

Holy Trinity, Hartshill

Notes from site visit, 23rd March 2023

Attendees: Revd Stacy Taylor, Nick Blamire-Brown, Nick Miles, Tim Latham, Mark Seabourne, Claire Strachan.

Community Centre

You highlighted that the community centre project has now been completed for some years now, and it is managed by the Parish Council. It has proved to be a well-used and popular space.

Church

Prior to the pandemic, you had started thinking about how to develop the church space to complement the community centre and provide a flexible space that could be used by the church, and for other events when the community centre is booked up. You are consulting with local schools and other potential user groups to find out what the market for wider community use would be. A Neighbourhood Plan has recently been completed (2017) in which lots of surveys and consultation were undertaken which can be used to inform your development proposals.

A well thought out and evidenced community-focused project could be of huge benefit to Hartshill, and help to secure the church's long-term future. Community outreach, particularly in serving the most vulnerable and needy, is part of our Christian mission and local ministry. Furthermore, the more people invested in a place – not necessarily financially, but emotionally – the more sustainable it will be in the future.

Needs

We talked about what the needs of the church are. The priorities at the current time are:

1. Improved heating, possibly including [solar PV](#) for energy generation
2. Repairs to windows
3. Replastering/redecoration
4. Reordering to create flexible space (removal of pews), addition of facilities (WC, servery)

We recommend that you obtain advice from the DAC Heating Adviser, Peter Bemrose, regarding the heating options available that would work best for your church usage.

It is important that the project team articulate the need for the reordering part of the proposals based on their own vision for the mission and ministry of the church, and how they can support the wider needs of the community. The pews, although not original to the church, are part of the 1930s reordering of the church under architect N.F. Cachemaille Day, who is gaining eminence as a significant twentieth century architect. The pews form part of a designed piece with the other furniture in the church including the pulpit and the lectern, and are of good quality. A robust case would need to be made for their removal, and break up of this set (which I'm sure can be made, it just might take a bit of thought and time to put this together and would be helped by supporting evidence for future use of the flexible space).

The need for the repair works are clear. Your church architect (or whoever you choose to undertake the work) will need to provide a full specification for the repairs as part of the Faculty application. The next QI is due in July, so it will be worth waiting until then to develop this part of the proposals based on priorities.

Funding

With significant repairs and large-scale reordering planned, there is likely to be a need for additional funding. [Andy Duncan](#), the Church Building Funding Support Officer, is best placed to support you with this.

Most large grants (like the [NLHF](#)) are only obtainable through a lengthy process which requires a lot of input from the PCC/church project team, and are highly competitive. Most funders will not consider building projects unless they have a community focus, beyond the worshipping community.

Successful applications to the NLHF will require a strong 'vision' that meets local needs, and incorporates a high level of community engagement based on a number of outcomes. The new 10-year strategy has now been announced, with a focus on '*saving heritage, protecting the environment, inclusion, access and participation, and organisational sustainability*'. The engagement will need to be centred on a story or 'theme', with events and activities developed into an 'Activity Plan'.

You are starting to explore ways in which you can tell the story of the church. Possible themes include:

- Hartshill Castle
- Quarry and industrial heritage/development of village (*did stone from church come from there?*) – "*Stories in Stone*"

Finding partners to help with the development and delivery of the community engagement side of things would also be beneficial – e.g. library service, local history groups, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (if a natural environment strand to project).

Andy Duncan (Church Buildings Funding Support Officer – Andy.Duncan@Coventry.Anglican.org) can support the PCC with identifying potential funders and advising and helping with grant applications, and particularly managing applications to the big funders like the NLHF.

Next Steps

- Take a look at the [Crossing the Threshold toolkit](#) – a thorough step by step guide into developing a community project in your church building
- Contact Andy Duncan regarding fundraising for such a project (he's away for the first 2 weeks of May)
- *Develop a Project Team* – this could be the PCC, as is, or a sub-committee of it continuing some PCC members and some others from the congregation who may be able to offer additional skills that would be useful (see Crossing the Threshold toolkit for more info).
- *Place audit* – identify what other public spaces there are in Hartshill, alongside their use and capacity. Identify what their benefits and barriers/downsides of them. What can Holy Trinity offer that they can't (if developed with facilities, flexible space and heating).

- *Community survey* – to determine where the gaps are in the local community, how people feel about the church, and how Holy Trinity could meet local needs. Claire and Andy can provide examples of community surveys that you can use/adapt.
- Consult the [Neighbourhood Plan](#) to identify needs of the local community and explore whether/how the church reordering project could meet these needs (and those of the worshipping congregation)
- *Identify potential partners* – speak to local charities, businesses and organisations about how Holy Trinity could help to support their work. Would they use the space if it was available? This could include, for example, local Community Officers, the NHS, homeless charities and foodbanks, schools, local history groups, uniformed groups (eg. Brownies etc). Ensure notes of any meetings or correspondence are retained, as they could be useful for funding applications!
- *Make contact with the local councillor* to discuss how they could support a community project at Holy Trinity, and what the local authority's vision for Hartshill is.
- *Explore heating options* – contact the DAC Heating Adviser (Peter Bemrose – peter@pbemrose.co.uk) who will be able to suggest options for new heating systems in the church, based on use and budget.
- Do some feasibility/survey work to support need for reordering and formalise this into a 'feasibility' report – based on some of the steps above (community survey, neighbourhood plan, discussions with potential partners and parish council)
- Develop a Statement of Need for the project and submit to the DAC. At this point they may recommend that a site visit be arranged to discuss the project in more detail (CS and TL to arrange).
- Following the QI, draw up the details of the repair project with the Church Architect.