

Statement of Significance – St. Peter's Church, Haveringland

Section 1: The church in its rural environment.

1.1 Setting of the Church



Aerial view of St. Peter's Church

The Church was originally set amongst the wooded **parkland surrounding the former Haveringland Hall**, which was located about half a mile to the north east. The Hall and its adjoining land became the site of the **RAF Swannington airfield**, built and operated in the last few years of the 2nd World War. This resulted in the trees surrounding the church being removed and the perimeter track of the airfield coming very close to the church (there is a photograph showing a Mosquito aircraft parked up in front of the church). As a result the Church surroundings today are **largely open fields with some stands of trees** (including some marking the main runways)- it is known as '**The Church in the Fields**'.

In the last few years an animal sanctuary has purchased the surrounding fields and these are now cultivated as **fenced pasture** for rescued horses and other animals. The church and its unique setting are held in affection by many local people and visitors from further afield.

There are **two monuments** in the vicinity of the churchyard: one of a monolith commemorating the airfield, erected near to the south west corner of the churchyard wall and the other a model of a Spitfire aircraft perched on top of a wooden pole with information about the airfield- this was originally part of a 2018 Norfolk- wide commemoration of the formation of the RAF in 1918.

Access to the church is via a **concrete track** connected to the Norwich Road, and a more informal '**green lane**' from the Haveringland Hall Country Park- a development of residential and holiday lodges on the site of the former Haveringland Hall estate.



Church surrounded by grazing fields



Memorial to RAF Swannington Airfield



Spitfire memorial for RAF Swannington

1.2 The Living Churchyard



Approach to the Church from the south showing unmown 'Conservation Churchyard'



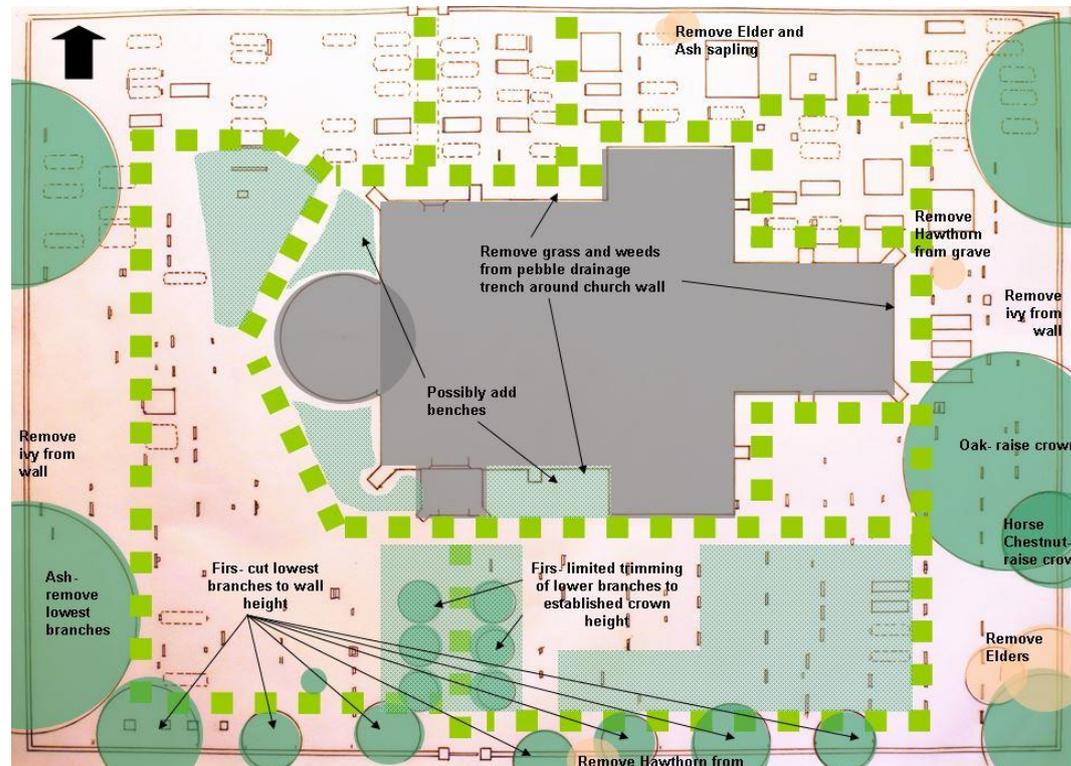
Southern side of the Churchyard after mowing and raking off

The church is surrounded by a **walled churchyard** (the walls of flint and stone, built at the same time as the reconstruction of the church in the mid 19th century), with graves dating back to the 17th century and some even earlier; outside the north chancel lies a crossed stone coffin slab, from the 13th century.

