

Holy Trinity Church, Hartshill



Vision Statement

Version 1.0

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.

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:

- Pastoral care and healing;
- Prayer;
- Worship;
- Service to the community;
- Fellowship;
- Leadership;
- Outreach;
- 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.

Haddon School of Performing Arts have used the building for rehearsals and performances.

Atherstone Choral Society use the Church for concerts.

(Pictured).



However, for much of a normal week the building is not used at all. As stewards of such an important building we feel it is important to explore how we can use the building for the benefit of the community we serve.

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.

Most people, we believe, would want to see the Church retained as a building serving the community as well as a place of worship and that is certainly the overriding aim of this vision statement. Indeed, it must be remembered, this is a building on consecrated ground so careful consideration will have to be given to any proposals.

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 Knit 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 Report- July 2018

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 paviours.

5.5 ESSENTIAL WITHIN THE QUINQUENNIUM

- 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).

Challenges for Church Congregation

The Quinquennial Report identifies some serious issues for the future maintenance of the building. The challenge of those is against the backdrop that the church congregation although fairly stable is an ageing one and the church's financial position like most churches is very difficult. The future sustainability of the building requires a new approach.

Some of the large challenges in relation to the fabric of the church building are as follows:-

Windows are buckling because of corrosion of iron support bars in the walls. It is a specialist job to replace these and the last estimate some years ago was some £30,000.

Heating System- The boiler is now old and not very reliable. Replacement parts will be increasingly difficult to obtain. In cold weather the heating system cannot heat the church to a comfortable level which is of real concern with an aging congregation. It is on sometimes for many hours before a service and is obviously expensive in its use of gas. The infrequent use of the church adds to the problem, and it is not a sustainable system. Ideally a new heating system should be introduced. A new heating system could cost up to £100,000 based on the recent experience of St Mary's, Atherstone. The vicar of that Church has already given us valuable advice.

Decoration- the Church has not been decorated for a great number of years and although it is not too bad there are bare patches of plasters and some major cracks. A guess at cost of decoration would be some £20,000.

Flooring- some of it such as the plastic tiles and carpet are not in good condition.

The pews are not the most comfortable to sit on for long periods and do not allow a flexible use of the space (When some of the pews were removed from the back of Church there was quite a lot of opposition although it is generally accepted that it was a good move)

The Church simply has not got the financial capacity to tackle the costs in renovating the church. The PCC have already endorsed exploring a new approach to using and sustaining our church building.

Options

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.

Way Forward

At present, the PCC preference is to explore Option 6.

Following the Diocese mission aim of transforming communities, the church recognises that to bring people to Jesus and make new disciples we need to build trust and contacts in the community through events such as the Sausage Sizzle in July and the Light Party in October, which are put on for free not seeking anything in return. We need to show the church is relevant in today's world and that we consist of ordinary people who have a faith and belief in Jesus. If we can demonstrate that then people will want to explore what following Jesus would mean for them.

The PCC also recognises that to move forward the church building cannot only be used for church activities on a few days in a week - it needs to be a resource that is open to the wider community and provide an income stream for the future maintenance and upkeep of the building. We need to show good stewardship of the resource that has been given to us. To do this we need to achieve a comfortable, sustainable and multi-use building.

We also know from the experience of doing the Community Centre that funding and grants are influenced by the outcomes achieved for the wider community.

We want the use of the building to complement the Community Centre and not compete with it. As it has to be available for funerals and weddings it is unlikely to be suitable for regular events during the day, however its size does make it suitable for concerts, arts, use by schools and even some sporting activities which cannot be accommodated in the Community Centre. With the use of the facilities of the Community Centre it might be appropriate for conference type uses.

To achieve these aims some radical steps are needed - in particular taking out the pews and replacing with flexible seating. We will also need to have temporary staging and have modern audio equipment.

New carpeting or hard-wearing flooring, a new heating system and redecoration will be required. New lighting might be required, and the windows will need to be repaired. Consideration will also need to be given to whether the church building should have its own toilet and kitchen facilities.

The experience of St Mary's, Atherstone would suggest that the project may have to be split into phases to be completed when funding is available. However, a master plan showing the ultimate finished scheme should be developed.

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.

We want to meet with the school head teachers, especially given the growth of Michael Drayton and High School. The availability of the church may be extremely useful to them.

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. An initial meeting with Chair and Vice Chair of Council and Community Centre Manager took place on June 7th 2019.
2. Meeting with Michael Brandsma, Vicar of St Mary's, Atherstone for advice took place on 24th October 2019.
3. Meeting with Andy Duncan, Diocese of Coventry, for advice on grants, vision statement and steps to progress project. Meeting took place on November 14th 2019, with very useful feedback from Andy and possible future support.
4. Meetings with the representatives of the 3 schools in Hartshill to find out if there are any possible needs for use of the church building (again not seeking financial input which is extremely unlikely given school budgets).
5. Consider the establishment of a heritage/local history group as a partner to the project.
6. Report to PCC in February 2020 with Vision Statement, to consider options and next stages.
7. Once PCC have agreed a draft vision statement to present that to the wider congregation.
8. 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.
9. 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).
10. Draw up schedule, plans and specifications for project.
11. Arrange a public meeting to present proposed project.
12. PCC meeting to consider comments and concerns raised and agree way forward - including any revised vision statement and project details.
13. Look at how match funding can be raised.
14. Apply for grants.

15. 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.
16. Prepare risk management assessment and mitigating actions.
17. Consider separate phases and implementation parts for project.
18. Go out to tender on separate elements.
19. Monitor progress of project and outcomes on completed project.
20. Publicity on completed project with aims for future uses.

Appendix 1
Listing Schedule

SP39SW
5/97

HARTSHILL

CHURCH ROAD
(East side)
Church of The Holy Trinity

11

Church, 1841-1848 by T.L. Walker. Hartshill granite rubble with red brick, blue brick and sandstone dressings. Plain-tile roof has stone-coped gable parapets. Nave and shallow apsidal chancel. Neo-Norman style. 8 bays. Moulded brick plinth, pilaster buttresses, and moulded blue brick corbel table throughout. West front has very large and deep portal of 6 orders; arches have zig-zag, ball flower, serpentine and other mouldings in blue brick. Sandstone shafts have scalloped, interlaced, waterleaf and other capitals. Chamfered shouldered doorway has double-leaf doors and roundel with cross in the tympanum. Narrow left and right bays have 2 tiers of windows between buttresses. Windows have blue brick roll-moulded round arches throughout. Gable has brick tumbling, and row of 4 blind quatrefoil roundels of sandstone. Large wheel window of sandstone with columns as spokes. Small square turret at apex of gable on 2 coved corbels with grotesque masks, and pointed elliptical louvred opening between them. Moulded brick string course, and stone pyramid roof. Bell chamber openings have simple outer arch, inner arch with sandstone nook shafts, and 2 louvred openings to each side. Return sides have doorways to first and eighth bay, with windows above. East doorways are bricked up; west doorway has plank door. Windows have continuous moulded sill course forming hood mould above doorways. East gable of nave has small turret with louvred openings and remains of stone cross. Semi-circular apse has 3 windows. Interior is plastered with moulded cornice and false ceiling. Arch to apse is unoulded. West gallery on 4 shafts with scalloped capitals. The interior was redecorated in 1939 and 1948 by N.F. Cachemaille-Day. Stone octagonal Gothic style font.
(Buildings of England: Warwickshire: p307)