



APPENDIX J: 12 IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES

PURCELL October 2016



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DOCUMENT ISSUE

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INTRODUCTION

These case studies have been prepared to provide an in-depth understanding of a smaller sample of representative MPCs. Each case study has been produced from a site visit, examination of existing reports and a face-to-face interview with a PCC representative. The case studies offer a snapshot in time of the experiences of the church today, set out within the context of the historic development and significance of the church building. The opinions expressed within the case studies are the voice of the PCC representative and as such offer honest but individual insight into the challenges and opportunities of that particular MPC. The case studies provide an evidence base from which the study report have been written. The information presented is based on personal opinions of the PCC representative and publicly-accessible information such as QI reports. Unless otherwise stated, photographs within the case studies are copyright Purcell, 2016.

UNDERSTANDING THE CASE STUDIES

The sections below explain the data contained within each of the 12 case studies.

KEY FACTS TABLE

Diocese - the Church of England diocese each MPC sits within

Grade - the listing grade for each MPC, taken from the National Heritage List for England. Each MPC is listed at Grade I, Grade II* or Grade II.

National Heritage List Entry Number - the unique identifying number for each MPC, found within the National Heritage List for England. <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Church Heritage Record Number - this is a unique number given to all Church of England churches listed on the Church Heritage Record. <https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org/churches>

Deprivation Indices - data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation setting out the level of deprivation of each secular parish. The categories of high, medium and low indicate a high to low level of deprivation respectively. <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/> The Church of England maintains its own IMD based on ecclesiastical parishes. This can be found at <http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-lookup-tool>

Footprint (m2) - the area of each Major Parish Church, based on the measurement of a Geographic Information System polygon. This data was compiled by Historic England. The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division of the Church of England has assigned a categorisation from 'small' to 'very big'

Building Period - Date of the principal phase of the building, as identified for each Major Parish Church within the Church Heritage Record. Periods include Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Medieval, Victorian, Edwardian and Twentieth Century.

Settlement Type - the categorisation of an area by settlement type. Data provided by the Church Buildings Council Research and Statistics Unit. <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats/research-statistics.aspx>

Scheduled Monument - the presence of additional architectural and/or archaeological responsibilities, for example scheduled monastic remains

Heritage at Risk 2015 - s or no for inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register for 2015. Those included within the register will have a category assigned to it of 'very bad', 'poor' or 'fair'. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

Average Weekly Attendance - data on the number of attenders at Sunday and mid-week services, provided by the Church Buildings Council, Research and Statistics Unit.

Number of Residents in Parish - data on the number of residents within each ecclesiastical parish, provided by the Church Buildings Council, Research and Statistics Unit.

Annual Visitors - estimated annual visitor numbers to the church outside of worship, provided by the Church Buildings Council, Research and Statistics Unit.

OUTLINE SUMMARY

The outline summary section of each case study sets out the key facts, defining characteristics and principle challenges of each MPC. Below this can be found a short summary description of the church and its experiences.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

The history section provides information on the historical development of the MPC from foundation to the present day. Key dates and building phases are highlighted and a description of some of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is an articulation of what makes a place special. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting, which is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. The significance of each MPC has been described using the following sections:

Setting and townscape - the importance of a MPC within its surroundings, for example as a local landmark or in a prominent location in the town centre.

Artistic and architectural interest - the aesthetic significance of a place and the emotional response it elicits from visitors. This could range from the high-quality architectural design, to a twentieth century piece of internal artwork.

Historic interest - this is the ability of a place to illustrate past human activities and behaviours, and what it tells us about the past in a way that is relevant today. This might include a good example of transitional architecture, or the associations with important local people.

Archaeological interest - this is the potential of a place to reveal evidence about that past that we might not already know. This could be both below ground, but also within standing built fabric.

Community interest - this is the value of a place to communities in the past and in the present.

EXPERIENCE OF THE CHURCH

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page of each case study) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the PCC Representative, a site visit, online research and publicly-available reports. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

Impact of the Building's significance - this section sets out how the church building is utilised as a tool for ministry and mission, or the ways in which it represents a challenge. The impact of the scale and significance of the MPC might have a positive or negative impact on a number of things, including the perceptions of visitors, heating and insurance costs, urgent repairs, architectural value, 'wow'-factor, flexible or constrained interiors and heritage crime.

Organisation and responsibility - this section sets out the management and use of the MPC including details on the number and responsibilities of paid staff, clergy and volunteers. The governance and management structure of the PCC, and associated trusts or companies are explored here.

Finances - this section considers the financial resources available to each MPC from a variety of sources. A simplified breakdown of income and expenditure is included, which has been extracted from the annual report or recent projection figures. Sources of income such as shops, cafes or venue hire are explored here.

Making changes and doing repairs - this section looks at the repairs set out within the QI and any major projects that the MPC has recently undertaken or is working towards in the future. The role of architects, amenity societies and funding organisation are explored here, as is the effectiveness of strategic management documents. One recent project is explored in detail within this section.

Current use - this section considers how the MPC is currently used, for example for worship, civic duties and tourist activities. A table sets out the typical activities undertaken, and the number of baptisms, funerals and weddings carried out annually. The role of the MPC beyond its immediate geographical parish is explored.

Welcoming visitors - this section focuses on the way they welcome all visitors; local, national and even international. Information is provided on opening hours, volunteer welcomers, interpretative materials and methods of engagement.

BRIGHTON, ST MARY'S KEMP TOWN

St James's Street, Kempdown, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 1PR

Diocese	Chichester	Settlement Type	Suburban/Urban Fringe
Grade	II*	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1380884	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Very Bad)
Church Heritage Record No.	610107	Average Weekly Attendance	75
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	6,500
Footprint (m ²)	1018 (Very Big)	Annual Visitors	7,000
Building Period	Victorian	Website	http://www.stmaryschurchbrighton.org.uk/



Exterior showing the liturgical west end and church hall on the right of the image

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- The only surviving church and most significant building in Britain by the architect Sir William Emerson, who helped define the Bombay Gothic style.
- A mixture of Gothic, Oriental and Classical architecture reflecting Emerson's work in India.
- Strong associations to Revd Henry Venn Elliott (1792–1865) and his sister Charlotte Elliott.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- An inclusive and welcoming church that provides services for all.
- An architecturally and historically spectacular church building that is its biggest asset.
- A Parochial Church Council (PCC) that recognises the need to harness this scale and significance in order to enhance mission.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- The inherent risk of individuals or small groups driving a project and bearing the full weight of responsibility.
- The threat of closure and the residual perception of this that remains within the local community.
- Providing services for all users in a way that continues to generate income.
- Amateur volunteers who lack the relevant skills required to deal with historic fabric, complex projects and funding applications.



Interior; looking towards liturgical east

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The new St Mary's church was consecrated on 14 October 1878 on the site of a former chapel owned by the Elliott family. The architect Sir William Emerson used a broadly Gothic style, but with significant Oriental and Classical features reflecting Emerson's work in India and his commitment to architectural hybridity.

Following a Diocesan review in 2003 and again in 2006, St Mary's was earmarked for closure, leading to a drop in morale and physical decline in the building. Support for the church came from the Churches Conservation Trust's pioneering Regeneration Team, which sought to partner community members with suitable expertise in order to work towards a sustainable future. The church built-up a core group of dedicated volunteers and a part-time priest-in-charge. They continue to work tirelessly to reintegrate the church into local community life and to provide a welcoming space for all visitors.

St Mary's volunteers take on enormous responsibility for the building and there is a risk that projects driven by such a small

group may stall if that capacity is somehow lost. St Mary's has recognised the importance of having the right skills in place and the capacity to understand how to work with funders to get the best out of a project for both parties.

The church is on the path to financial sustainability with a focus over the next ten years on the three core income streams of giving, regular church and church hall hire and one-off big events. The church forges strong relationships with user groups in order to provide mutual benefits, such as a useable, safe, open space. The PCC is well on the way to having an income that exceeds its expenditure by 2018.

St Mary's philosophy is to think big, as this is the only way to deal with such a big building. The PCC has recently embarked upon an ambitious repair and new build project in order to remove the building from the Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register and to provide modern facilities for its users. Both projects are supported by the HLF and other grant funders and will amount to £2.25 million over a ten-year period.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“In 1884, six years after Sir William Emerson completed St Mary’s, he explained his approach to construction, calling for an architectural renaissance whose arms shall be long enough and bold enough to embrace the lintel, the round arch and the pointed arch, the picturesqueness of the Gothic vault, and the dignified nobility of the Classic and Oriental dome; where the crudities of Gothic art shall be eliminated and the refinements of Classic art introduced.”⁰³

Brighton developed as a seaside resort in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, following its royal patronage of George IV (then the Prince of Wales). The town soon became a thriving tourist destination and retirement location, bolstered by the perceived health benefits of the bracing sea air and waters.

The first chapel of St Mary’s was built in Kemp Town between 1825 and 1826 for property speculator Barnard Gregory on land belonging to the Earl of Egremont. The chapel was built by the architect Amon Henry Wilds (1790-1857) in the Greek Revival style and was modelled on the ruined Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnus. The construction was beset by problems however, and in 1826 Gregory sold the incomplete chapel to Charles Elliott (1751-1832), a royal cabinetmaker who had recently retired to Hove.

In 1827, Charles installed his son, the Revd Henry Venn Elliott (1792-1865), as the first perpetual curate of St Mary’s Chapel. Under Henry’s leadership, St Mary’s became one of the most fashionable chapels in Brighton, and drew preachers and churchgoers from around Britain and the Empire. Henry’s sister, Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871), was a poet and prolific composer of hymns, including the internationally famous *Just as I Am* (1835).⁰⁴

St Mary’s Chapel was converted to a parish church in the 1870s, at a time when the Church of England was creating new parishes in Brighton, including St Mary’s, in order to deal with rapid population expansion. Building work to construct a chancel space was underway in 1876 when the chapel collapsed. The then owner, Charles Alfred Elliott contributed approximately £7,000 towards the construction of the new St Mary’s Church, which began in 1877.

St Mary’s is situated on St James’s Street in central Brighton, falling within the East Cliff Conservation Area. It was built to designs by Sir William Emerson, an English architect who worked mostly in India, where he helped define the Bombay Gothic style. His most iconic building is the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta (Kolkata).

Listed at Grade II*, St Mary’s it is the most important of Emerson’s surviving buildings in Britain. It is broadly Gothic in style, but includes Oriental and Classical features reflecting Emerson’s work in India and his commitment to architectural hybridity. The principal building

materials are a locally made red brick, which is laid in English bond, with exterior dressings and trims in pinkish-red Corsehill sandstone from Dumfriesshire and Bath limestone.⁰⁵

The internal fixtures and fittings of St Mary’s were designed by Emerson in the 1870s. However, some new items were installed later, including the reredos and high altar. In 1924 the Chapel of Remembrance was created in the south transept in memory of those who died in the Great War. By 1952 the Chapel was better known as the Lady Chapel.

In 1949 the St James’ Chapel was installed in the north transept when St James’ church was demolished.

In 1980 the church hall was built to the east of the church, on the site of the old Rock Brewery, in compensation for an old church house requisitioned and demolished by the local authority.



View of the sanctuary

⁰³ <http://www.stmaryschurchbrighton.org.uk/church-history.html> accessed 01/08/2016

⁰⁴ <http://www.stmaryschurchbrighton.org.uk/church-history.html> accessed 01/08/2016

⁰⁵ St Mary’s Church, Rock Gardens, Brighton, Assessment of Significance, August 2013, Katherine Prior

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- First church on the site was a private chapel built in 1825–1826 for Barnard Gregory in a Greek Revival design.
- In 1827 St Marys Chapel was sold to the family of the well-known Evangelical Henry Venn Elliott, the chapel became popular locally
- Conversion to a parish church in 1876 led to collapse of the old chapel.
- The new church was begun in 1877 and consecrated in 1878.
- Additional internal fixtures and fittings were added in the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century.
- The Chapel of Remembrance was created in 1924 (renamed Lady Chapel in 1952) and the St James' Chapel created in 1949.
- The church was listed Grade II* in 1971.
- The church hall was built in 1980.



Interior of the church as imagined by the architect Emerson prior to construction, 1877 (© St Mary's PCC)



External depiction of the church by Emerson, showing the west tower that was never built, 1880 (© St Mary's PCC)

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

St Mary's retains most of its original fittings as a single-phase scheme. There have also been additions over the decades, particularly when St Mary's absorbed the neighbouring parishes of St James's (1948) and All Souls' (1967).

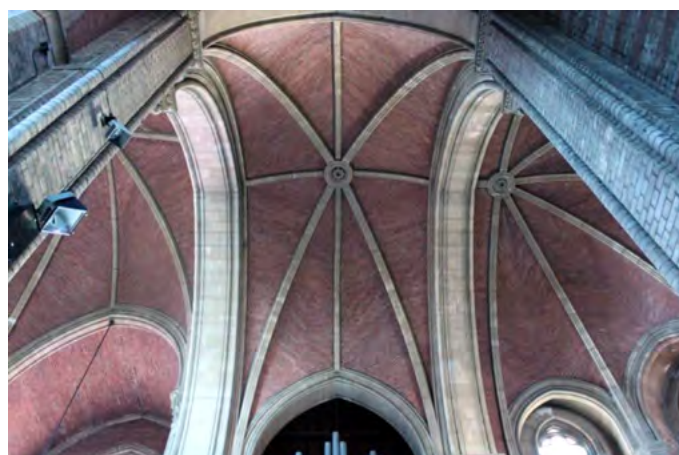
A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Windows

The windows provide a good range of high quality Victorian stained glass, along with some later work. The original tinted glass installed in 1878 is reported to be the work of George William Luxford (1851–1933) of London. This work is of excellent quality, and the surviving examples of it, particularly the large window in the south transept, are artistic and aesthetic features in their own right. William Emerson may have had a hand in their design as they feature the number-based symbols seen elsewhere in his work for the church.⁰⁶

The Font

The font is part of the original 1878 Emerson scheme and has a large basin of alabaster, with a carved panel depicting children being brought to Jesus. The basin is supported on a lotus flower carved from red-veined Siena marble which in turn stands on a shaft of Swiss granite and a pedestal of Siena marble, the whole on a square stone platform, which was originally surrounded by metal railings, long since removed.



