

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St Peters Evercreech is a 15th century Church. The same service bell has been rung for prayer since before the reformation. The full peal of 10 bells is well known throughout the country when the BBC broadcast them each week. For this reason many people make a point of visiting the church. St Peter's is near the centre of the village, surrounded by a de-commissioned churchyard, local roads and period houses. Its painted ceiling and elevated organ (above the west door in the tower) are among the various features (others include the Font, Pulpit, Lectern, Brass Chandaliers etc) that combine to make St Peters a place of worship for an average of 55 congregants each Sunday.

The Chancel is the earliest part of the present structure dating from about 1300 with the Nave Tower North and South Aisles and Porch being added later in the 15th century. The Vestry was the last structural addition in approx 1750. The magnificent ornate roof, richly carved and decorated was restored in the 1960s to its original medieval colourings after removing layers of Victorian varnish. The 2 brass chandaliers which adorn the Nave date from 1761. The brass Eagle lectern was given in 1900. The Victorian pulpit to the north of the Chancel steps dates from 1843. The floor and pews were renewed in 1921 by J Wippell and Co. and according to records Parson Angell's wife carved many of the bench ends.

In 1875 the altar step and later Victorian tiles were laid over the eastern end of the encaustic tiled pavement and the reredos installed. The perpendicular nave was constructed in several stages during the 15th century. The nave was later heightened with the addition of the clerestory, three light windows and the roof. Fittings predominantly late 19th century include reredos, sedilia, altar rails, choir stalls, brass eagle lectern, pews, stone pulpit, and stone font. Organ built in 1870. North and south galleries to aisles, Gothic Revival, constructed 1825 and 1843 respectively. The new south aisle with matching gallery was added in 1843-44 by local architect and builder Jesse Gane. He carefully copied the existing medieval north aisle, arches and pillars while inserting the galleries in the available roof spaces.

Previous successful reordering schemes in the last 20 years, which included introduction of WC and servery installations, under north and south gallery. The scheme provided storage provision which is fully utilised and now full. Also permitted pew removal at the west end.

There is additional pew alteration and removal at the far west end of the south aisle, creating a regularly utilised arts and crafts area for adult and children's groups. Removal of the same pews on the proposed north side would be symmetrical. In 2019 thanks to a generous donation a successful glazed entrance screen was installed. The faculty permitted the disposal of two further pews.

STATEMENT OF NEED

The church has undergone several previous schemes, setting a precedent of permitted disposal. The further two 20th century pews are of limited value and readily unfixed, without the need for any remedial works to the north wall or flooring.

Since removing the 2 pews, the "Little fishes leaders have reported storage of toys, in and out has been made much easier. The seats of the pews that were originally used as shelves etc proved to be an obstacle and potential health and safety issue given that the children are encouraged to participate in extracting and replacing of their toys.

The children's team leaders are very happy with the new storage arrangements as they no longer have to negotiate the perilous extraction of toys from the galleries which was considered, by the churchwardens, to be a health and safety issue.

These leaders are also very pleased not to have to exit the church to source the toys in a shed. The toys were often damp and it was difficult in bad weather.

In addition, this toy storage area could future serve as an area to accommodate those with disabilities, including non-able bodied wheelchair users for services and events; and prams, which can often clutter the main entrance/exit route causing a health and safety issue.

The pews in question have not been used to provide additional seating capacity for some years, as they are not required and on the rare occasion when a large service event takes place the gallery seating and chairs are used to compensate for any pew loss.

St Peter's church is in active use for worship and has a well-established relationship and use by local groups, in particular the successful children's and parent group. Toddler groups are amongst the most exciting and significant starting places for mission for both adults and children. Toddler groups thrive because there are people dedicated to providing a safe, caring and welcoming environment where parents, grandparents and other carers, along with their infants and toddlers can begin to experience the Christian faith. This is very important missionally as the number of these groups decline and the parish and volunteers at Evercreech are owed a debt of gratitude for their dedication, love and sheer hard work running this group.

Since my last report we have 3 new families (6 children) regularly attending weekly services. One of the parents has become a "Reader", one has joined the PCC and two are active in lay ministry roles. The importance of the children's club and it's outreach impact to us is self evident.

We have noted the DAC concerns re the storage of tables and chairs in the same area as the children's toys and removed them. These are now placed at the back of the north isle where they are not impacting hanging painting and cannot cause any damage to walls

We are mindful of the ideal position of creating/building purposeful storage as an extension of the toilet block in the north isle. Unfortunately we have no funds with which to do this at the moment if we are to continue gifting our annual parish share of £47,000 into the common fund which the treasurer and PCC are anxious to do.

We have found, over the past year, this new arrangement to be safer, neater and more convenient for both leaders and children.

We hope and pray that you will look favourably upon this report and the benefits these new arrangements bring to us all at St. Peter's.