The churchyard has been actively managed in the last few years as a **wildlife conservation area**, with a meadow cutting and raking regime, combined with more frequently mown paths through the graves and surrounding the more looked after plots.

With the landowner's permission, beyond the churchyard an **'Avenue of Remembrance'** of trees was planted in 2017 to mark the 70th anniversary of the closure of the RAF Swannington airfield, along the track leading up to and in front of

the church. At the same time a small triangular area of field margin was cleared and is also being left as a 'wild' area. Further trees were planted near this area in 2018, alongside the concrete hardstanding that acts as a car park for the church. The former *Church Action Group* was recognised for its creative approach to improving biodiversity in the 2018 **Norfolk Biodiversity Awards**.



Management Plan for the churchyard

1.3 Social History

What is the historic and present use of the church and churchyard by the congregation and wider community? How does this contribute to its significance?

In living memory, weekly acts of worship were held at the church, but wider societal changes along with a change in the demography of the parish led to dwindling congregations, to the point that services were only held in summer months and were attended by very few people - many of whom came from other churches in the group.

In 2015 a decision was made to explore the “Festival Church” model, and to concentrate on providing a mix of varied events and activities, rather than a traditional programme of weekly worship.

A focus on Remembrance, Harvest, Rogation, Christmas and Easter as our key religious festival opportunities has enabled the church to consider exploring other missional opportunities such as shared silences, heritage open days, eco fairs, and our popular social event “Forties in the Field”.

The churchyard remains open for new burials with one or two funerals most years. As such the churchyard is visited frequently by relatives; alas, due to its isolated position, the church building remains locked when not in use for events and services.

The church's location, on the edge of the former RAF Swannington airfield, attracts many visitors looking to find out more about their family members who served at the base in the Second World War. In 2023, the church was dedicated by the Bishop of Norwich as a memorial church to the RAF 100 (Bomber Support) Group, who flew from the base in the Second World War. It is hoped that this new status will attract further visitors to the church building. The current situation of a building which is usually closed does not respond to the missional opportunity of this link with RAF Swannington.

1.4 The church building in general



The Church tower illuminated for a Carol service

Architectural and historical interest

- The Church is listed as Grade II* (originally listed in 1961).
- Its Norman round tower is of significance as one of the oldest in Norfolk (1086) and features some unusual brickwork, Roman material and bells of historic interest.
- The main church structure is an example of an early Victorian rebuild and was completed, along with its fittings and contents, to a high standard in 1858; it is a relatively rare example of such a complete single, private patron rebuild.
- The Victorian painted glass and nave pews and *De Ramsey* South transept, given their relatively early age and above average quality, are of especial note, as is the organ, installed later.
- The Church setting and churchyard are of natural and historic interest given the location and associations with Haveringland Hall and RAF Swannington.

Artistic and archaeological interest

- The painted glass and nave pew tracery is of artistic interest as are some of the carved stone corbels. There have been no significant archaeological finds in the church or churchyard, but there is a small display of some finds from the wider area in the church.

1.5 The church building in detail



The Tower

The Round Tower and some adjoining walls date to 1086 making it one of the oldest round towers in Norfolk and is constructed of flint, ironbound conglomerate, significant amounts of roman tile and brick and fragments of opus signinum. It includes a battlemented parapet wall to the top which was added at the time of the rebuilding of most of the church in the 19th century. The bricks in these battlements have diagonal skintlings, apparently only 2 other examples of this being found in Norfolk. There may have been battlements on the tower prior to this.

The tower houses a belfry which has four bell-openings, thought to be in their original shape. Three bells (not used for some time) with old inscriptions are present, one of which was recast in 1856. One of these is thought to be 'St. William's Bell', commemorating the baptism and possibly birthplace of 'St. William of Norwich', whose medieval murder gave rise to the first recorded 'blood libel' against the Jews.