Brick vaulting in the chancel

⁰⁶ St Mary's Church, Rock Gardens, Brighton, Assessment of Significance, August 2013, Katherine Prior

Pulpit

The pulpit was also designed by William Emerson as part of the 1878 scheme and appears in his drawing of the church's interior published in *The Architect* in 1877.

Coronae

The nine wrought-iron coronae (a type of circular chandelier) are part of the original 1878 Emerson scheme and were originally plumbed for gas lighting. They were made by Hart, Son, Peard & Co., ecclesiastical metalworkers of London and Birmingham. Electricity was installed in 1922.⁰⁷

The Organ

The original organ by Henry Bevington & Sons of Soho, London, was installed in old St Mary's Chapel in 1855 and survived the chapel's collapse in 1876. Some of the pipes were incorporated in a new, larger instrument built by Bevington in time for the opening of the new church in 1878. It is regarded as an exceptionally fine example of a Victorian organ and of Bevington's work in particular.

Reredos

The finely carved stone reredos was added in 1893 and depicts the resurrected Christ appearing before the Marys at the tomb, the scene flanked by angels. It replaced an original mosaic reredos, one slab of which is believed to survive, albeit with some damage.

High Altar

The high altar of carved stone depicting the Adoration of the Magi was installed in 1929.



Reredos, 1893, and high altar, 1929, with modified gas chancel standards by Hart, 1878

⁰⁷ Ibid

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“Florists, bar staff, and corner-shop staff have all been heard to say ‘Oh, I thought it was shut.’ This is not a universal response, but happens sufficiently often for it to be a cause for concern. There is a sense in which St Mary’s has dropped out of some people’s consciousness and, for a large building, become surprisingly invisible.”⁰⁸

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St Mary’s chose its architecture. 32% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Mary’s church is situated a few streets back from the Brighton seafront, in a prominent position on the corner of St James’s Street and Upper Rock Gardens. The church is a short walk from the city centre and a 20 minute walk from the train station. The church is also about 0.6 km to the east of Old Steine, Brighton’s principal north-south artery. The church dominates the immediate area and is surrounded by nineteenth- and twentieth-century townhouses on one side, and mid-twentieth-century tower blocks and council housing to the other.

St Mary’s Church exists today largely as it was built in 1878, with no external additions to the church itself. The modern church hall to the east is architecturally ‘of its time’ (built 1980) but was carefully constructed in similar bricks in order to blend in with the church building. As such, when viewed from the east, the church hall appears to be a modern extension rather than a separate building. The church almost completely fills its urban site, is built hard against the modern road, and does not have a conventional churchyard. Immediately to the west on the corner of St James’s Street and Upper Rock Gardens, is a plot occupied by a low-quality redundant toilet block, bin park, and shabby public garden, which has a detrimental impact on setting.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The exterior of St Mary’s is of red brick and pink sandstone with slate roofs, while the interior is of red and buff brick with Bath stone piers and window dressings. Oriented with liturgical east facing north, the church has a lofty and open interior, comprising a curved baptistery, broad nave, narrow aisles, deep crossing and transepts, and chancel and sanctuary. A proposed tower at the (geographical) south-west corner was never built, but is depicted in early architectural drawings.¹⁰

St Mary’s has a unique character and a remarkable aesthetic value. The church looms up from its high position on the corner of St James’s Street and Upper Rock Garden when approached from the seafront. The architecture can be described as a mix of Gothic, Oriental and Classical features, constructed in typical Victorian materials of brick and slate. However, the poor condition and low-quality of the toilet block to the west is detrimental to architectural interest and visitor’s appreciation of the exterior.

With the exception of the West Front, the church’s exterior is relatively plain. The main decorative features are the sandstone window dressings and courses. The ornate West Front is dominated by the entrance way in the base of the putative tower and the curved exterior wall of the baptistery, with the large windowed gable of the nave roof rising behind it. The smaller entrance porch at geographical south-east completes the main frontage.¹¹

The modest exterior heightens people’s aesthetic appreciation of St Mary’s interior, which elicits responses ranging from surprise, to amazement and awe. Internally, the original vision of Emerson can still be seen. The internal layout is consciously modern and forward-looking for that date, with minimal impediments to sight-lines and no chancel screen. The arches of the nave arcade are high and broad, the piers are designed to look slender, while the nave itself is exceptionally wide and the crossing unusually deep. The quality of the single-phase fixtures and fittings also inform people’s appreciation, including the lighting, pulpit, font and seating. The stained glass windows are artistic and aesthetic features in their own right. Other characteristics of the church include the high-quality acoustic and the atmosphere for performers.¹²

However, the overall poor condition and level of decay to the fabric of the church also invokes an aesthetic response from visitors. Most commonly it has been seen to provoke sentiments of sadness, regret, and pity.¹³

08 St Mary’s Church, Rock Gardens, Brighton, Assessment of Significance, August 2013, Katherine Prior

09 Survey results

10 St Mary’s Church, Rock Gardens, Brighton, Assessment of Significance, August 2013, Katherine Prior

11 Ibid

12 Ibid

13 Ibid

HISTORIC INTEREST

St Mary's is illustrative of the evolving design of churches in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly the move away in the 1870s from the fashion for recreating the medieval church, to one that focused on the needs of worshippers. The building also provides evidence of the economic and social use of the church in the nineteenth century and showcases the highly-skilled craftsmanship that is exhibited in the construction and design of the building.

St Mary's, especially the interior, has high historic interest as it provides unique evidence of the work and philosophy of an internationally significant architect, Sir William Emerson. As the only surviving church designed by Emerson in Britain, these associations are very important, and the physical fabric of the building shines a light onto his work elsewhere in the world. Emerson's building, fixtures and fittings provide unique, irreplaceable evidence of his architectural philosophy and also the local impact of Britain's imperial rule overseas.

The fine collection of Victorian cathedral tint and stained glass windows is also of high significance, particularly for the work of Alfred Octavius Hemming. The 1878/1904 Bevington organ is an outstanding instrument and is recognized by the British Institute of Organ Studies as containing important archaeological material.¹⁴

Associations with the Evangelical Elliott family are also of high significance, as a family that was important nationally to the evolution of Church of England worship in the nineteenth century. The historic development, from the original Classical chapel to the rebuilding of St Mary's in the 1870s, illustrates the decorative and theological evolution from a moderately Evangelical church to one more reflective of Brighton's strong Anglo-Catholic tradition.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There is currently very little information about the below-ground archaeology of St Mary's. No recent investigations have been carried out and there is very high potential to learn more about past human activity in this area. Investigations would likely uncover remains from the old chapel, which is known to have had a crypt. The site's earlier history is currently largely unknown.

¹⁴ Ibid

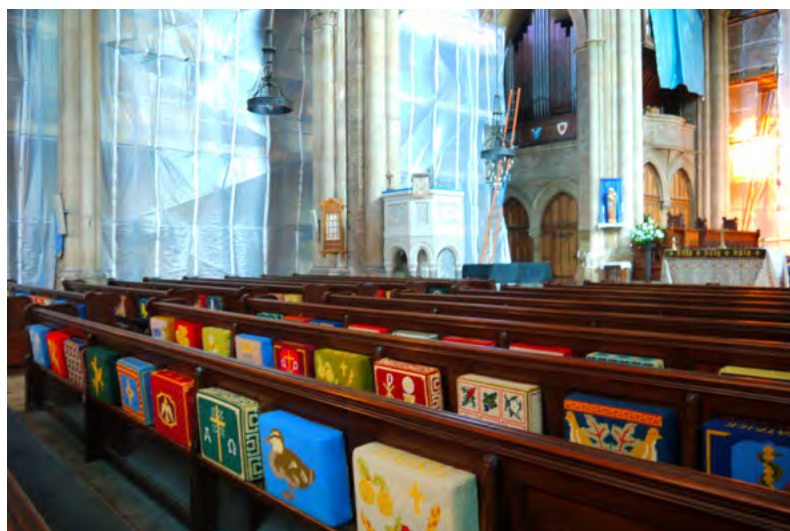
COMMUNITY INTEREST

The parish of St Mary Kemp Town encompasses 6,500 people living in one of the poorest parts of Brighton. In 2003 and again in 2006 a Diocesan review recommended that St Mary's be closed, which had a significant impact on how the church was viewed locally. The church remained open with the support of a small but dedicated congregation, committed to serving the spiritual needs of the parish while also encouraging greater community use of the church.

From 2010, St Mary's worked with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) to evolve a feasible plan for future growth and the restoration of the building. Community consultation was an important stage in that process and identified the need for a flexible, affordable space for hire.

St Mary's holds regular Sunday and weekday services and has an active support network of people who wish to see the church remain in use. Along with the historic features, the modern fittings also hold community value for local people, for example needlepoint hassocks, hymn boards, and altar cloths are intimately associated with parishioners. In particular, the church is filled with colourful needlepoint kneelers, which were worked mostly by one recently deceased parishioner and are considered as her memorial.

St Mary's in particular has very high community value for all sorts of disadvantaged and homeless people in the area, who see the church as a welcoming and friendly refuge. This is arguably one of St Mary's most important roles.¹⁵



View of the needlepoint kneelers

¹⁵ Ibid

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

"We have a big task ahead of us, but we have been entrusted by past generations with the care of this beautiful building, which many of us feel is a gift from God. Restoring and revitalising St Mary's will be our legacy to the generations who come after us."¹⁶

The PCC of St Mary's considers the church building to be its biggest asset, both for its rich and varied history, but also the role it plays in mission and ministry today. Although the external appearance of St Mary's is in need of enhancement and can be somewhat uninspiring at first glance, the wide nave, vast height of the roofs and sheer volume of the internal space awes visitors.¹⁷ The special characteristics and atmosphere of the church building is considered to be very important, which is why events are held in the welcoming space of the church rather than the more modern church hall.

St Mary's was not always perceived as a welcoming, useable space. In 2003 and again in 2006, a radical audit of church buildings within the Diocese (Pastoral Strategy Review) saw the decision taken to close or review churches in the Brighton area. While the review focused on attendance levels and financial stability, in practice this meant that many churches listed at Grade I and II* were earmarked for closure. At this point, a casual assumption can be made regarding the huge resources required to care for significant or large scale places of worship and the drain they place on their congregations to maintain them. This attitude within the wider church community offers insight into the burden these buildings can be, but the review did not seek to capture the myriad of opportunities that they also present.

At St Mary's, the decision for redundancy led to an immediate decline in support from the congregation and in regular maintenance. However, from 2010, support from the CCT Regeneration Team, and the tireless efforts of a small PCC and part-time non-stipendiary priest-in-charge, saw the church began to rebuild its role within the community. The new PCC rejected the notion that the church building should be seen a hindrance and relied on the passion for the building from the local community and wider visitors to help care for it in the future.¹⁸

While the PCC recognises that substantial resources are required to repair its church, both because of the scale and the significance of the fabric, it also recognises that these resources come from very different sources from those funds required to support mission. For example, a large Grade II* structure would have access to pots of money that other less significant churches might not and with this, comes further opportunities in the form of activity funding and publicity.

In 2014, St Mary's was added to the Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register by Historic England and at the time was assessed as being 'very bad' in terms of condition. This assessment has been received positively by the church as a way of raising the profile of its plight and as a way of accessing new funding. Recognition of the problems facing the PCC on a national level has been extremely valuable and has provided an extra level of support.

Internally, St Mary's is used for a varied programme of activities beyond worship. However, some of the elements that make St Mary's significant, for example, the scheme of fixed pews installed by Emerson in 1878, are also partly what hinders these new uses. The single-phase internal architectural scheme is a simple design in pitch pine. However, careful consideration and a strong justification would be needed prior to any proposals for removal. The pews do currently place some limitations on the use of the church, but a substantial proportion having been cleared in the 1980s and 1990s from the back of the nave has allowed the creation of a children's play area and café-style space. To date, the PCC has been able to work within the limitations of the building by being creative with 'picnics in the pews' for example, although a record is kept of events turned away because of the inflexibility of the interior. The PCC is beginning to question whether the current arrangements are sustainable in the long-term and whether a more radical solution is required to create useable spaces.

The wide, open nature of the church also precludes the sub-division of spaces and as such, the PCC have been restricted in the facilities it can provide, such as meeting rooms, kitchens and WCs. The requirement to heat the entire space for small activities or administrative work only is also inefficient. These constraints have led to the development of a scheme for new facilities within an extension to the west of the church on the site of the redundant public toilet block.

While St Mary's is situated within an economically and socially deprived area of Brighton, heritage crime, such as lead theft, has not been a major issue, although inner-city problems such as rough sleeping, substance abuse and vandalism are not uncommon. The incorrect assumption that there are valuables within the church has led to break-ins in the past, causing thousands of pounds of damage, which is disproportionate to the items stolen.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St Mary's considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places St Mary's with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁹

¹⁶ St Mary's Annual Report, 2015

¹⁷ PCC Representative

¹⁸ PCC Representative

¹⁹ Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

The threat of closure in 2003 and 2006 initially had a disastrous effect on the morale of the church users. Congregation numbers and income immediately dropped, the maintenance programme stalled and finally, visitor numbers dwindled as the church became less welcoming.

Support for keeping St Mary's open came from the unlikely source of the CCT (an organisation that at the time dealt only with closed churches). St Mary's is believed to be the first church supported by the CCT's Regeneration Team under their pioneering scheme to evolve a feasible plan for future growth and the restoration of the building, thereby avoiding closure. The scheme, which continues today, blends partnership working in the local community with regeneration expertise, in order to bring new life to these buildings. This was the first step needed to bring St Mary's back from the brink of closure and was welcomed by the PCC. The CCT scheme was perceived by St Mary's to be invaluable as it sought to retain the community support that can be lost if a church, even temporarily, closes. It aimed to reduce the length of time it takes to build morale back up.

Minor limitations in the approach were later identified as the PCC looked back on its progress. The reliance by the CCT on professional expertise to produce supporting documents was considered to be an expensive approach and reduced ownership of the PCC in those documents. This approach highlights the disconnection between the skills of the PCC and the expectations of many national funders or professional organisations. At St Mary's, even an overly long email could result in anxiety and inaction for some members of the PCC, simply because they did not have the capacity to cope with that level of detail. The other option, employing professional consultants, was simply not cost-effective. The PCC now feel that the most effective methodology is to build a team that has the capacity and skills necessary to own and deliver a project.

