

Holy Trinity Church, Hartshill



Vision Statement

Version 3.0

October 2024

Introduction

This vision statement relates to the future use and sustainability of the main Church building of Holy Trinity, Hartshill. Although Holy Trinity Church is much more than its church building the building is nevertheless a key element of the Church's ministry in Hartshill.

The following aim and objectives are to guide the development and delivery of this vision statement.

Aim for the vision statement.

'To make better use of our Church Building to the glory of God and for the benefit of the community which the Church serves.'

Objectives

1. To provide a long term and sustainable future for the Church Building, which is a very important and prominent Grade II listed building in Hartshill.
2. To bring a wider range of people together in using the building and to develop relationships in and across the community of Hartshill.
3. To improve the Church Building and the spaces around the building that matter to the Community and contribute greatly to the appearance and visual amenity of the area.
4. To contribute to the development of the heritage of Hartshill as a resource for future generations.
5. To develop the arts and cultural facilities available to residents and students in Hartshill.
6. To engage with the Church of England plan to achieve carbon 'net zero' by 2030
7. To achieve sufficient income to be able to meet the running costs of the Church.
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The vision for the future is also based on the mission statement of Holy Trinity and the Diocese of Coventry mission statement.

Holy Trinity, Hartshill - Mission Statement:

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IS COMMITTED TO
SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS WITH ALL.

By:

- Providing Bible-based teaching, which makes the gospel of Jesus relevant to everyone;
- Providing witness which welcomes the Holy Spirit, is God-centred and changes lives;
- Sharing how God's Word can shape our church and how our church can shape society;
- Encouraging those in the wider community, by example, to find the strength and joy that Christianity can bring;
- Encouraging each other to grow in the faith and power of Christ and being witnesses to his love in our lives; and
- Providing fellowship and love to those we meet.

Through:

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| • Pastoral care and healing; | • Fellowship; |
| • Prayer; | • Leadership; |
| • Worship; | • Outreach; |
| • Service to the community; | • Use of God's gifts. |

The Diocese of Coventry mission statement

Has three objectives:

- Worshipping God
- Making new disciples
- Transforming communities

Background

Apart from the regular Sunday services, Holy Trinity Church is also used for funerals and baptisms throughout the year. There are also weddings and wedding blessings which average about 4 or 5 a year. Most of these one-off events do not necessarily involve Church members.

However, it demonstrates that a lot of people in the parish and even in the wider area identify Holy Trinity Church as 'their church' when it comes to these life events.

Other events such as Remembrance Day and the Christingle service also see a lot of people attending from the wider community as a whole.

Schools use the Church building for visits as part of their curriculum and for Easter and Christmas services.

Atherstone Choral Society use the Church for concerts. (Pictured).



However, for much of a normal week the building is not used at all.

Physically, the Church has a great presence in the street scene and was built partly as an expression of worship to God's glory. It is an attractive building from the outside and is Grade II listed. There would likely be a great outcry if it was ever contemplated demolishing it or even selling it. It is most likely, therefore, a well-loved building in the village including by those who do not have a faith.

The use of the word 'We' in this vision statement refers to the Parochial Church Council. In time it is hoped that the vision statement will be endorsed by the whole Church membership (as set out in the churches electoral roll) and the wider community.

It will be developed over a period of time as the actions in this statement are completed.

Description of Church Building



The Church is an early Victorian church of unusual design. Construction commenced in 1840 and was completed in 1848 using stone from the local Hartshill Quarry. Some red/blue brick and sandstone dressings are also included in the façades. The roof has a steep pitch and small plain tiles with stone coped gable parapets.

The front (west) of the Church has a very impressive west doorway with Norman style arch over a bank of six orders of columns and a large spoked (Rose) window, above which is a small tower and spire. The doorway is thought to be one of the largest of its kind seen on a parish church in England. Behind the west façade it is plainer –the large leaded windows are in poor condition.

The Church interior is large and functional. The influence of N.F. Cachemaille-Day may be seen in the decorations. There is a stone octagonal Gothic style font in the southwest corner and the other main feature in the body of the Church is the false ceiling erected during major alterations to the interior in 1938-39, when the gallery was strengthened to accommodate the organ pipes.

Over the years, the interior has been enhanced by many gifts from its parishioners, notably the three stained glass windows in the semi-circular apse, the oak carved altar and the oak altar rails.

Records and such silverware as we have are kept in a safe in the North West part of the Church.

During the 1990s, English Heritage awarded significant grants for the replacement of the roof, repair of the Bell Tower and the Rose window.

The Church is a Grade II Listed Building, and a copy of the listing description is attached as Appendix 1.