The original church is thought to have had, in addition, a nave, chancel, north aisle, north transeptal chapel and south porch. There was a phase of rebuilding between 1300- 1340. By the early 19th century the chancel had gone and its window walled up.



One of the Bells



The Tower with Bell ropes

The north doorway appears to date from around 1300 and the west windows of the tower and north aisle seem to belong to the period around 1400. Outside, at the junctions of the north and south aisle roofs and the tower are carvings of two 'agitated cats', possibly medieval. It is possible that the north aisle was rebuilt in 1755 and the chancel was demolished some time between 1740 and 1830 (there is an etching of the church showing its form in 1830 by J.D. Ladbrooke).



The north door

The nave

The majority of the current structure (with the exception of the main body of the tower and adjacent walls) is predominantly a reconstruction dated to 1858, so a relatively early example of a Victorian rebuild. In addition to the main structural elements of the earlier church it has a southern aisle and transept. The main body of the church is constructed of knapped flint on the south elevation, with rough flint on the north aisle and transept (and buttresses in knapped flint); this may indicate that these are the walls of the earlier church. The internal wall surfaces are finished in rough plaster and in several places show signs of damp penetration and staining. The roof is of Westmorland Slate.



One of the corbels



The aisles both have three bays. The north door was re-set and there is a gabled porch to the south. Both north and south transepts have stone parapet gables and verges. The nave has four bays with “Decorated” and “Perpendicular” style arcades. All the corbels are different.



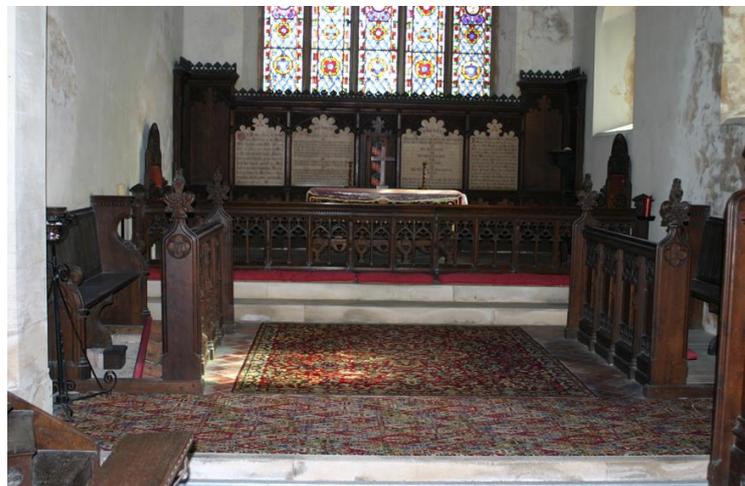
The south aisle looking west



The north aisle looking west

The chancel (south wall) has two bays both with “Decorated style” windows. There are no north windows in the chancel. It is believed that the panels in the east window and two south windows were made by William Wailes.

The south wall of the Chancel



The Chancel

The main roof has alternating arch braces and scissor trusses.



The Nave roof



The south aisle roof

The font, located near the doorway to the tower at the west end of the church is octagonal and has a 13th century top on a 19th century base.

Behind the organ, on the east wall of the north transept is a **brass plaque** in memory of Alice Townsend, who died in 1561. The plaque bears a shield with a coat of arms.

On the floor and against the east wall of the south transept is a large stone with the indent of a knight in armour and an inscription in Lombardic letters. This is possibly the **gravestone** of Sir Roger de Bylney, who paid for the building of the north aisle in 1280.



The Font



The gravestone of Sir Roger de Bylney?

The **windows** are a version of the “Decorated style”. The east window has five lights, with trefoil tracery. Outside, at the outer arch ends, are stone carvings of the head of Queen Victoria and also Bishop Pelham, who was the Bishop of Norwich from 1857 until 1893. Many windows have elaborate designs painted onto coloured glass.