Today, St Mary's has a traditional PCC structure. The standing committee of the PCC consists of the priest-in-charge, curate, reader, churchwardens, treasurer and secretary and with one or two additions the same team work as the fabric committee and development project committee. Additional sub-committees were disbanded in 2014 after consultation was begun to consider the development project. St Mary's has a Friends group, which has a remit to fundraise for the fabric of the building; it has more members than there are people on the electoral roll. It is a sub-committee of the PCC, though is contemplating independent charity status.

St Mary's has an unusual incumbent arrangement. Due to the threat of closure, the church lost its allocation of a priest and remains today under suspension of presentation. A non-stipendiary minister was given permission to minister to the parish in 2007; this was subsequently converted into a two-day-a-week house for duty role. Since 2014, the same priest has been paid for the equivalent of a four-day week (0.6 of a full stipend) via released capital of a trust fund, which will run out in 2018. The PCC hopes then to have the suspension lifted and to be in a financial position to continue paying the 0.6 stipend for a parish priest via the normal parish share method. The church has access to four members of clergy; the priest in charge, a curate, retired priest and a reader. Another reader is shortly joining the team.

In total, the church has what amounts to 0.7 of a full-time post in paid employees. This is spread between the priest-in-charge and the director of music. Everyone else – including the dedicated churchwarden cum project and venue manager – is a volunteer. St Mary's currently does not have any paid vergers and relies solely on volunteer welcomers. The church would like to be able to employ a full-time verger who could be responsible for supervising the church.

The value of having competent, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers (or staff) in place cannot be understated in the case of St Mary's, which has been evidenced by the strong activities programme and ongoing repair project at the church. The value of volunteer time on the first phase of repairs amounted to 14% of the total project costs, or £50,000 on top of the £350,000 capital repair costs.

In many churches, demoralised or timid PCC members are unintentional barriers to change. The churchwarden, who does the project management, believes that the cautious nature of many PCCs is a barrier to growth and that change cannot take place without an element of risk.

At the start of the project, St Mary's PCC members did not have particularly economically or socially deprived backgrounds, but they lacked the development, business and heritage skills required to carry out a major project. More recently, the committee has grown to include more relevant skills and other more transferable skills including project management, museums, practical financial skills, property development, banking, law, nursing and teaching.

A serious concern for the small group of volunteers who support every aspect of St Mary's is the reliance on particular individuals and the inherent risk this brings. The loss of a single person, who is the driving force of a project, can have the potential to halt the entire development, which brings an unnecessary element of luck as to whether a church can become or remain sustainable.

Number of members on PCC	11
Number of clergy	4
Number of paid staff	0.7
Number of volunteers	25
Number of sub-committees	4

FINANCES

“St Mary’s sits in one of the poorest parts of inner Brighton; this limits the resources that the parishioners can muster to safeguard its fabric and spiritual mission.”²⁰

Since 2006, St Mary’s has been working to make the church self-reliant on revenue rather than on its capital reserves. In 2015, the income of St Mary’s did not meet their regular expenditure. The PCC has a policy of running at a small deficit each year to enable it to access funds from charitable trusts; more significantly, however, it does not currently pay its priest-in-charge from revenue. On top of this, the additional expenditure relating to a backlog of maintenance, major repairs and the new build project widened the gap further, although a substantial contribution was made to income by grants and the VAT reclaim scheme. There was an overall deficit of approximately £20,000 in 2015. The church currently has £123,000 in reserves.

The outlook at St Mary’s is positive, as the income is now starting to increase from additional church and church hall uses outside of worship. The main sources of funding are giving, regular church hall and church hire and one-off events. The installation of a new facilities extension in the near future will also enable the church to increase its regular income, particularly from church rents.

A programme has been put in place to focus on those three income streams over the next eight years and St Mary’s churchwarden has produced a costs projections plan, setting out the current and anticipated incomes to 2020. It is anticipated that income will continue to increase by £10,000 a year.

Due to the unusual arrangement of paying for their incumbent from capital rather than revenue, St Mary’s is able to pay 100% of their parish share, which excludes the cost of clergy. This transitional period is expected to continue until April 2018 (at which point the released capital from the trust fund runs out), when income is projected to be able to sustain an incumbent part-time.

At St Mary’s the running costs of the church and church hall are currently the largest items of expenditure (excluding specific repair projects). Heating for the church is via a very efficient but costly gas-fired hot air blower system built into the tower. This costs £13 per hour to run. Repairs to the 1980s church hall were an additional burden of £11,000 in 2015 and more work remains to be done there. Due to the very limited number of staff at St Mary’s, the total cost of payroll in 2015 was only £18,000.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Mary’s income does not meet expenditure.²²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Mary’s financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Not recorded
Urgent QI cost	£1.5 million (repairs to exterior)
Annual maintenance cost	£8,000
Parish share cost	£30,000
Insurance Cost	£6,000
Utilities cost	£13/hour for heating or £11,250/ year running costs
Major project cost	£2.25 million repairs and new build
INCOME 2015	
Annual donations income	£24,600
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£4,500 Friends
Events/church hall income	£41,000 church hall rent, £9,000 church rent
Other income	£7,500 investments £19,950 grants (2015)
Individual project income	n/a

²⁰ Assessment of Significance, 2013

²¹ Survey results

²² Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“It has been an exciting year at St Mary’s as we have embarked on a major works programme that over the next ten years will, we hope, completely repair the original fabric of the church. We are grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for their assistance with these works.”²³

St Mary’s Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was produced in 2014 and identified a substantial catalogue of urgent repairs. The repairs were split into four phases, staggered over a ten-year period, at a total estimated cost of £1.5 million. St Mary’s have now embarked upon this programme of major repairs and in 2016, the church is now in the second (delivery) stage of a Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) project from the HLF, which focuses on the most urgent fabric repairs to the liturgical north elevation.

Prior to the major project, the church also carried out other repairs and alterations in 2015 to install CCTV, replace locks, install a new lantern in the south-east porch, replace the organ blower and create a new children’s play area. The 1980s church hall has had its flat roof replaced and an overdue programme of repair and redecoration carried out.

Historically, conservation and repair work at the church has been carried out by well-intentioned but misinformed PCC members. For example, the stained glass windows have been covered with protective sheets of polycarbonate, which gives the church an appearance of being boarded up from the outside. Several members of the PCC have completed the maintenance course run by the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), which was found to be extremely useful in understanding basic conservation principles.²⁴

Since production of the QI in 2014, St Mary’s has found the advice and support of their architect incredibly helpful. His advice on all aspects of the building from repairs to new build and how to approach the HLF have been invaluable. Advice from the architect is pitched at just the right level for the volunteers to understand and offers practical steps forward. Once the four phases repair project had begun, the architect helpfully costed each phase in order to apply for funding and budget accordingly. He is described as being just a phone call away and always offers practical advice.²⁵

As part of the development of the new build project, St Mary’s spent £10,000 trialling two architectural practices during the feasibility phase for the development project and consider this to have been an excellent use of money as the vision and drive of the architects was partly what pushed the project forward.

In conjunction with the repair work, St Mary’s is embarking on an ambitious project to create new facilities for the church in an extension, which seeks to make the church sustainable in the future. St Mary’s has spent over £30,000 developing this and is seeking core funding for it from the Big Lottery Fund’s Reaching Communities Buildings programme.

A conscious decision was made to carry out the repairs and new build project in tandem as both elements are crucial to it remaining an active place of worship. Preliminary meetings with Historic England and other amenity societies indicated that support would not have been forthcoming for a facilities-based project that excluded repairs to the original fabric. Equally, funding from the HLF for the repairs required a level of new activities and facilities that seek to sustain the church in the long-term beyond the life of the grant.

St Mary’s experience of working with the HLF has been overwhelmingly positive and the PCC appreciated working within a grant scheme that was specifically aimed at places of worship, such as the HLF GPOW, as these are tailored to the PCC’s level of expertise and more suited to amateur volunteers. The PCC also acknowledged that the level of risk at an early stage of any major project is high, particularly for a substantial church where a small group of people are involved, and the church has few resources to fall back upon.²⁶

23 St Mary’s Annual Report, 2015

24 PCC Representative

25 PCC Representative

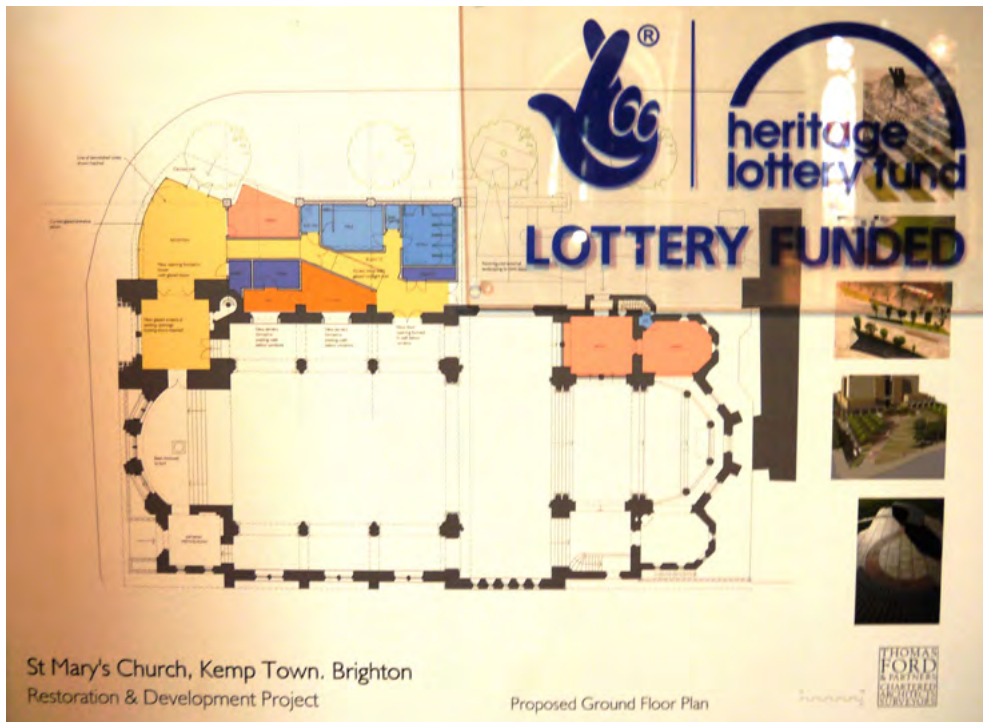
26 PCC Representative

Luckily, St Mary's churchwarden-cum-project manager has experience of dealing with funding applications and has a professional heritage background. Other members of the PCC are not as experienced in preparing complex application forms. A stark picture was painted from the explanation that the CCT's Business Plan guidance is 120 pages of full colour, while St Mary's church has only just managed to install a printer. Similarly, it was significant that a £5,000 feasibility study and asset audit produced in 2011 by an external consultancy was not regarded as value for money by project team members because they lacked the skills and vision to recognize its value or exploit its findings.

The larger grant schemes are thought to be inappropriate in scale and complexity for amateur volunteers, which becomes even more apparent on Major Parish Churches due to the large scale fabric repairs, and associated high costs required for even a simple re-pointing scheme.²⁷



Poor condition of the external brickwork



Plans for the new visitor facilities at the church, displayed on boards inside the church

²⁷ PCC Representative

RECENT PROJECT

REPAIR PROJECT (GPOW)

St Mary's have begun the first phase of a four phase repair programme that focuses on the condition of the external brick and stonework. The repairs are likely to cost £1.5 million in total over the four phases. The first phase is estimated to cost £350,000 and comprises repair of the external brick and stone, roofs, rainwater goods, drainage, and windows to the liturgical north elevation. The specification includes the removal and repair of three stained-glass windows in the north aisle and the renewal of window masonry inside and out. This first phase is currently in delivery and every day, new and exciting discoveries are being made from the scaffold.

The PCC has been awarded Stage 2 funding from the HLF of £216,000 and match-funding from the the National Churches Trust of £40,000 and Garfield Weston Foundation of £10,000. A grant of £6,500 towards the works has also been secured from the Sussex Historic Churches Trust. The PCC is required to contribute £15,000 from unrestricted reserves, along with local fundraising of £5,000.

NEW BUILD PROJECT

In conjunction with the repairs, St Mary's are in the consultation phase for a development project, which seeks to provide facilities for the church and its users. The project will ensure the church is fully accessible, will provide an extension for office and meeting spaces, a kitchen and WCs. St Mary's would also like to refurbish the church interior by installing underfloor heating, recreating the original lighting scheme and creating a new nave altar/performance platform.

The church has approached the repairs and development of the building as a single project as they understand the importance of not seeing each issue in isolation. The principle of extending the church to the west (liturgical north) has been agreed by amenity societies in order to retain the integrity of the interior.

The PCC also hope eventually to be able to surrender the income (£9,000) generated by letting the church hall flat and use the accommodation instead as part of the remuneration package for full-time verger.

The new build element is likely to cost around £650,000, of which St Mary's will contribute £150,000 of its own, all but emptying the reserves. This leaves a current funding gap of £500,000.



View of the stained glass from the scaffolding that has not been seen since it was installed in 1878

CURRENT USE

St Mary's is certainly not the largest church in Brighton and does not hold the responsibility for being the civic church of the city. St Mary's role beyond the geographic parish relates to their style of worship and the welcome they choose to give to all. Seventy-five per cent of the people who worship at St Mary's are thought to come from outside the parish, which is not an unusual statistic for a Brighton church. St Mary's identity relates to its diversity, welcoming all ethnicities, educational and economic backgrounds, sexual orientations and disabilities. Homeless people and people with alcohol dependency or substance abuse problems often attend services. People with physical, learning and mental disabilities are all welcomed regularly. St Mary's also holds strong links with the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) communities in Brighton.

An advantage of being an urban church within a city containing multiple places of worship is that each church can focus on a particular type of worship, or offer particular facilities for specific user groups. Services at St Mary's take place five times a week and everyone is welcome. The church has recently created a crèche area at the back of the church for children and dogs are often seen being blessed at communion.