A vestry was built in 1909 on the north side of the church and is connected to the original small vestry by a corridor. The vestry was designed to reflect the character of the church – it was built in brick and granite stone with small clay tiles with a gable front. Metal windows match the character of those in the Church. The vestry is not referred to in the listing description. The vestry is home to Hartshill Community Library which started in 2012 and has done very well in establishing not just a library with computer facilities but a base for regular activities such as Family History Group, Book Club, and Needles and Natter Group. It is also used for PCC meetings, Mothers' Union and other meetings such as Neighbourhood Watch. It is already seen as a successful community facility.

The original vicarage (now privately owned) faces south onto an attractive grassed area in front of the church. There is an area of tarmac immediately in front of the church which is used for car parking but is kept clear in times of funerals and weddings. To the south of the grassed area is the access to the church with further car parking.

Down the southern side and eastern side of the Church is a closed churchyard with some significant trees. It provides a home to wildlife, bordering as it does to the northeast on fields and woodland.

The Community Centre, completed in 2012 (replacing the original Church Hall), is to the north of the church and behind the original vicarage. It is connected to the vestry by a corridor and has a hall, meeting rooms, toilets and a kitchen, which the church are able to use with the agreement of Hartshill Parish Council, who manage the Centre.

Quinquennial Inspection 2023

This was carried out by our church architect Steven Matthews and the following extract from his comprehensive report covers his recommended actions:

5.1 GENERAL MAINTENANCE

It is absolutely essential that all rainwater gutters, downpipes and ground gullies are inspected and cleared of any debris and plant growth, if necessary, at least twice a year. Any materials growing around the base of the external walls should also be carefully removed.

It is understood that some consideration is being given to entering into an annual gutter cleaning agreement.

5.2 ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

The following inspections should be carried out annually:-

- a) Electrical system (power, lighting, security, fire detectors, IT) – including all portable appliances.
- b) Heating system
- c) Firefighting equipment.
- d) Lightning conductor.

Inspection/test certificates should be obtained for all inspections.

5.3 OF UTMOST URGENCY

- a) Continue to monitor all cracks to the internal plasterwork (i.e. balcony, north and south walls of nave, sanctuary archway, etc.).
- b) Check the adhesion of the plasterwork to the right hand pilaster of the sanctuary arch.
- c) Regularly check for slipped/cracked tiles to the nave roof and refix as required.
- d) Consider installing snow guards at the eaves of the north and south roof slopes of the nave.

5.4 ESSENTIAL WITHIN 18 MONTHS

- a) Repair voids in external stonework (north wall and south wall, gable of west wall).
- b) Repoint open mortar joint to the left hand side of the keystone above the main entrance.
- c) Obtain an inspection report from the DAC's glazing advisor on the condition of all windows, glazing and frames.
- d) Remove the material stored on the balcony areas.
- e) Repair cracked paving slabs at west entrance. Also repoint the open mortar joints to paving slabs and pavements.

5.5 ESSENTIAL WITHIN THE QUINQUENNIAL

- a) Repoint all open mortar joints to the low level brickwork of all elevations.
- b) Repoint open mortar joints to coping stones to west gable.
- c) Redecorate timber louvres to belfry opening of tower.
- d) Redecorate all external rainwater goods (rainwater gutters and downpipes) and ventilation grilles.
- e) Redecorate the external doors, door frames and ironmongery.
- f) Invite the Local Authority Fire Prevention Officer to visit the church and obtain guidance on fire safety.

5.6 EVENTUAL

- a) Repair to sandstone medallions to west gable.
- b) Repair/renew east gable cross.
- c) Consider the internal redecoration of all areas within the church (walls and ceilings).

Options Considered

1. Do no major changes and try to maintain the church building as well as can be done within the financial resources available.
2. Look to create different areas in the church building retaining the east end for worship purposes and perhaps leasing out the other part for a nursery, fitness centre, or dance studio.
3. Sell the Church Building and use the Community Centre for services.
4. Sell the church building and look to share an existing church facility such as the Friends or Roman Catholic Church.

This has a lot of sense in Churches Together unity, but it is not at all clear that either the Friends or the Roman Catholic Church would want to share or that it is legally possible. This option would need exploring very carefully before this vision statement was shared with the wider Church and Community.

5. A variation of 3 and 4 would be to see if you could use schools –that might work for Sunday services and weddings but almost certainly preclude funerals. Again, it is not at all clear that any of the schools would agree to share on a regular basis.
6. Convert the church building into a multi-use building so that it can be used for worship purposes as at present but make it available to the wider community for one-off and regular events such as use by the local schools, concerts, arts exhibitions and sports clubs, at times when the church building is not used for worship purposes.

The PCC began by exploring Option 6.

However, following a period of praying and listening to God in the early part of 2024, there was a shift of perspective. Consideration had been given to making the Church a multi-purpose building but it was concluded that the Community Centre was already providing an excellent community space and that the Church Project should focus on making the Church building a comfortable and sustainable place for its current community and future generations.