One of the south aisle windows



The south aisle windows

1.6 Contents of the Church



The Altar

In the chancel the ornately carved **wooden altar** is Victorian but looks backwards in style. The **reredos** is similarly elaborate and extends across the full width of the chancel; the panels show the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, based on Georgian practice. The fact that **stalls are included in the chancel** is unusual at such an early date. One might suggest that they were intended for the noble family (Fellowes) to occupy were it not for a substantial family pew in the south transept.



One of the Altar chairs

There are **two ornately carved chairs near the altar** which are believed to date from the reordering in the mid-19th century; these are upholstered in velvet with a stencilled/painted design. They cost £28 (a large sum in the middle of the 19th century).

The inclusion of **stalls filling the chancel** meant that there was no room for a clergy seat in its usual location. This was therefore combined with a reading desk west of the chancel arch. Its square form, again, looks back to the Georgian period. The chancel floor has more decorative tiling than the rest of the church, a familiar aspect of the period, but not extravagantly so. The **pulpit, reading desk and open seats** are all of fine carved oak. The floor is paved with encaustic tiles.



The Pulpit



The Reading desk

Textiles, estimated to date to the late 19th century, consist of a red altar super frontal, reading desk fall and pulpit fall.

The seating in the nave comprises benches of oak. These are extremely well carved and set on wooden platforms. Those at the SE corner are divided in the middle – either because they were rented or because they were intended for the servants from the Hall. The rest are undivided. The rear seats have blank traceried backs of exceptional quality. The details within the tracery are all different, incorporating heads, faces and foliage. At their ends are poppy head finials.



The front of the Nave pews



Pew end on front pew

The **benches at the rear of the church and those facing inwards at the crossing point** of nave and transepts are much plainer; they may be contemporary with the main nave pews or later in date; the pews at the crossing point sit on a wooden floor which itself sits on the tiled floor of the church, whereas the nave pews have a wooden floor which sits over a void of approximately 18" depth. The rear benches were apparently used by the Headmistress of the local School, and possibly a 'gallery' for school children.



Benches on the west wall



Pews at the crossing point



Iron work on the frontals of the crossing point

The south transept contains the private pew of the de Ramsey family. It runs along the south wall, facing the pulpit, and returns a short way along both east and west walls, with the ends being carved with heraldic devices (a lion's head, in memory of a later Lord de Ramsey, who died in 1925). It might once have had a book rest or division

from the nave, and it is possible that the **low screen now in front of the organ** near the north transept formed part of this, however it's stepped design suggests not. This is elaborately carved with a carved figure (an angel or possibly St. William?) surviving on one end.



The South Transept



Pew end with Fellowes coat of arms



Rail and figure next to the organ area

The north transept contains the late 19th century organ and also a vestry, separated from the church by a tall wooden screen with blank tracery which appears to be *en-suite* with the other woodwork. The Vestry contains a carved wooden chest and there is a floor memorial stone to the Herne family from the 18th century.



Entrance and screen to the Vestry/north transept



West end of the north transept showing the Herne family ledger stone

The **organ** was given to the church in memory of Edward Fellowes, the first Lord de Ramsey, by his children upon his death in 1888. The organ bears a plate "Norman Bros and Beard" but is believed to have been built using second hand parts from an organ made by Alfred Kirkland. A report by Richard Bower (of Bower and Company- pipe organ builders and restorers) concludes that 'It is a fine instrument, attractive looking and with good pipework and tracker action'



The Organ

1.7 Significance for mission

The church operates as a Festival Church, and therefore seeks to draw people through special events and festival services, rather than providing weekly worship. Some of these events are traditional acts of worship, but many are more community-focussed and social in nature; requiring clear spaces and modern facilities.

The building has served its community well as a worship space, but it is poorly equipped for the types of events and services we now seek to offer. The lack of heating, toilets and other basic facilities make missional activities hard work! We have persevered despite the lack of facilities but have hit a ceiling as to what we can achieve without the proposed improvements.

Section 2 : The significance of the area affected by the proposal.