St Mary's prides itself on being inclusive and strongly believes that establishing relationships with people who regularly use the building is crucial to a sustainable future. The events and activities carried out at St Mary's are varied and range from yoga in the crossing, to digital art installations. The Great Escape Festival 2014 saw 1,000 young people using the building, which is seen as crucial to getting people over the threshold and providing non-religious uses of the building.²⁸

The PCC has a policy of letting the church at affordable rates to charitable and community groups and small entrepreneurs such as yoga and singing teachers. Rates can be as low as £15 per hour, which just covers running costs. The PCC makes only a small surplus from these users, but values the relationships it builds and the new people they bring into the church. Regular clients who use the church every week are seen as a more sustainable income than large one-off concerts as the income can be budgeted for annually. Regular users are also able to use the church without supervision of the PCC, reducing volunteer time but also allowing the church to be open more often. Regular, trusted lets also produce less wear and tear on the historic fabric of the church than big, equipment-heavy concerts.

St Mary's business model is less commercial than many churches seek to be, with a large degree of flexibility from both the PCC and the clients. The church has built strong relationships with users, ensuring that change can be accommodated without disrupting regular income. Users pay fees in arrears not advance, younger people can use the church for free and relationships are built slowly over time. Feedback from clients on this approach is positive and relies on a more traditional model of use, although this does rely heavily on the small group of volunteers who run the church.



Concert taking place in front of the altar



Event taking place in the nave

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

St Mary's prides itself on its inclusivity and seeks to extend its welcome to all visitors. The response below was received from an orchestra who initially sought to hire the church for a concert but in the end opted to perform for a nominal payment to their costs as part of the church's own outreach programme of free recitals. It is representative of the way the PCC seeks to build a relationship with all its users.

Dear Katherine,

I just wanted to say an enormous thank you on behalf of all of us at SWON for such a wonderful concert on Saturday evening. I have had amazing feedback from all of the performers and the audience alike, it really was a fantastic event.

We were made to feel so welcome from beginning to end and we can't thank you and everyone at St Mary's enough for everything you did for us. So often we perform in venues and don't always have such a relaxed, friendly atmosphere, but it has been an absolute pleasure to work with you from beginning to end and we all had such a lovely time thanks to your warm welcome. It was great to see such a big audience there too – and some of them even made a point to come by in the drizzle to watch us in Pavilion Gardens yesterday as well!

*Thanks again for everything!
Symphonic Wind Orchestra of North London²⁹*

Baptisms	2
Funerals	3
Weddings	1

Civic church (town use):

World Aids day concert
School carol services and performances
Local Community Action Group meetings
Brighton Housing Trust tenancy meetings
Local political and advocacy meetings

Tourist church (visitor use):

All manner of concerts – electronica, rock, classical etc
Yoga classes
Mindfulness classes
A Band of Brothers support group
Theatre workshops and rehearsals
Individual music and singing tuition
Dance classes
Jam sessions
Informal piano use
Children's drama classes
Free English conversation classes
Photograph exhibitions
Music recordings
Soundscapes
Light projections and digital art
Film recordings
Fashion shoots Sussex university conference dinner and performances with curry
Hen party drumming workshops
Sussex University Live Interfaces conference dinner (curry in the pews!) and performances
Reminiscence sessions and local history

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Worship – sung parish Eucharist, morning prayer, said Eucharist, prayer meetings
Community meetings
Tea and coffee drop in
Knitting group
Craft fairs
Afternoon teas and socialising for the elderly

²⁹ Email, 11/07/2016, SWON to Katherine Prior

WELCOMING VISITORS

St Mary's has the advantage of being situated not far from Brighton city centre. The church benefits from visitors to the city, both national and international, and tries to capture the more intrepid visitors. However, St Mary's geographical parish is an economically deprived area and the church has struggled in the past to find relevance within its own geographic parish. This was compounded in the early twenty-first century by the threat of redundancy and a proportion of local people still assume the church is closed.

The church is open between 22 and 26 hours a week in 2016, which has steadily increased over the last few years as more users have been identified. Visitor numbers are recorded in a log book, as are the hours contributed by the volunteers. High levels of substance misuse and associated anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood means it is not possible to leave the church unattended, but a rota of competent adults allows the church to be open as much as possible and it is also open to visitors when certain events are on.

Traditionally church opening, limited as it was, was conducted without much thought to safety and it was unfortunately common that two vulnerable adults (a 95-year-old, say, and an adult with learning disabilities) would be left in charge of the church. Since 2014, church opening has been overhauled and rotas are produced by the Safeguarding Officer with careful attention to the abilities and training of people undertaking it. St Mary's is gradually growing the number of competent volunteers, not all of them worshippers, to help with church opening.

St Mary's makes extensive use of digital and social media and considered this crucial to reaching different audiences. By raising their profile through TV and radio appearances, coupled with an active presence on Twitter and Facebook, St Mary's is able to reach people who may not know the church or those who cannot physically visit. For some of its members with mental health problems, social media is the preferred way of staying in touch with St Mary's.

The church uses a variety of methods to engage visitors – from pop-up banners on the history of the church in the entrance, to interpretation boards on individual features. A display explaining the major repair and new build project can also be found within the church. The church provides a good level of information for visitors but a more coherent scheme will soon be provided as part of the HLF project.

The church is currently working on a history project for St Mary's School on Mount Street (demolished 1978) and has recently established a local memories project of the church. The churchwarden is overseeing production of a new guidebook and the Friends group is providing calendars and postcards as merchandise. Other activities that have been recently introduced include Heritage Open Days, meet the stonemasons and a window appeal. Many of these activities relate to the ongoing repair works and allow local people to participate in the new discoveries at the church.

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The crèche

TOXTETH, ST JAMES IN THE CITY

Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, L8 1UR

Diocese	Liverpool	Settlement Type	Suburban/Urban Fringe
Grade	II*	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1209882	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Poor)
Church Heritage Record No.	622279	Average Weekly Attendance	100
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	N/A Network Church
Footprint (m ²)	948 (Big)	Annual Visitors	Not open outside services
Building Period	Georgian	Website	http://www.stjamesinthecity.org.uk



OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Built 1774-1775 in Toxteth, an urban development of the expanding city of Liverpool with associations with Liverpool's merchants and the slave trade.
- Galleried pews demonstrating one of the earliest uses of cast-iron columns.
- Long-term decline and redundancy in the twentieth century, followed by current regeneration.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Simple Georgian church in a poor condition following previous closure.
- Chosen because it is an historic church, to be the base for a new evangelical charismatic congregation.
- Worship is held within 'tents' in the church to provide comfortable (heatable) spaces for the congregation.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Church does not have any facilities including running water or disabled access.
- Several funding applications to national organisations have been turned down in succession.
- New church congregation is growing and requires a large, useable building.



One of the 'tent' worshipping spaces within St James'

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St James in the City was built in the eighteenth century as the population of Liverpool expanded. The church is believed to contain the earliest surviving cast-iron columns in the country, which pre-date the iron bridge at Coalbrookdale.

The church was closed in the mid-twentieth century and was vested in the Churches Conservation Trust in 1974. Decades of slow decline led to St James' being put on the market in the early twenty-first century in a poor condition. The need for a student church in the city led to the Diocese of Liverpool buying back the church in 2009 and St James now has a thriving student and young professional's population.

The church carried out substantial roof repairs in 2012 and associated masonry and electrical improvements. However, the church remains closed outside of worship, with no running water and an unwelcoming interior. The congregation continues to

worship inside a 'tent' within the church and has submitted three unsuccessful major grant applications in the last two years.

St James is unusual in that it is a parish church with a non-geographical parish; with a reach far wider than its local community. It is also unusual in that the incumbent made an active choice to use St James, recognising the benefits of the building – its scale, prominence and heritage – and seeing the challenges – its condition and lack of facilities – as an opportunity rather than a constraint. Since then, St James has built capacity by drawing on the resources of highly qualified professionals. The church was also provided with start-up funding by the Diocese in 2010, which allowed them to grow the church from the beginning and work towards a sustainable future.

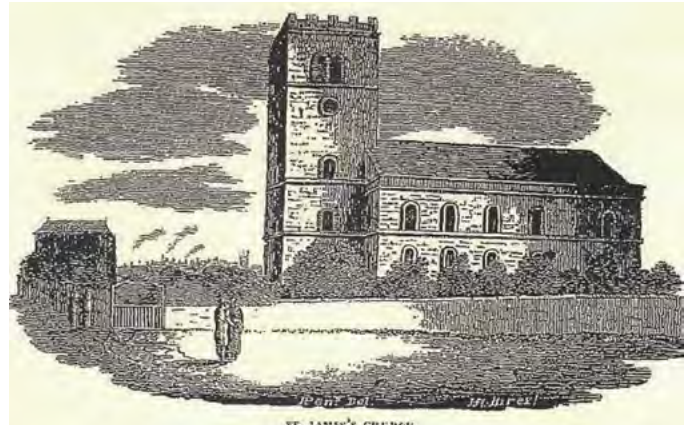
HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“St James’ is of huge interest as one of the oldest standing churches in Liverpool and the oldest remaining building in Britain to use cast-iron pillars.”⁰³

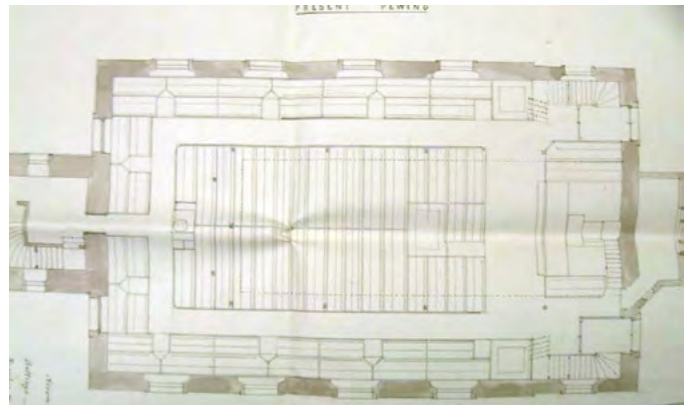
St James’ was built as part of the development of the suburb of Toxteth between 1774-1775 and forms a key part of the expansion of Liverpool in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The increase in population of Liverpool led to a demand for new churches to accommodate the additional population. The church was built, and apparently designed, by Cuthbert Bisbrow. In its original form it was a rectangular plan, with only minimal demarcation of a chancel by the treatment of its easternmost bay. Like many churches at the time, its construction was funded by shareholders, who recovered their investment by the sale of pews. A gallery was installed to maximise seating, supported on cast-iron columns. These galleries survive and the cast iron columns are unusually early examples.⁰⁴

In 1846, the roof was found to be in a dangerous condition and was replaced by an ornamented open truss roof by William Culshaw. At the same time, further gallery seating and a new organ were installed. Nonetheless, the church was again reported to be in a poor state in 1866, when the Rev Robert Henry Hammond arrived to find broken windows, no heating and a morning attendance of only ten adults. However, Hammond’s arrival was the beginning of a period of renewal for the church. Alterations were carried out in 1871-1875 to add a small vestry to the east end of the church and create a new entrance under the tower at the west end. A new east window, designed by Henry Holiday, was inserted in 1881. By 1892 the congregation and the state of the church were much recovered. A few years later, in 1899, a chancel was added to the east end of the church by JH Havelock-Sutton. This was a major alteration which dramatically altered the form and liturgical shape of the building. The cost of the works was met by voluntary contributions.

By 1972 the church’s congregation had declined to about 25. The building was declared closed and handed over to the Redundant Churches Fund (later the Churches Conservation Trust or CCT) in 1974. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the CCT had not been able to sustain St James’ as a viable site and the building continued to decline. In 2007 the building was put onto the open market and in 2009 the church was returned to the Diocese. In 2010 the church became a parish church, but with no geographical parish beyond its churchyard as it was to be used as a site for the new Student City church for the Diocese. The church has continued to be used for worship from 2010 to the present day, although the congregation moved out on two occasions for repair and restoration work totalling over 12 months.



Historic sketch of St James c.1815 © St James’ Conservation Management Plan



Floor plan of St James in 1846 © St James’ Conservation Management Plan



Historic photograph of the interior prior to redundancy © St James’ Conservation Management Plan

⁰³ St James in the City, Statement of Significance, nd

⁰⁴ St James in the City, Conservation Management Plan, Anthony Walker, 2010

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **1774-1775:** Construction of St James' as a Chapel of Ease (Parish of Walton).
- **1844:** St James' raised to be a parish church.
- **1846:** Original roof replaced by king post roof of higher pitch.
- **1899:** Chancel built at east end of the church.
- **1972:** Church declared closed.
- **2010:** Church reopened.

NOTABLE FEATURES

The original construction of St James' in the eighteenth century was of a simple design, and additional fixtures and fittings were added in the nineteenth century. However, redundancy, decay, damp, vandalism and arson has led to the loss of the majority of fixtures and fittings within the church. The space has the character of an empty shell that requires substantial enhancement and repair.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Cast Iron Columns

The first floor gallery at St James' is supported by cast iron columns, which are original to construction in 1775. Some cast iron columns for a second floor balcony also remain.⁰⁵ The shafts have a quatrefoil section, except for the lower part which is octagonal. Their use in buildings was a significant development, particularly in buildings meant for public meeting and addresses as they eliminated the need for thick brick or masonry pillars, which obscured sound and views. The earliest recorded use of cast iron columns appears to be by Christopher Wren at the Houses of Parliament in 1692, although there was not sufficient confidence in the material until the construction of the Iron Bridge at Coalbrookdale in 1777-1779. The columns at St James' are therefore an exceptionally early surviving example, possibly the earliest.⁰⁶

Wall Monuments

There were a number of wall monuments in the church, many of which are still in existence. All the monuments are of interest, not least for information about the people in the area and their occupations.⁰⁷

Windows

The original windows of the eighteenth-century building were likely to have been replaced during the substantial Victorian restorations. Both sets were either damaged beyond repair or removed when the church was declared closed in the 1970s. The current windows are leaded lights installed by Riverside Studios of Hull for the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). The east window survives from the nineteenth century and is by Henry Holiday.

