

St Julian's Church, Wellow

Statement of Need for new toilets and kitchen facility

St. Julian's Church is at the heart of the village of Wellow, not only physically but also spiritually. It attracts a congregation both from the village and from the other parishes in the group. It is a popular choice for weddings and funerals, including on occasions requests to hold a wake in the church. In addition it is used for a variety of activities both for fund raising for the village community and also as an artistic and cultural centre for village based activities.

The current toilet provision is a Portaloo in the church grounds, which is not an accessible toilet and there are no baby changing facilities. When simple refreshments are wanted, hot water is provided by means of an urn, the health and safety aspects of which are very unsatisfactory and are a matter of great concern.

We are very aware that we have a fine and unspoilt Grade 1 listed church but unless we can provide the expected facilities for the 21st century, there is a real risk that the church will not continue into the future. The church is a living body, not an historical monument, and as has always happened through the ages, must move with the times, whilst also preserving its historical significance.

As a church community, we see it as our mission to grow the church and expand the church family as well as reaching out to the local community. We already try and do this but with more modern and comprehensive facilities, we feel that we will be able to do this far better which will then ensure the future of the church as a vibrant part of the village.

The regular congregation is of all ages and mobility and needs easy access to toilets. Also, people often travel considerable distances to attend weddings and funerals and have need of both toilet and baby changing facilities. Going outside the church to access these is not an acceptable solution in the 21st century.

By providing modest kitchen facilities, we will enable the church to host more activities that involve the general community, which will help significantly with the church's finances and encourage appreciation of this wonderful church.

The PCC has considered numerous options over the years and we feel that we have now arrived at the most satisfactory solution that has only modest impact on the building whilst giving us the facilities we need in the most appropriate way.

The other options considered were:

A: Provision of one toilet and a kitchenette in the tower: this is not acceptable due to the very limited space each side of the tower west door, the use of which is crucial to the success of the church for special events, including weddings and funerals; the sub-standard dimensions for an accessible wc; the conflict with access to the bells above for maintenance; the disturbance of worship and events from use of either facility without an intermediate lobby.

B: Provision of one toilet and a kitchenette in the vestry: this is not acceptable with the location of the vestry at the east end of the church with almost certainly impossible access due to the levels and construction of the building. The very public access that would conflict with worship and events.

C: Provision of 2 toilets and a kitchen and meeting room in a separate building in the north field reached via a glazed passage through the existing north aisle door, altered to suit: this is not acceptable due (as in B) to the conspicuous access via the north aisle door half way up the nave; the significant impact of the glazed link on the centre of the north aisle externally as well as the impact of the new building

itself in the north field.

D: Provision of one toilet and a kitchenette at the west end of the north aisle: this is not acceptable due to the intrusiveness of the use of these facilities to worship and events; the unacceptable impact on the interior of the church and the pews and interference with the use of the font. The scale of facilities would be less than advisable (as in A).

The proposal is therefore for a small extension, placed on the north side of the tower and below the north aisle west window so that it will not impact greatly on the external appearance of the church; in the 21st century, it is essential that this is reached from within the church: the proposed doorway through the base of the tower allows for the tower's role as lobby and places the facilities at the appropriate end of the church to suit both worship and events; a less satisfactory alternative access is for a more conspicuous, 'less lobbied' doorway in the north aisle below its west window.

Unlike many churches, the tower of St Julians has a prominent vestibule role that would be enhanced by placing the doorway in the north wall. It would encourage more use of the space than at present as well as providing a practical solution from all aspects, liturgical, hierarchical and visual. The extension, at the same level as the church's floor, would allow for one normal and one fully accessible wc, both with baby-changing facilities, and for a small kitchen with appropriate storage.

Externally, owing to the rising ground of the north field and the west boundary wall to the churchyard, the extension would be unobtrusive in the typical approaches to and views of the church from south and west and scarcely apparent in views of the church from the north.

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