2.1 The parts of the church which will be directly or indirectly affected by our proposal.

- **North west wall**- removal of pews and installation of fitted Kitchen/ Servery unit in wooden finish to match existing woodwork along north west wall finished to cill height of the north west window.
- **North Transept/ Vestry**- removal and relocation of wooden rail with figure next to organ (lower section with figure to be relocated between the pulpit and organ, the taller section to have feet added and to be used as a barrier for events). Adaptation of wooden Vestry screen to provide a wide door access to new internal wheelchair-accessible WC and baby changing area and another door into the remainder of the vestry (fitted out as a utility and secure storage area).
- **Tower**- installation of 4G antenna in upper tower and router and other streaming camera mixer/controls in cupboard on left wall inside the entrance to tower.
- **Nave** 3 cameras in the nave to allow streaming/recording of services, events etc.

2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.

Very significant features:

- Vestry wooden screen and rail

Other significant features:

- Pews along north west wall
- Nave
- Ledger stone in north transept floor
- Wooden chest

Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals

3.1 The impact of our proposal on these parts, and on the whole.

Following on from a previous Faculty approval that will address a wide range of repairs and improvements, this application achieves further, significant functional improvements whilst sensitively addressing the key features affected.

- **Pew removal** and disposal is limited to the planer benches on the north west wall.
- **The rail with figure** next to the organ will be separated into two lengths corresponding to its different heights, the taller one to be fixed with two wooden feet designed to match the existing carpentry, and used as a moveable screen/divider for events etc. The lower length will be fixed to the pier between the Pulpit and organ (with decoration showing towards the crossing point), with the figure relocated to a new post at the end projecting into the space between the pulpit and organ.
- A separate, **all access W.C. and associated baby changing area will be created** in the western end of the Vestry alongside the utility/storage area (the subject of a previous faculty approval). The widened door entrance to the WC and a new door into the utility area will be fronted with the pieces of the screen directly affected. The partition between the WC and remains of the vestry will overlap the ledger stone on the floor but will lay over the top of this and not damage its surface. The wooden Parish Chest will be moved to the tower which will be more accessible for exhibitions and displays.
- The **4G antenna/router** will be concealed inside the upper tower and **camera control equipment** set within a custom-built wooden cupboard just inside the door into the tower, with finishes to match the existing woodwork.
- **The three cameras** will be positioned at two locations at the tops of the capitals towards the front of the nave and one at the top of the capital above the font at the rear of the Nave. Cabling for the two forward cameras will be routed along the wall plates in the aisles, concealed from the main nave and will be of plaster colour, as will the cameras.

3.2 How we intend to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

- New furniture for the proposed kitchen/servery will be of high-quality wood (oak) to match that already in the Church
- Natural light through a glass roof to the WC plus sound insulation on the walls and quiet equipment (e.g. no electric dryer, and a quiet extractor fan and WC cistern filler), will minimise noise disruption.
- Using the existing wooden screen to the Vestry in creating a new and widened door and a door into the utility area.
- Reuse of the rail and figure beside the organ and the taller, moveable section on display and used as a barrier for events.
- Concealing camera mixing and associated equipment in a built-in wooden cupboard inside the tower to match existing furniture.
- Painting cameras to match wall finishes and using cabling to match.

Sources consulted

NHER

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology Report 1996

John Vigar site Visit Sept 2019

Research by A.Moskvina (et al)

Statement of Needs

1. General information

Haveringland is a dispersed settlement approximately 10 miles north of Norwich and with a population of around 370 people (2021 census). Over recent years the population has been added to from new development, most significantly the growth of the Haveringland Hall Country Park for lodge style homes and holiday properties.

The village has no public buildings or facilities other than the Parish Church. The church remains locked apart from services and events.

Around eight years ago the church was facing an uncertain future. Dwindling congregations and a degree of neglect of its fabric and surroundings posed questions about how long it could continue to function. A group of parishioners (including the Chair and Clerk of the Parish Meeting) and the relatively recently appointed Vicar, decided that a plan was needed to address this decline. The *Church Action Group* (CAG) was formed as a sub group of the *Parochial Church Council*. It's Terms of Reference were to be accountable to the P.C.C. for :

1. Planning and organising a programme of services, events and activities at the church.
2. Leading work on the development, costing, design and funding of an improvement plan for the church and its grounds.
3. Undertaking fundraising and attending to the general maintenance of the building and its grounds.