⁰⁵ Details of dates for these columns are found within the Conservation Management Plan

⁰⁶ Browne, S & de Figueiredo, P (2008) in Religion and Place; pub English Heritage, p14

⁰⁷ St James in the City, Conservation Management Plan, Anthony Walker, 2010

Floor

The nave floor was originally a raised wooden floor with underfloor ventilation but is now in a poor condition and requires comprehensive restoration. The chancel floor is reasonably intact, decorative mosaic with some damage.



Historic image of the church from the mid-twentieth century. Many of the internal fixtures and fittings have since been lost



Cast-iron columns within the church © St James' Conservation Management Plan

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“There has always been controversy about the extent of actual slave ownership in Liverpool... St James’ was their church. In the records, names range from Adams to Wilson. Places of birth included the Gold Coast and other parts of Africa, North Carolina, Jamaica, Bombay, Santa Cruz, Barbados, Philadelphia, New York, Virginia, Martinique.”⁰⁸

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St James’ chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St James’ occupies a dominant position in the locality as it is placed at the junction of several major roads, on raised ground and surrounded by the open space of its churchyard. It is within the Rodney Street Conservation Area. Toxteth was once a hunting park to the south of Liverpool, acquired in 1605 by Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton. By the eighteenth century, Liverpool had expanded considerably and the park became one of the first planned suburbs.

The Earl of Sefton gave the land for the new church. Liverpool’s expansion was outrunning the provision of churches in the growing city. St James’ was built as a chapel of ease for the parish of Walton and acquired its own parish in 1844. The area was initially planned as genteel suburban residences. Whilst many of those associated with St James’ were prosperous merchants, the parish also included large numbers of Welsh labourers and a significant black community between the church and the waterfront.

Today, the tower of Liverpool Cathedral is prominent beyond the churchyard of St James’, which is separated from the Cathedral Close only by Upper Parliament Street. However, St James’ seems isolated from the Cathedral and the difference between them in terms of architecture, condition and economic deprivation is stark.

The church is close to the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University campuses and has a mission specifically intended for students and young professionals.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The simplicity and design of St James’ is of considerable interest. Many Georgian churches were more elaborate than St James’, even when built under budgetary constraints. The pared-back, modest appearance of St James’, especially of the original Georgian nave, is effective and noteworthy. The use of cast iron pillars to support the upper gallery level is particularly interesting. It is undoubtedly an early, and possibly the earliest surviving example of the use of cast-iron pillars in this way. It is of interest that the columns are cast with an ecclesiastical quatrefoil section and make a valuable contribution to the restrained aesthetic of the building as a whole.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The building is of interest as evidence of the wider history of the development of Liverpool. It was built as part of the expansion of Liverpool as a major port and prosperous city in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through memorial inscriptions the parish records it is associated with a variety of people from Liverpool’s past, such as the merchants who moved to the suburbs in the eighteenth century and the industrial labourers who worked in the city’s factories and on the docks.

The relationship of the church to different ethnic groups and its possible connections with the slave trade both through merchants and African and other groups is contained in the records of the church rather than the fabric of the building, but nonetheless contributes greatly to the interest and significance of the church. Liverpool was a major slave port, which prospered greatly from the trade. It is also thought that some young Africans were brought back to England to work in the homes of the affluent as domestic servants. The rich diversity of places of birth for those memorialised at St James’ indicates the spiritual value of the church to those who passed through or made Toxteth their home.

08 St James in the City, Statement of Significance, nd

09 Survey results

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

An archaeological report indicated the existence of monuments and burials within the churchyard. It is unlikely that there are extensive pre-1774 archaeological remains, although it is possible that excavation would reveal remains of the boundary of the historic Toxteth hunting park. The churchyard of St James' contains over 9,000 burials, the headstones of which were laid flat in 1891 and covered over with soil. There are likely to be remains of archaeological interest which could provide a sample of Liverpool's eighteenth and nineteenth-century population.



Churchyard to the south of the church

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The church's prominent position makes it a significant local landmark. As it was closed in 1972 with a declining congregation, and only re-opened as a church in 2010, it arguably has limited community interest as a church, but this is growing. The church makes a significant contribution to the character and history of the Conservation Area. While it was in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) the local community made several efforts to ensure that it was retained and to find a viable use for the building.

Today, the congregation of the church is growing and seeks to find relevance to people across the city, not just within its immediate vicinity. It now has strong links with the nearby university, both as a church with a specific mission to students and as a building of interest visited by architecture and theology students and lecturers.



Setting of St James', with Liverpool Cathedral to the north

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“St James’ in the City meet inside a tent inside a crumbling Grade II listed building. The vision of St James’ is to transform the building, into a welcoming and usable space, for the benefit of the local community. It is to inspire people to re-discover the hidden heritage held within St James’, to celebrate its history, diversity and character, to benefit from its rich cultural heritage, bringing hope to a new generation.”¹⁰*

St James in the City is a Georgian inner city church of just under 1000sqm in footprint, assessed as being in poor condition on the 2015 Heritage at Risk Register. St James’ was closed in 1972 and was vested with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) in 1974, following a two-year period in which the building went into rapid decline, following vandalism and arson attacks. The CCT improved security and carried out urgent repairs, including replacing some of the leaded lights. However, around 2009 the church was put up for sale on the open market.

St James’ was taken back by the Diocese of Liverpool from the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) in 2009 to serve as the Student City church for the Diocese. The site itself, in a prominent location on a busy thoroughfare in the heart of the city was considered an ideal location. Several companies expressed interest in the building for conversion and subdivision from uses as diverse as an art gallery, recording studio and residential. A large supermarket chain was also interested in the site, although this would have required demolition of the building and disinterment of over 9,000 burials.

When the church was handed back to the Diocese in 2009, the roof was leaking, the structure unsafe and the building had no running water or heating. The PCC carried out a series of investigative works such as bat, asbestos, damp and structural surveys and architects were employed to draw up a schedule of urgent works. Urgent roof replacement was costed at £600,000 and a further £1.5 million was required for additional repairs.

In order to use the church as quickly as possible, the new incumbent for the church installed a tent within the building to create a more comfortable worshipping space. This 6m x 6m marquee was purchased and as the congregation has grown has been incrementally expanded into a 12m x 20m tent that seats up to 170 people.

Between 2011 and 2012, the congregation moved out of the church to allow for the urgent roof repairs to be carried out. This was funded largely through the Historic England/Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Repair Grant for Places of Worship (RGPOW) scheme. The congregation celebrated the works by extending their tent in 2013.

Despite having an almost uninhabitable building, the incumbent recognises the benefits of worshipping within St James’ in the City. Firstly, the site has enormous setting and townscape value. The site is at the junction of two roads and is visually prominent, set on raised grounds, close to the Church of England cathedral. Secondly, the dominance of the church from the surrounding area negates the need for physical signage. This factored highly when searching for a new site for the Student City church, as the ecclesiastical architecture of the parish church was seen as its own expression of the function of the building, which would have been lost if worship took place in a hall or pub. The architecture of St James’ therefore draws people in and is a massive positive benefit.

Thirdly, the church is situated directly between two different postcodes, which separate the affluent (L1) and the deprived (L8)¹¹ areas of Liverpool. The juxtaposition of the city centre commercial, professional and leisure facilities, with an inner city suburb is stark and the position of the church here allows it to reach out to both areas. The incumbent believes that the resources of the area L1 can be used to support those in L8.

Fourthly, the internal space of St James’ is ideal for the style of worship they practice, with space for 250 people in the nave and plenty of room to overflow into the galleries for big events. Looking beyond the current condition, the interior is light and airy, and the slender columns do not impede views. While the loss of the original fixtures and fittings is to be lamented from a heritage viewpoint, the value of having a wide, open space with no pews or pulpit is valued by the PCC.

¹⁰ St James in the City, Vision Statement

¹¹ PCC representative

St James' PCC is therefore in a unique situation in that it was able to choose a building that would serve their specific style of worship. The opportunities presented by the site, such as its size, heritage and location, were clearly understood by the Diocese, while disadvantages such as the condition of the building were seen as challenges to overcome, rather than a constraint. At St James', heritage significance has been harnessed to support ministry, though the Heritage and Hope project. This aims to inspire people to discover their heritage at St James', in order to celebrate history, diversity and character, bringing hope to a new generation.

St James' is currently locked outside of worship and is in a poor condition. Metal security doors, heavy-duty locks and metal lock boxes are all required to prevent unauthorised access, and even these do not prevent attempts being made. The majority of damage to the church occurred in the first few months following closure in 1972, prior to securing access. A fire was started in the tower around this time and significant damage was caused that is still awaiting repair today.

At the present time, the building remains watertight but large annual maintenance tasks are not carried out as the fabric is in need of complete overhaul. Issues that could cause long-term damage are addressed (such as a leak) but cosmetic or minor health and safety issues are not (such as a hole in the floor). Changes to the building focus on 'comfort maintenance', which are things that enable the church to be used more comfortably (such as additions to the 'tent').

The church is insured with 75% cover, which costs the PCC £2,300 annually. As the repairs are carried out and the value of the church increases, the insurance costs will also rise. The church has no running water but does have electricity. Electric oil-filled radiators are used for heating but both hot food and water have to be carried over to the church. Water can be boiled on site.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St James' considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places St James' with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹²



One of the 'tent' worshipping spaces within St James'



Locked entrance to the church on the north side

12 Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“St James in the City is not a building preservation trust; the building is a side-line to the main function, the ministry of the church.”¹³

St James in the City is unusual in that its defined geographical parish does not extend beyond the churchyard. The church was established as the Student City church and as such does not serve a local community in the traditional sense, but has a much wider reach to a specific audience within the city.

An incumbent was employed by the Diocese in 2007 to establish the Student City church. His first two aims were to find a base for the church (eventually settling on St James') and to create a network of skilled people to support development of the church. The strength of St James' is the robust network of professional people who support the church with the skills necessary to grow and regenerate the church. The first people were recruited through word of mouth and ranged from doctors to accountants, high court judges to insurance brokers, both full-time and retired. Once this highly-skilled small group of people were in place, the way was paved for the church to grow as more people were made aware of it.

The challenge at St James' is somewhat different to other parish churches in that rather than having a core group of people who live locally, willing to give their time to the project, St James' has a strong foundation of highly-skilled professionals drawn from across a wide area, who have limited time to put towards the project; skill levels are high, but time is limited. Therefore, at St James', there are two teams; one which deals with the daily tasks, and an advisory team. Many of the people supporting the church want to spend their time helping with ministry rather than the physical building.

In order to support the church, the skills of the congregation are also utilised in order to maximise their value to mission and ministry. Newcomers are asked to fill in a profile, which allows them to explore who they are and where their skills lie. This ensures that the skills of each member of the congregation are well-used; whether this is their ability to fill in grant applications, provide advice to new students, cook food, run the children's work or help with accounting. In total there are approximately 120 volunteers with either a role in the life of the church or the community. Each week, there are approximately 35 members of the congregation on the rota of tasks.

St James' has a traditional PCC structure supplemented by a strategy group, which provides more long-term planning. A vision document underpins the vision and values of the church. The church is supported by two additional charities, which are separate from the PCC; LivServe and LivGrow. These are charitable companies, limited by guarantee to reduce the risk to the PCC. LivServe focuses on new build development, community facilities and the long-term restoration of the church. LivGrow was set up separately to support the ministry of the church and fund future youth and community workers. This has only recently been registered. The PCC of St James' meets alternate months with the strategy group while LivServe and LivGrow meet quarterly for breakfast.

The church has a full-time incumbent and a full-time associate vicar. From June 2017 the church will also have a full-time curate whose accommodation is paid for by the PCC. The church employs interns on a regular basis. The interns are generally congregation members taken on after their first degree. The interns attend St Mellitus theological college one day a week and support the church part-time. As volunteers they are not paid but have their expenses covered and are given a programme of activities and training, but also the opportunities to explore their interests.

Number of members on PCC	9
Number of clergy	2
Number of paid staff	2 staff 2-3 interns
Number of volunteers	120
Number of sub-committees	1 strategy group 2 charities - LivServe/ LivGrow

¹³ PCC Representative

FINANCES

St James' highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been payroll. They anticipate building repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Payroll is often the third highest item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁴

In 2015, the total income at St James' was £113,702, which was balanced against expenditure of £107,000. The church is therefore sustainable in the short-term, but has over £1.5 million of repairs that urgently need completing. The church has a restoration fund with a limited amount of money restricted to repairs of the building. No maintenance budget is set.

When the church was established in 2010, a benefactor gave £135,000 over a three-year period. This was required to cover everything from bibles and masonry repairs to fundraising costs. The money was therefore used as seed funding to employ people and build capacity at an early stage. It acted as a working reserve that allowed the church to take risks at an early stage in its development in order to create a sustainable future and a growing congregation. The next stage is to address the defects in the building, by utilising the skills people have in fundraising and project management.¹⁵

On a practical level, the resourcing at St James' by the Diocese of Liverpool was seen as sustainable in the long-term due to the type of worshippers they aimed to attract. As the Student City church for the Diocese, students and young professionals are likely to have a more than average salary. Capturing donations and planned giving from this group of people would provide the financial resources to be able to continue to grow the congregation and to maintain the building once restored.

St James' approaches income generation in a traditional way. They have the view that churches are not businesses; they are there to offer support to people who need them. While it would be possible to generate income from new facilities, such as charging market price for a coffee, the church would rather provide it for an at-cost price for someone who needs it. The incumbent believes that a model that relies on donations within a growing church is the most appropriate and is also sustainable.

Parish share is a compulsory payment within the Diocese of Liverpool but due to the unusual circumstances of St James' as a parish church with a non-geographical parish and as a relatively new foundation (2010), their contribution is calculated differently to a traditional parish church. It is anticipated this will be reassessed in the future.

St James' employs two full-time positions and two to three interns each year. In 2016 the payroll totalled £447,045.