Potential Work Identified by the Church Project Team

Guttering and Drainage

Due to climate change and increased intensity of rainfall, our gutters and drainpipes which were installed years ago are too small and therefore need replacing. We have had to have some repairs done to the Church recently due to water ingress and the raising of the floor behind the altar is also due to water ingress, Therefore, replacement of the drainage system is of high priority.

Heating

Our current gas boiler is not working and so this matter requires urgent attention. However, the current heating system is financially and ecologically unsustainable.

As Church services are only held a few times a week, its is inefficient to 'heat the space' to a comfortable level in the colder months.

Therefore, we should consider localised heating, e.g. pew heaters, heated pew cushions. Also, consider fabrics which retain heat, e.g. pew cushions.

However, the Church Project Team is of the opinion that there is a minimum temperature required for people to worship in comfort. Therefore, some form of heating system to heat the building is required. Replacement of the gas boiler with another gas boiler is ecologically unsound and so we should consider alternatives, such as Air Source Pumps which are powered by electricity.

It would be financially and ecologically beneficial if we could generate our own electricity by installing solar panels.

Windows

The windows can apparently be repaired without removal and they can be repaired one at a time. We should also consider secondary glazing on the inside of the windows for thermal comfort.

Decoration

Refresh the interior decoration of the Church maintaining similar colour scheme. Use lime based paint. Replace incorrect gypsum plaster with lime based render on the north wall before painting.

Insulation in the loft space

There is currently no insulation in the loft space as it was removed several years ago due to having all blown to one end.

Solar panels

Many churches are having solar panels installed to offset their energy costs and to meet the CofE carbon 'net zero' by 2030 target.

Although the Church roof is very large, we have been advised that the pitch is too steep and there is too much foliage on the sunny side of the Church for this to be viable.



However, installing solar panels on the Community Centre roof would be practical. We have the approval of Hartshill Parish Plan, the owners of the Community Centre buildings.



Interim Measures

Over the last couple of years, we have successfully held Café Church services in the Community Centre hall on several occasions. In the event that the Church is too cold for a Church service to be held in comfort, we are fortunate to have the option to hold a Sunday service in the hall. We have verified that banns of marriage are legally allowed to be read in the hall as the whole of the Church land is deemed consecrated ground.

Partners

We know that to be successful with grant applications we need to demonstrate strong partnership with community organisations, and bodies.

One of the most important is the Parish Council, especially given the relationship with the Community Centre and library. We would not be looking for financial support but that the Parish Council is willing to support the vision and proposals for the future of the church. A meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council took place in June and they have indicated their strong support for the approach the church wants to take.

Local groups and organisations – we need to survey what scope there is to involve others in the project.

Issues and Risks with any Proposals

Matching funding for grants is going to be a real challenge for the church. We may get some support from local businesses.

One of the biggest challenges is car parking. We do need to seek opportunities in the new development behind the church to try and improve car parking provision to enable the Community Centre and the church building to be used at the same time and maybe in a more intensive way. The relationship to facilities currently available at the nearby schools may be vital in this.

Another is the relationship with adjoining residents. Careful control of uses would have to be in place.

The complexities and delays in making grant applications and complying with planning and faculty legislation will need commitment and perseverance from any team set up.

The manpower from the church to actually complete the actions will be an issue.

Opposition from within the church and wider community may result in lengthy procedures. Regular updates and opportunities to give views will be essential.

Action Plan

When we have had initial discussions with partners, we will then map out a more detailed vision and share that first with the church members and then the wider community. We will also develop a comprehensive risk assessment plan (perhaps using workshop approaches) which will be regularly reviewed as the project progresses.

Proposed Actions

1. Maintain regular liaison with the Parish Council.
2. Report to PCC with Vision Statement, to consider options and next stages.
3. Once PCC have agreed a draft vision statement to present that to the wider congregation.
4. Seek possible funding for a needs assessment (possibly in conjunction with the Parish Council) and a feasibility study for the detailed proposals for the achievement of the project and provide a business case for future grant applications.
5. Seek to appoint an architect to draw up plans and schedule – this could be our church architect or a specialist architect. (St Mary's used Apec Architects in Birmingham).
6. Draw up schedule, plans and specifications for project.
7. Arrange a public meeting to present proposed project.
8. PCC meeting to consider comments and concerns raised and agree way forward - including any revised vision statement and project details.
9. Look at how match funding can be raised.
10. Apply for grants.
11. Set up implementation arrangements and team including a quantity surveyor. The one used for the Community Centre enabled a successful implementation of the scheme. Without him the scheme would not have been so successful.
12. Prepare risk management assessment and mitigating actions.
13. Consider separate phases and implementation parts for project.
14. Go out to tender on separate elements.
15. Monitor progress of project and outcomes on completed project.
16. Publicity on completed project with aims for future uses.