The CAG has now been subsumed in the PCC, which is pursuing a vision of a 'Festival Church' which holds at least six religious services per annum and alongside this a programme of other events, activities and functions which meet the needs of both the immediate population (of whom about 50% are aged over 60 years), and those living in surrounding areas, where other churches have been declared redundant and/or there are few if any community facilities. In addition it is seeking to engage with other 'communities of interest' such as those with family or other connections to the church and village, the RAF Swannington Airfield; those interested in the heritage of the Church and area, Church architecture history, the arts, music etc.

Following a consultation exercise with local residents in 2017, the plans for improvements and repairs have been developed to provide a venue that is:

- a focus for relatively frequent meetings and gatherings of the local community (clubs, interest groups, talks, parish meetings etc.)
- a setting for less frequent, more major events, possibly in conjunction with other churches and groups, and serving a wider community (arts and crafts events, musical performances, rallies etc.), building on our involvement in the 'Twelve Towers Festival' for example
- a base from where to provide public services and promote wellbeing
- a centre for explaining and exploring local heritage and acting as a focal point for nature recovery in the local landscape.
- an income generator

A further consultation was held with local people in September 2019 when firmer ideas for improvements were described, and those present (around 40 people) had the opportunity to ask questions and comment. Discussions also covered a review of the original outcomes from the 2017 consultation and developing the thinking about the Church's future range of uses. In summary, those participating were unanimous in their support for the preferred option for improvements and confirmed that the range of uses and activities envisioned in 2017 was still relevant; further, specific ideas for events and activities were put forward.

More recently these conclusions were reaffirmed at Parish meetings, and the potential for the church to play a part in promoting health and wellbeing (through shared silences, retreats, as a base for wellbeing walks etc.) has been explored, as has its potential as an 'anchor' in the review and development of the wider landscape to help with nature recovery.

In 2023 a door to door survey of local households (with a 70% response rate) confirmed that the provision of an internal, all-access WC and kitchen servery were considered critical to the future operation of the church- over 90% of those spoken to supported this view. At the same time views on what sorts of events and activities that local people would support were sought and provide a very useful guide to planning future uses of the church; over 70% said they would attend performances, cultural or heritage related events and over 40% religious services etc.

Over the last few years we have been piloting new forms of service and other events and uses, which include:

- Well attended **Harvest Festivals** (with vintage tractor runs and other attractions)
- **'Follow the Star' and 'Christmas by Candlelight'** Christmas services (which included an astronomical presentation about the Natal star and a candlelit churchyard quiz)
- **'All Creatures Great and Small'** (a special service to bless pets and other animals and which featured presentations from the RSPCA and 'Pets As Therapy' organisation)
- **Remembrance and reunion** events to commemorate those serving from RAF Swannington. The 70th anniversary of the airfield closing in 2017 was attended by over 300 people and the church was dedicated as the memorial church for the RAF 100 (Bomber Support) Group in 2023 by the Bishop of Norwich)
- **'Forties in the Fields'** – a themed re-creation of wartime Britain complete with vintage vehicles, posters and literature, accompanied by music and food from the era. The first event in 2017 was so successful that it has been re-run in subsequent years and is becoming a fixture in the annual calendar
- **Parish Meetings** to discuss and agree action on issues of importance to local people
- **Book and Jigsaw Swaps**- a monthly opportunity to visit the church and chat
- **'More Tea Vicar?'**- a summer Sunday afternoon tea in the beautiful churchyard
- **Shared Silences**- a chance to get away from the world and spend an hour or two in silence sitting or walking in the church or churchyard, with some music and refreshments.
- **Heritage Open Days**- telling the stories of local people and those associated with the village, including oral histories; over 3 afternoons in September 2019 nearly 200 people visited to see exhibits and activities about people with historical connections to the village.

The churchyard and some surrounding open spaces (in agreement with land owners) have been managed as wildlife conservation areas. This includes local volunteers as well as the *Community Payback Scheme* to carry out programmed cutting and raking off of grasses and wild plants, as well as more frequent mowing of paths in the churchyard to enable access to tended graves. A project to work with local landowners about further enhancing biodiversity in the surrounding area of the church ('Living Landscape') is supported by Heritage Lottery funding.