Like 46% of other Major Parish Churches, St James' income does meet its expenditure.¹⁶

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St James' financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	£1.5 million
Urgent QI cost	£1.5 million
Annual maintenance cost	£0
Parish share cost	£23,000
Insurance Cost	£2,300
Utilities cost	Electricity £1,800
Major project cost (annual or five-yearly)	£2.8 million
Annual donations income, inc. legacies	£83,200
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£0
Events/church hall income	£0
Other income – land/interest/fees	£0
Individual project income	£0
Grants (ministry)	General £1,200 Staff £9,400 Intern project £5,000

¹⁴ Survey results

¹⁵ PCC Representative

¹⁶ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“We received the disappointing news that our HLF application for £2.8m to refurbish St James’ was unsuccessful at the recent National Board meeting in London. There were 25 projects considered and only five were awarded grants. HLF North West said it was disappointed with the outcome as it thought ours was a strong application. Do please pray for us over the next few months as we seek God for the way ahead.”¹⁷

St James’ is on the 2015 Heritage at Risk Register in ‘poor’ condition but has recently had its roof replaced and other associated repairs carried out in order to create a water-tight space for worship. As part of the project, the PCC received funding through the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, which allows listed churches to reclaim VAT on repairs and professional fees (although fees have only recently been added to the scheme). The PCC highlighted that the process of paying VAT and reclaiming it was an unnecessary burden, and that 0% rating would be a more efficient system. It also noted that while it has the capacity or skills to reclaim the money, many other churches might not.¹⁸

Since the urgent repairs in 2012, St James’ PCC has been working towards a larger repair and regeneration scheme and several grant applications have recently been submitted to the HLF:

- **2014:** a £4 million scheme was submitted to the HLF consisting of £2 million to restore the church and £2 million to build new facilities. *Not successful*
- **2015:** a reduced scheme under £2 million was submitted. *Not successful*
- **2015:** a scheme of £2.8 million was submitted for repairs, activities and limited facilities within the church. *Not successful*

The first scheme was the largest in its scope. National statutory bodies and funding organisations are very supportive of the regeneration of St James’ and have been involved since the church was returned to the Diocese in 2009. In 2014, the principle to extend the church was accepted by some bodies but HLF were reluctant to finance facilities outside the original building. This disagreement at a national level was felt by the PCC not to encompass the thoughts, feelings or requirements at a local level of those that knew the building and how it would be best used in the future.

The second, smaller scheme submitted in 2015 was rejected by the HLF at regional level (north-west) as it was thought to be unrealistic in terms of restricting costs to the £2 million threshold.

The third application for £2.8 million, reflecting more realistic costs for the works, was assessed by the national committee of the HLF (as a grant over £2 million) and was therefore in competition with 25 projects, of which only five were funded.¹⁹ The PCC is currently debating whether to put in a fourth application to the HLF.

A second opportunity that St James’ is exploring is a development site close to the church. The council have invested in a piece of brownfield land with the church on the agreement that the church redevelops it and maximise the income.

As mentioned in ‘Organisation and Responsibility’, the challenge at St James’ is somewhat different to other parish churches in that rather than having a core group of people willing to give their time to project, but may not necessarily have the correct skills to take it forward – St James’ have a strong foundation of highly-skilled professionals, who have limited time to put towards the project.

¹⁷ St James in the City, April 2015

¹⁸ PCC representative

¹⁹ PCC representative

RECENT PROJECT

In 2011-2012 the church was awarded an Historic England/ HLF RGPOW grant under the previous places of worship grant scheme (now replaced by the HLF Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW)) for £407,000 covering a total project cost of £600,000.

The 2007 Quinquennial Inspection listed the extensive works that required urgent attention:

1. poor state of roofs and parapet gutters;
2. stability of plaster ceilings, decorative parts of roof trusses, gallery front, gallery structure and tower copings;
3. inadequate safety of Tower and roof access;
4. electrical safety;
5. endemic dry rot and death watch;
6. lack of rainwater goods and blocked drains; and
7. continuing need for masonry repair and repointing.

Repair work funded by the RGPOW grant included a completely new roof and rainwater goods, enhanced tower and roof access, improved electrics, stabilisation works, some timber repair works and some masonry repair and repointing.



The current incumbent getting involved in the repair works

CURRENT USE

“On Easter Saturday we had an amazing Easter Egg Hunt in the church grounds. We estimate that about 150 children and 75 adults attended. It was an ideal opportunity to explain our vision for the site, have lots of fun and eat an indecent amount of chocolate.....we had 2,500 eggs!”²⁰

St James' reaches out to a range of different communities within Liverpool but focuses on university students, young professionals and city dwellers. The vision and values of St James' are set out in a single document and are explained to newcomers. The vision of Heritage and Hope allows worship to encompass the rich cultural heritage of St James'.

St James' worshipping style is Evangelical Charismatic and this specific style of worship is provided as a service across the city. Due to a lack of geographical parish, the church has limited interactions with the local community through baptisms, weddings and funerals. The role of the church as the Student City church does not necessarily cater to local people in more deprived areas, and they are often directed to other local churches. The worship pastor is therefore the link to the local community, who spends a high proportion of her time in the inner city suburbs surrounding St James'. The annual Easter Egg Hunt is also used to bring the local community into the church. This event sees £300 of eggs hidden and is utilised to obtain feedback in a questionnaire.

The church is well used for worship, with regular worship on a Sunday, supplemented by four children's groups, which have now been expanded into an additional 'tent' space within the church due to numbers.

One of the most popular events is the weekly midweek meeting during term time. Fifteen minutes of worship is followed by a hot cooked meal, before dividing into different groups: Alpha, Newcomers, and students. Average attendance is 30-40. The worshipping congregation of St James' is growing and it is anticipated that there will be more congregation members than the 250 seating capacity of the church. The plan is to run multiple congregations and to plant into other existing churches in the Diocese.

Currently, the church is not open for use outside of worship. This is due to the condition of the building, the lack of adequate access and a lack of facilities. The PCC aim in the future to keep the building open permanently and provide a facility for other groups to use.

2010 to 2016

Baptisms	4 infants (from August 2016) 3 dedications 4 adult baptisms (at the cathedral)
Funerals	0
Weddings	1 since opening



Event taking place within the church



Annual Easter Egg Hunt activities around the church

²⁰ St James in the City Newsletter May, 2010

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

Due to the poor condition of St James', the congregation meet within the church, but worship inside 'tents' that provide warmth and some degree of comfort.

To continue weekly worship meetings with a growing congregation and to address immediate safety concerns we erected a temporary marquee inside the church in 2009 to accommodate increasing numbers. The congregation outgrew the marquee by 2010 and has been extended several times since. The marquee is quite Heath Robinson and is not professionally installed. We have just been adding extensions each time we outgrow it.

Internal re-arrangements are still needed to address basic safety concerns and provide some degree of basic comfort to worshippers in the short-term. In the medium to longer term, we are planning to fully renovate the building.

The building is currently not accessible to outside groups due to condition, poor access and a lack of facilities.

Tours (advance notice) – architectural and theological.
Heritage Open Days.
Community Easter Egg Hunt.

Sunday worship.
Four youth groups.
Evening worship and meal.
Student group.
Alpha group.
Newcomers group.

St James' has a range of management documents including a conservation plan, and a statement of significance and statement of need. It has an average number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²¹

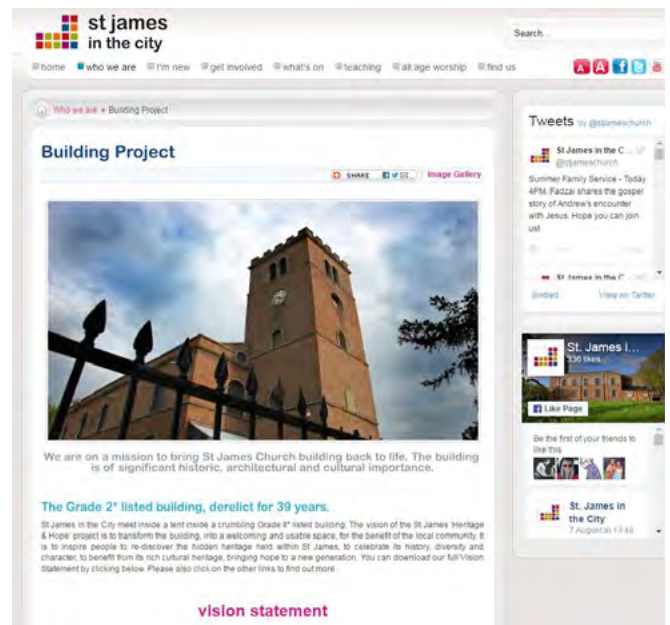
²¹ Survey results

WELCOMING VISITORS

Currently, St James' is focused on welcoming newcomers through worship, rather than visitors, as the church is closed. The incumbent considers this to be crucial to a sustainable future for St James' as the higher the congregation numbers, the more skills and resources they have at their disposal, and the more financial support is received.

The welcome newcomers receive is not restricted to formal worship and might include informal chats about their needs, along with invitations to the pub or to the incumbent's house for dinner. Many church users are international students, with a limited support network in the UK, so the welcome they receive is very important. Food and drink is seen as a very important part of that welcome and is a crucial element of worship.

Following repairs to the building, the church hopes to be open daily and be able to welcome visitors. To keep people informed, the church has a website aimed at students, but also provides information on the development of the building and updates on the repairs.



St James' website

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View of the west tower

BOW COMMON, ST PAUL

St Paul's Way, London E3 4AR

Diocese	London	Settlement Type	Inner City
Grade	II*	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1241881	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Very Bad)
Church Heritage Record No.	623163	Average Weekly Attendance	83
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	6,912
Footprint (m ²)	921	Annual Visitors	1,000
Building Period	Twentieth Century	Website	http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/



Exterior at St Paul's

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- St Paul's has been voted best modern church in the UK
- The church was built between 1958 and 1960 by Maguire and Murray to a radical architectural design of the New Brutalist movement
- The church was one of the earliest expressions of the liturgical reform movement

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Significant art and design by craftsmen Charles Lutyens and Ralph Beyer
- Radical design in the form of a stack of three diminishing cubes with ancillary spaces
- Twentieth-century liturgical design with a central altar and surrounding seating on all sides

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Supporting an economically and socially deprived local community
- Innovative and previously untested modern construction materials
- Raising the profile of the church beyond the immediate parish



Interior

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Paul's was newly built in 1958 following the destruction of the original church in the bombings of the Second World War. Architecturally, the building was also at the forefront of the New Brutalist movement. The church has important associations with the architects Maguire and Murray, Charles Lutyens and Ralph Beyer.

St Paul's has just completed a substantial repair project to address serious defects in the materials used in the lantern. These innovative modern materials are untested and are now reaching the end of their life. On a building of this size even replacement of a single element (the wool wood panels) can require hundreds of thousands of pounds in repairs. A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)-funded repair project was completed in 2015 and the next phase is to renew the heating, lighting and wiring.

The heritage engagement activities carried out at St Paul's during the repair project have had a positive effect in raising the profile of the church and engaging with wider community groups. It has also allowed the church to stay open longer outside of worship and has increased local community pride in the building. The complex range of activities and the promotion of church hall hire are seen as important ways of making the church sustainable in the future.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“Churches were being built in Europe with central altars and minimum division between priest and people. These ideas passionately concerned Fr. Kirkby but he was not impressed by the new buildings he saw abroad. [The design the architects proposed] was the most radical and pure expression of the movement”⁰³

The original St Paul's church was built on an area that had previously been common land, following rapid population expansion and the arrival of the railways and canal in the mid-nineteenth century. The church was built in 1858 in the Victorian Gothic style with a large broach spire and an aisled nave to accommodate the burgeoning working classes of East London.

In 1941, during the Second World War, incendiaries gutted the church, reducing it to a shell. Following the War, the War Reparations Fund ensured that a new church could be built to replace the previous church on the site.

The first vicar of the new church was the Revd Gresham Kirkby. Kirkby was a young radical, his philosophy capturing the spirit in London after the Second World War, with thoughts of reconstruction and hope. Kirkby wanted the new church to be daring, and forward-looking. He is often described as an anarchist socialist and was the first priest to go to prison for anti-nuclear activities in 1961.

Kirkby chose the architects Robert Maguire and Keith Murray, who were both in their 20s at the time. The architects worked with the vicar and took inspiration from the local parishioners in Bow Common to create a church predicated upon the question “What will Christian worship be like in the year 2000, and how can we build a church to reflect this?”⁰⁴ This new vision of Eucharistic worship sought to be inclusive to all in the sight of God and was the beginning of the liturgical reform movement.

In contrast to the innovative location of the central altar, the font remained in its traditional place in sight of the door, to show all that Baptism is the way to enter the church. Within the church, there is a minimal division between the clergy and the congregation and only two steps up to the altar to increase visibility.

The architecture employed by Maguire and Murray is described as New Brutalist in style. Brutalism is an architectural movement that flourished from the 1950s to mid-1970s and is derived from the French word for raw. Characteristics of Brutalist architecture are imposing, fortress-like buildings with a predominance of exposed concrete construction. Emphasis is often placed on expressing the functionality of the building, for example by indicating internal circulation routes on the exterior. The architecture is one that communicates strength, functionality, and frank expression of materiality.⁰⁵

The current St Paul's was built between 1958 and 1960. The attached church hall and vicarage were built at the same time and are mentioned in the list description as holding the same special interest as a group.

In 1963 Charles Lutyens was commissioned to install artworks around the walls of St Paul's on the spandrels above each pillar. These took the form of mosaics known as the 'Angels of the Heavenly Host' and were installed by 1968. The mosaics were not part of the original vision for the church.

Innovative new materials were used in the construction of St Paul's. For example, wood wool panels were used to construct the lantern and was used in such a way as to achieve a textured, two-tone decorative finish. Prior to the installation of the mosaics by Lutyens, the lantern ceiling and blue painted frames to the structural glazing below provided the main source of colour against the interior backdrop of purple-grey brickwork.

03 Prebendary Duncan Ross, St Paul's Bow Common History Booklet, 2014

04 <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/church-design> accessed 03/08/2016

05 <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/church-design/brutalism.php> accessed 03/08/2016

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- The original St Paul's church was built on common land in East London in 1858.
- The church was gutted by incendiary bombs in 1941 during the Second World War.
- The current church was built 1958-1960 by Maguire and Murray architects.
- Charles Lutyens created his mosaic panels 1963-1968.
- Lutyens finally finished the mosaic in 2011, the same year he exhibited *The Outraged Christ* at St Paul's.
- The church was listed in 1988.
- The church hall was refurbished in 2011.
- St Paul's was given the title of 'best modern church' in the UK in 2013.
- Major repair project was carried out in 2015.



