happy with.

Geoff Hamlet