A Friends Group ('**Haveringland Together**') has also been formed to keep people in touch with developments, organise events and to help in raising funds for further improvements and repairs to the Church. A recent example is the holding of an '**Earth Day Fair**' at the church in April 2023, which attracted around 200 people and raised £500 towards the costs of new facilities at the church. Many displays were available and several presentations and launches were delivered on important environmental issues. The Church has also been awarded Bronze Eco church status and is working towards the higher awards.

2. What do we need?

The church is currently not a comfortable, accessible, easy to use or attractive venue with its stained and eroded walls (due mainly to water penetration and poor drainage), damaged glass and lack of basic facilities.

It is also locked most of the time and those with mobility or other disabilities cannot use it easily. As there is no heating the building is not a comfortable venue all the year round, which further limits its use, as does the lack of flexible space for displays and performances. Its damp condition is also a limitation for exhibitions, art displays etc. The wealth of historical information and material already discovered, and which has been used in several events, is too large to be displayed effectively in the current space wholly on exhibition boards and suffers from the damp conditions.

The Church requires a range of urgent repairs and improvements so that it can provide a safe, well equipped, comfortable venue for religious and other activities that a *Festival Church* will provide; and enable it to further expand and develop the range of functions it performs, including a number that will have wider appeal and will ensure the church's viability.

Most of these needs will be addressed by 'Part 1' of the project which has been the subject of a previous, successful Faculty application. In addition this 'Part 2' of the project will meet the need for:

1. A hygienic and comfortable 'all access' toilet and baby changing facilities
2. Being able to prepare and serve food and drinks conveniently
3. Enhancing the strength of 4G internet connectivity (for use in online giving etc.)
4. Providing capacity to live stream and record services and events

3. The proposals

Part 1 of the project will commence on site in March 2024 and includes a wide range of repairs and improvements. Part 2 will install an 'all access' toilet and baby changing area and kitchen servery, plus enhanced internet and filming equipment. These will add considerably to the capability of the church to be welcoming, attractive, comfortable and sustainable through its ability to support visits, audiences and congregations for a wide range of events, services and activities (including remotely).

4. Why we need it and why now?

The current building is not able to meet the basic needs of the range of uses it is currently a venue for; it is not routinely open or accessible, has no water supply, toilet or refreshment area, has no heating or effective and efficient lighting; has little space to allow a range of activities to be carried out.

The programme of activities is continuing to grow (as is the local population) and cannot develop further without the works in both parts 1 and 2 of the project. It needs investment in basic repairs and improvements to make it fit for purpose and a sustainable venue for the future. These, together with the proposals included in this part of the project will ensure its future. A recent door to door survey of households in the Parish achieved a 70% response and over 90% of those responding felt that the all-access WC and Servery were critical to the future sustainability of this Festival Church.

It is proposed to integrate the works in part 2 of the project with those in part 1 so as to provide a complete package of improvements from the end of 2024 going forwards, to support an initially Heritage Lottery funded programme of events and activities in 2025, and once these foundations are laid, an ongoing programme that supports a wide range of local needs and those from further afield.

Section 5. Justification

The proposals, together with those in part 1, will add to the functionality and comfort of the building, and create the conditions, spaces and equipment required for the foreseeable future, without impacting to any great degree on the more important aspects, features and fittings of the church and its surroundings. They will add to its value as an historic building and churchyard and at the same time provide a cost effective, efficient and sustainable solution to meeting the practical needs of a venue for mission, heritage interpretation, promoting wellbeing, community support and cultural events.

6. How the proposal is contributing to the need for environmental sustainability

The Church has achieved the bronze Eco Church award and will continue to pursue higher awards. A future programme of 'green' events and activities to promote sustainable living will be helped by the proposed repairs and improvements, which will make these events more attractive and so reach more people.

The disposal of foul water will not impact the local mains sewer and drainage network. We propose systems whereby all waste water will be handled on adjacent land with no impact to the Anglian Water network, and a very small carbon impact.

We are already using an electricity supplier that uses sustainable sources of power generation.

7. Other options considered, taking environmental sustainability and the impact identified in the Statement of Significance.

Alternative layouts to meet the need for improved and new facilities were considered and thoroughly examined and evaluated during the planning of the overall project. The chosen option is the least intrusive or damaging to important architectural features and most sustainable given the expected pattern and greater intensity of use.

February 2024