The original Bow Common church © St Paul's PCC



New St Paul's in the early 1960s © St Paul's PCC

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

St Paul's interior represents the modern liturgical movement of the mid-twentieth century and as such contains a central altar, a circular area of seating (which can be moved) and individual chapels around the edges of the single space. The character of the interior is expressed through the modern materials used, rather than applied decoration.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Beyer Lettering

The iconic lettering around the entrance porch of St Paul's was produced by the sculptor Ralph Beyer as part of the original scheme for the church. Beyer was apprenticed to the sculptor and typeface designer Eric Gill and was also taught by sculptor Henry Moore. He is recognised for developing lettering from a craft tradition into an art form. His lettering work on Coventry Cathedral is said to be the most significant work of British public lettering of the twentieth century. The lintels of the entrance porch bear a statement from the Book of Genesis:

*'Truly this is none other,
But the House of God +
This is the Gate of Heaven.'*

Beyer handcrafted each letter and imprinted each in the wet concrete. He also carved a large anchor into the sacrament altar, which is an early Christian symbol.⁰⁶

Lutyens Mosaics

The mosaics that run around the walls of St Paul's on the spandrels above each pillar are the work of Charles Lutyens, the great-nephew of the architect Edwin Lutyens. The architects did not originally have the vision for this decorative element, but were commissioned later and installed over a period of five years between 1963 and 1968.

The title of the mosaics is the 'Angels of the Heavenly Host' and represents the angels in Christian tradition that have various functions and duties. Some act as divine messengers, while other surround the Divine Being with ceaseless worship and praise. Lutyens took his inspiration from his visit to the island of Murano in Venice, famous for its production of mosaic tesserae. He worked on a space of 800 square feet in total to produce 12 angels, with each corner representing Earth, Air and Water and Fire.

The angels were completed within budget, but Lutyens was left with no funds to finalise his vision as he saw it. To express his dissatisfaction, he left a small patch of raw cement in the south-west corner and after 43 years in 2011, at the age of 78, he added the missing piece, completing the work.⁰⁷

06 <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/beyer-lettering/>

07 <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/lutyens-mosaics/> accessed 03/08/2016



Bayer lettering on the entrance porch



Concrete altar (with Beyer's lettering) on the outside wall



Lutyens mosaics 'Angels of the Heavenly Host'

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"I designed the building as 'liturgical space', informed by how I saw the nature of liturgy as the formative activity in realising the community as the Body of Christ. Later, and now, I would call it 'inclusive space', space that enables everyone within it, wherever they are, to feel included in what is happening, wherever in the space that may be."⁰⁸

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St Paul's chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Paul's is situated within the Borough of Tower Hamlets, which is a socially and economically deprived area of East London. The area is characterised by high levels of immigration and unemployment in a largely working class area. The area of Bow Common is a residential area and is a small parish. Council estates predominate (although many are now being developed) and despite busy arterial train and bus routes running through the parish, there is little reason for people to stop. The parish had very few spaces that can be used as public venue or gathering space.

The church is situated on the corner of a busy crossroads. Local people may not use St Paul's or even know its name, but the church holds significance locally as 'the Gates of Heaven church' due to the distinctive Beyer lettering above the entrance. The church is a significant part of the local townscape.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

St Paul's holds value for its artistic and architectural interest as a radical and pure expression of the post-war liturgical reform movement. This movement focused on the way the building would be used, and on the relationship of the gathered worshipping community with God, together around the altar as a single body.

The church also holds value for its Brutalist architecture, which is characterised by expressions of functionality, strength and materiality. Although radical, the architectural design actually has its roots in Classical and Renaissance forms that rely on the fundamental geometry of square and circle.¹⁰

St Paul's was built by Maguire and Murray in the form of a stack of three diminishing cubes with ancillary spaces at the sides. The church was built in purple Uxbridge brick and concrete and has a rectangular plan. The cubical windowless nave with large glazed lantern is enclosed on all sides by lower windowless aisle walls with a folded concrete roof, glazed gables and deep projecting eaves. The sanctuary area around the centralised altar is defined by a steel 'corona' suspended from the roof.

⁰⁸ The architect, Robert Maguire in 2010

⁰⁹ Survey report

¹⁰ <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/church-design/architectural-heritage.php> accessed 03/08/2016

The architect's defining geometry was that of two bounded areas contained by the exterior and barely the broken walls but also by the inner 'transparent' encircling line of columns. Inside the columns was the worshipping area around the altar, while outside the area were spaces to serve the needs of the community beyond worship. The solid, fixed nature of the concrete central altar contrasts strongly with the surrounding benches, which were designed to be easily moveable so that they could be set aside or re-arranged according to need.

The church hall and vicarage of St Paul's are attached to the church and hold special architectural interest for their associations with the church and for being a single architectural piece.

The use of innovative modern materials at St Paul's is of special interest, for example the use of the wood wool panels to construct the lantern to achieve a textured, two-tone decorative finish is unique in a post-war building. The building is characterised by a simple palette of materials that point to authenticity in construction, such as the raw brick and concrete finishes.



The Outraged Christ by Charles Lutyens (photographed in Liverpool Cathedral)

HISTORIC INTEREST

St Paul's is internationally recognized as a building of historic and cultural interest, both for its associations with notable architects and artists, and as the physical expression of key ecclesiastical and architectural movements.

The church building is evidence of the mid-twentieth-century liturgical reform movement that saw a re-evaluation of the function of a church, and how its architecture should express its purpose. The years after the Second World War were characterised by exploring the roots of Christian worship and St Paul's is considered to be one of the first full and authentic expressions of the ideas of the liturgical reform movement which sought to place the High Altar centrally within the worship space and to break down perceived or physical barriers between the congregation and the clergy. This form of worship was characterised by an inclusive, participatory liturgy with flexibility in terms of seating arrangements.¹¹

The liturgy at St Paul's followed the Roman rite, but anticipated the reforms of the Second Vatican Council by at least ten years. In 2010, Robert Maguire wrote about what they had been trying to achieve in the 1950s;

'We were trying to build a church which would encourage true relationships in the liturgy – priest to people, people to one another, priest to God and people to God, the worship of the whole Church together. Encourage, but not cause; because it is only people coming together with understanding and faith which bring those relationships to life.'

The new forms of worship at St Paul's were inspired by the vicar Rev Gresham Kirkby. Kirkby was described as a radical socialist and was one of the first priests to march to and from Aldermaston. He was also the last surviving member of the League of the Kingdom of God (founded in 1922) and chaired the Socialist Christian League until its dissolution in 1960.

Associations with the architects Robert Maguire and Keith Murray are also important. Maguire and Murray were a small architectural practice but worked within the changing context of post-war architecture and are renowned for combining New Brutalism with the Scandinavian tradition. Maguire was a leading figure in the liturgical reform movement while his partner Murray was a silversmith and designer.

Associations with other gifted, young artists are important at St Paul's. Charles Lutyens, the great-nephew of Edwin Lutyens created the mosaics around the walls and Ralph Beyer created the lettering on the entrance porch.

¹¹ <http://www.stpaulsbowcommon.org.uk/heritage/hlf-supported-repairs-201516/statement-of-significance-.php> accessed 03/08/2016

Overall, the design of St Paul's was revolutionary in the mid-twentieth century as it was predicated on the widening belief that the altar should be at the centre of the worshippers so that everyone, including the clergy, are focused around it. This church is held to be the first to truly put these principles into practice.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

St Paul's church was built on common ground belonging to the parish of Bow in East London. The area has long been a site of human activity but the site itself was little developed prior to the 1850s, when it saw rapid population expansion.

The site has the potential to provide evidence of the earlier Victorian church that was destroyed during the Second World War, which may survive beneath extant buildings. Excavations may have the potential to reveal information on past human activity.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

St Paul's national and international importance was reaffirmed in 2013 when it was voted 'best Modern Church built in the UK'. This competition was organised by the National Churches Trust, Twentieth Century Society and the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association to search for the best Modern church in the UK. The judges had sought uplifting architecture that celebrated Christianity and churches that best responded to changes in religious liturgy and practice.

At a local level, and on a daily basis, the church is used as more than a liturgical space, as envisioned by the original architects. This was first experimented with in modern times in 1998, when the Victoria & Albert Museum's Shamiana, the Mughal Tent exhibition was installed at the church. Since then the church has hosted exhibitions from Stitches in Time, celebrating the needlework tapestries by local people to Stones of Menace, an exhibition exploring brutalist architecture. Large single artworks have been enhanced by the space, particularly the iconic statue by Charles Lutyens, the 'Outraged Christ', later installed in Liverpool Cathedral.

The church is also used weekly for sales and bazaars and is marketed as a space for conferences and community purposes, concerts or suppers, dance or performance projects. The church is well-known within the local townscape as the 'Gates of Heaven' church, even if not everyone enters the building.

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“St Paul’s, Bow Common is the most famous and significant parish church to be built in Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century. It crystallised architectural and theological thinking about the form that the church should assume in the post-war era. This important church marks a critical moment in British architecture, poised between progressive attitudes to both design and theology.”¹²

St Paul’s was built to serve a very specific type of liturgy, but one that continues to be relevant to this day. The users and the PCC of St Paul’s find the layout of a central altar and moveable seating to be effective for its preferred ‘in the round’ worship style, but also for other uses. The original vision of Revd Kirkby and the architects Maguire and Murray was for the central area to be used for worship, while the areas outside the columns should be used to connect worship with the community and the outside world.

This vision continues to be followed, with the outer spaces used for weekly markets and jumble sales. This flexibility for secular uses is important as St Paul’s is the largest communal space in the parish and is seen by many as a neutral space. The congregation of St Paul’s is small (averaging approximately 40 on a normal Sunday) and as a large, single space the building is expensive to run and takes more than an hour to heat-up in the winter. The heating costs about £20/hour to run and is therefore restricted to the main services and events. The heating is not used for weekday services but even so, the heating bills are large in winter.

The PCC is proud of its building and consider it to be a hidden gem.¹³ The building is not considered to be a hindrance to active use as a place of worship as it allows people worship in a flexible way. Unlike a typical Major Parish Church, with traditional architectural construction and substantial amounts of ancient stonework, St Paul’s was built in the twentieth century, using untested materials on a large scale. At the time, the liturgical and architectural ideas were radical. The PCC is now dealing with the consequences of these new techniques, both positive – in continued effectiveness of the internal layout – and negative – in the failure of modern materials.

However, the church is positive about its future and following a recent major repair project, St Paul’s is now watertight. The next phase is to renew internal facilities such as heating and lighting in order to create a space that can be used for the many new ideas the PCC has. The PCC is seeking to develop links with new organisations and using this new found confidence to begin to transform the neighbourhood.

New uses that benefit the community are being tested out in the existing spaces available to them. It is important to the PCC that any new uses do not negatively affect the architectural inheritance and integrity of the building.

As part of repair or development works, the PCC have particular conservation decisions to make as original materials reach the end of their useful life. For example, are the innovative materials effective enough to be replaced like-for-like (assuming they are still available)? Or should another radical technique be employed, following the architect’s original vision for the church? How can it remain relevant to users?

Assessment of the original design is also required, for example where drainage has not been effective, in order to ensure that repairs are not short-lived.

The church currently experiences very little heritage crime, possibly because the church is not left open unattended. Heritage crime in the past has led to the loss of lead from the roofs. The long-term goal is to be able to leave the church open and unattended.

When asked to select either ‘help’ or ‘hindrance’, St Paul’s considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a Help. This places St Paul’s with an overwhelming majority (83%) of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁴

¹² Gerald Adler, 2012

¹³ PCC representative

¹⁴ Survey report

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

St Paul's PCC is traditional in structure and includes churchwardens, a secretary, treasurer and safeguarding officer all under formal terms of reference. A standing committee exists to make decisions on behalf of the PCC between formal meetings. The sub-committees of the PCC are task focused and set up to complete specific projects or initiatives rather than to deal with general fabric etc. Currently the main sub-committee is a transformations group, which exists to support the next phase of repairs.

The PCC consists of a small group of dedicated volunteers. It is made up of a diverse group of people, the majority of whom work full-time. Members include a wide range of ages who might be employed, unemployed, self-employed or retired. Backgrounds include teaching assistants, full-time mothers and IT services. The various sub-committees are generally made up of PCC members.

Other than the incumbent, St Paul's does not employ any paid staff. During the HLF project, a freelance fundraiser was employed by the church to support the applications for match funding. While the PCC does not have specialist conservation skills, it does not see this to be a problem as the team works with professionals, using their expertise to interpret specialist reports such as the Quinquennial Inspection (QI).

As with the PCC, the church relies on a fairly small pool of dedicated volunteers to keep the church open during the day. The nature of the local community is a barrier to recruiting additional volunteers as many work two jobs or support young families. This lack of volunteers has been overcome by partnering with other organisations to provide services for the community. This approach has been found to have multi-faceted benefits, for the partner organisation and for the church. This way, the organisation has a suitable venue to use, and the church gains valuable income. Some organisations are able to use the space but also keep it open for visitors, which is beneficial to the church. For example, a recent partnership with the Asian Women's Group will see use and supervision of the church in a joint venture.

Number of members on PCC	12
Number of clergy	1
Number of paid staff	0
Number of volunteers	10-12
Number of sub-committees	1 (transformation group)



Interior of the church looking across the central high altar

FINANCES

St Paul's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been parish share. They anticipate parish share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Parish share is regularly one of the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁵

The income of St Paul's meets their expenditure and is generated from regular and one-off hire of the church hall, car parking rental income, donations, stewardship and a major Christmas fair. The church is seeking to build on successful income generation activities, which were expanded during the HLF project, and increase them in the future in order to create a steady income stream.

In 2015, church hall hire by a single client brought in 26% of unrestricted income while 36% of planned giving came from nine church members. This reliance on a small number of clients and donors is an acknowledged risk to the future sustainability of the church.

Income generation at St Paul's is an important task due to the high running costs of the church and anticipated future repairs. The PCC has worked hard to develop a scheme for renting out new car parking spaces on a yearly lease.

Parish share is by far the largest expenditure, representing 57% of unrestricted expenditure (£27,820 in 2015, rising to £29,000 in 2016). Within the Diocese of London, parish share is known as the Common Fund and is a voluntary contribution of an amount chosen by the PCC. Each year the churches are required to make an offer and provide a justification for their contribution. St Paul's is an economically deprived parish and is heavily subsidised by the more affluent churches within the Diocese. Nevertheless, St Paul's give generously to the Common Fund as they have a strong commitment to paying their share. The amount they give is well over half their income and increases by approximately 5% each year.

St Paul's recently completed HLF repair project was funded by the Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) scheme. A grant of £200,000 was made by the HLF, which was matched by c.£100,000 provide by the church from their own funds and other organisations. The Diocese has also been generous to St Paul's with grants and a loan during the project works. The PCC envisage that fundraising for the next phase of repairs will be a challenge due to deprivation within the parish and the recent drive to fund the first phase of repairs. The value of having a dedicated fundraiser was recognised at an early stage. St Paul's therefore employ a fundraiser on a freelance basis to support the work of the church for each major project.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Paul's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁶

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Paul's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Unknown
Urgent QI cost	Unknown
Annual maintenance cost	£4,100
Parish share cost	£27,800
Insurance Cost	£2,800
Utilities cost	£4,100
Major project cost	£300,000
Annual donations income	£30,900
Funds, trusts, foundations income	n/a
Events/church hall income	£6,400 (church hall hire) £2,100 (Christmas Bazaar) £3,000 (sale of donated gifts)
Other income	£5,300
Individual project income	£300,000

¹⁵ Survey results

¹⁶ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“You are doing wonderful things in this building . . . being centred on flexibility for worship it turns out, to my great joy, to be flexibility for many other things that build trust and grow true communities”¹⁷

St Paul's recently carried out a significant repair project to make urgent repairs to the lantern above the high altar. This project was completed in 2015 and is described in more detail in the Recent Project section.

While the lantern has now been restored and made safe, the remainder of the roof continues to cause problems, with ongoing leaks requiring investigations. Other minor defects include broken paving slabs, defective lantern glazing and issues with the damp proof course. The current leaks are thought to be due to a build-up of silt in one of the gutter heads. The church architect has been approached to identify the problems and assess whether remedial repairs are required.

St Paul's worked with various national organisations during the repair works, and in particular has forged strong relationships with the Twentieth Century Society, who are seen as allies to their cause.¹⁸ The HLF and National Churches Trust have been very supportive and the PCC work with the local authority and Historic England to achieve joint aims for the conservation of the building.

St Paul's makes use of a Gutter Clearance scheme provided by the Diocese of London. This provides twice yearly gutter clearance to all churches. However, due to tree coverage, St Paul's needs to clear their gutters themselves more often, which the incumbent often does herself. The churchwardens and incumbent at St Paul's regularly carry out practical everyday tasks to maintain the church and routine tasks are shared out based on urgency and availability.

The next phase of regeneration at St Paul's is a project to renew the heating, lighting and wiring. The church will need to fundraise and carry out activities to support this project, which is estimated to cost in the region of £120,000 to £150,000. This project focuses on the 'transformation' of the interior to a welcoming and useable space and goes beyond the physical repairs to heating, lighting and wiring. It seeks to 'transform the building, transform lives and transform worship'.¹⁹

Currently, the lack of effective heating in the building limits the use of the church beyond worship to the months of May to September. It also precludes use during the evenings for concerts and other events. This lack of use has an impact on perceptions of the church as the local community see the church as being closed and uncompromising. As part of the HLF project and St Paul's mission action plan, the local community was given a questionnaire to gauge their opinions on St Paul's and how they envisaged the church being used in the future. The PCC found that perceptions were much improved due to the many activities put on during the HLF project. The PCC also put on an Agency Day which invited all the organisations who worked within the parish to come to the church and discuss how they could work together.

Capitalising on the momentum of the HLF project, the church has recently completed a small fundraising project to restore the bells to working order. Feedback has been positive as schoolchildren are now allowed to ring the bells and its sound is recognised within the parish.

St Paul's has several management documents including a statement of significance and schedule of works. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁰



Minor leaks in the roof affecting the interior of the church

¹⁷ Robert Maguire, church architect, 2010

¹⁸ PCC representative

¹⁹ PCC representative

²⁰ Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

In 2013, fragments of the original wood wool tiles fell from the lantern. This partial collapse of the ceiling lining highlighted to the PCC that although the church remains remarkably intact after 55 years, many of the original materials are approaching the end of their serviceable life. Long-term exposure of the wood wool panels to micro-climatic conditions within the glazed lantern were identified as the principle cause of decay. In addition, below-ground drainage pipework and rainwater pipes embedded within brickwork cavities also required replacement.

The repairs required urgent attention and a grant application to the HLF was submitted with total project costs of c.£300,000. The application was successful and the repairs were carried out in 2015 following a development phase of investigations. The £100,000 of match funding for the grant was raised through a sponsored tower climb by the vicar; local donations and support from the listed places of worship VAT reclaim scheme, Allchurches Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Rank Foundation, Alan Evans Memorial Trust and National Churches Trust.

The heritage engagement programme embarked upon by St Paul's as part of the HLF project was very successful. In particular, the church commissioned new interpretative materials such as a new website, a guide booklet and two welcome leaflets, which are now available to visitors for a donation. Even the process of designing and discussing the new logo for the church, in partnership with a local branding company, was a positive experience.

As part of the project the area surrounding the church was enhanced. New gravel was installed to replace uninviting and broken concrete. This has come to be known locally as 'Bow beach' and children have been seen playing here.



Internal view of the lantern that has now been restored

CURRENT USE

“[St Paul’s is an] ‘inclusive space’ that enables everyone within it, wherever they are, to feel included in what is happening, wherever in the space that may be... This quality naturally extends inclusiveness to anything the community wishes to do in the building, and the building should lend itself creatively to community-building of any kind.”²¹

St Paul’s is one of only three spaces within the parish of 6,500 people that can accommodate large numbers of people. There are only two other public spaces within the parish; a restaurant and the St Pauls Waycentre. People of other faiths (5,000 or 77% of the parish identifies as Muslim) make use of these facilities without the requirement to worship at the church. The high proportion of non-Christian parishioners is not necessarily a hindrance to the use of the church and offers the incumbent interfaith opportunities to serve the entire community.

The church’s role within the community is very important, both locally and further afield. The parish is residential in nature and generally people pass through rather than stop and stay. The attitude of the PCC is that all are embraced and given the opportunity to use the spaces within their remarkable building.²² For example, a Zimbabwean church, Forward in Faith and Pentecostal fellowship all make use of the building.

The PCC believes the building deserves to be known by a wider audience, which can be hard to capture due to its location in a deprived area of East London. The parish of St Paul’s is a very poor inner city area with high levels of migration, unemployment and overcrowding. Much of the life of the parish is within its schools, which St Paul’s try to capture. In the area, poorer communities are being pushed out of the parish as council estates are being replaced with private housing developments. Overcrowding and substance abuse are also issues. Tensions within the parish are often linked to nationally divisive events such as the 7/7 bombings and the EU referendum.²³

The church remains a consistent reference point for community groups, often in times of uncertainty and change, who use the church and church hall. The church has been used as a night shelter in partnership with another organisation, which sees volunteers from the church and shelter organisation working together. The church hall is hired out to regular client organisations on a yearly lease. Blue Skies Day Services (a support service for a diverse range of adults with learning disabilities and mental health needs) use the space daily. The hall is also used by a self-help group and Eid celebrations. Many in the local community live in flats so use the space for children’s birthday parties.

The church hall is hired out on a yearly lease or an hourly rate. Yearly leases with regular users are reviewed annually and altered depending on demand and financial climate. Strong relationships are made with church hall users and the rate they pay is based on means. The basic rate is £15/hour. Occasionally community groups are given the space for free or at a reduced rate for a period of time when their work coincides with a mission priority of the church. Many users have been using the space for 12 years and the hall is viewed as a mission resource. The church is keen to encourage partnership working with other organisations to add value.

The repair project had an impact on the normal running of the church, with both positives and negatives. The Tuesday jumble sale could not run during the delivery phase of the works and the Tower Hamlets foodbank Christmas Lunch event could not be hosted.²⁴ However, the gains of carrying out the project included the valuable funds they unlocked for engaging people with the heritage of the building. The outcome of the activities was engagement with well over 500 people, strengthening the relationship of the church with different groups of people.

To encourage wider visitors, St Paul’s has now taken part in the London Open House event for the third year running, with visitor numbers increasing from 80 in 2014 to 240 in 2015. St Paul’s is included within several specialist architectural tours of London, although there are many more twentieth century and Brutalist architectural tours they could be included on.

21 Robert Maguire, church architect, 2010

22 PCC representative

23 PCC representative

24 St Paul’s Annual Report, 2015

St Paul's is known for its iconic art projects and several have been put on over the last two decades:

- Shammy Anna 1990s: an innovative partnership with V&A to exhibit ancient textiles
- Rose Finn-Kelcey 2004: a prize-winning installation of a giant emoji depicting an Angel was made from thousands of shimmer disks covering the external western wall
- to: Charles Lutyens, 'Outraged Christ': Lutyens' sculpture was first exhibited at St Paul's, before it was moved to its permanent home in Liverpool Cathedral
- Stitches in time: recent project to produce handmade banners for the church

The future aim is to build on these art exhibitions but facilities like professional exhibition lighting is required.

Baptisms	3
Funerals	3
Weddings	1



The church hall



Community uses of St Paul's during the week

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

Working with the HLF has been a great experience and has given us the confidence to do more in the future and realise further what an amazing building we have. The activities and events at St Paul's show the breadth of things we can do.

Comments from the community show that the heritage engagement events have enabled St Paul's to engage with the community in new ways. It was also a great way for the incumbent to meet new people who have not previously been involved in the church. Feedback from the activities has increased our sense of pride in our building.

Heritage engagement activities include:

- Angels of the Heavenly Host – a lecture by Charles Lutyens (whose mosaics were installed at St Paul's).
- The Significance of Lettering – a workshop by David Longbottom, an expert on Ralph Bayer (who carved the lettering at the entrance to the church)
- Open House London
- School Artwork Project – a large piece of artwork was created in local schools and then hung from the scaffolding during the repair works
- Developed links with the secondary school's enterprise programme
- Stiches in Time Workshop – local heritage sewing workshop in partnership with a local charity
- Summer market – table top sale designed as a tester to develop a sense of how the space can be used outside of worship to benefit the whole community

We enjoyed producing the heritage engagement programme and used the training provided by the HLF to increase the skill set of the PCC and local people.

Looking back, there are some things we would have done differently. Initially, we were keen to begin the urgent works immediately and we found the two stage process of the HLF grant took a little getting used to. However, we now believe that going through the HLF process has put us in a good position to understand how the application system works and feel that a second project would be much easier to manage.

The heritage engagement events would have been more targeted to specific audiences, although we did learn as they went along, altering event times to when they knew it would be busier. This adaptation was crucial to success. We would also have put more thought into the practicalities of some of our activities, as, for example, the hanging of the school art project on the scaffolding was much harder than anticipated.

Civic church (wider use):

Public meeting space and venue
Schools Art project

Tourist church (visitor use):

HLF activities
Creative workshops
Open House London
Heritage Awareness Raising programme
Ralph Beyer lecture
Twentieth-century architectural tours
Angels of the Heavenly Host talk by Lutyens
Significance of Lettering talk on Beyer
Stitches in Time workshop

Sunday Eucharist
Morning Prayer
Daily Office on weekdays
Evening Holy Communion
Christingle
Sunday School for young and school age children
Youth Group including games nights, camping, church cleaning, quiz night and Easter Egg hunts
Christmas Bazaar
Pizza baking and sale
Tuesday sale/market



Angel 2004, by Rose Finn-Kelcey © St Paul's PCC

WELCOMING VISITORS

Prior to the beginning of the HLF-funded repair project St Paul's was generally closed to visitors outside of worship. During the repairs, events and activities were used to increase awareness and encourage participation. Following completion, the church plans to be open all day on Tuesdays and following worship. Events such as the Tuesday jumble sale also offer visitors a 'safe' route into the building outside of worship for people of different faiths and people of no faith.

A long-term opportunity identified by the PCC is to raise awareness of the church through architectural tours. Capturing wider audiences' interests in modern and Brutalist architecture would raise the profile of the church beyond its immediate parish. The PCC would also like to open the church more regularly during the day and are exploring ways in which this could be done.

The brochures and website produced as part of the grant-aided project are the most important element of the interpretation provided by the PCC. Both are high-quality and provide different layers of information for visitors with different interests. The PCC aims to capture local, national and international audiences. It is also considering putting the new leaflets into local B&Bs and hotels.

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Exterior

HEXHAM, THE PRIORY AND PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW (HEXHAM ABBEY)

Beaumont Street, Hexham, NE46 3NB

Diocese	Newcastle	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	Yes
National Heritage List Entry No.	10425576	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	625074	Average Weekly Attendance	318
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	13,000
Footprint (m ²)	1893 (very big)	Annual Visitors	100,000
Building Period	Norman	Website	http://www.hexham-abbey.org.uk/



Exterior © Hexham Abbey

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Hexham Abbey contains an exceptional seventh-century crypt connected with Wilfrid of Northumbria.
- Hexham Abbey holds an important collection of local artefacts from Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods as well as later Medieval times.
- The Abbey has recently completed the HLF-funded Big Story project which involved installing new interpretative facilities, converting former Priory Buildings (latterly used by a Magistrates Court and the council) into a venue, establishing a new entrance and carrying out repairs.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Hexham Abbey is a parish church of cathedral-scale, with repair costs commensurate with this.
- The Abbey is a well-known tourist destination and provides a significant contribution to local economy and tourism.
- The Abbey has an effective governance structure, which takes account of a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the building.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Proactively managing large-scale repair needs to the building fabric.
- Maintaining and developing the church as a tourist attraction.
- Improving and maintaining financial viability of income generating activities (café, shop and venue hire).



Interior; looking towards the night stair

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Hexham Abbey has ancient historic fabric on a scale not often seen in a parish church. The scale and significance of the building makes repairs an ongoing requirement that cannot be covered by church funds. The Abbey building is considered a wonder and plays a strong role in encouraging worshippers, visitors and tourists to the town.

The Abbey is striving to make itself sustainable for the future by proactively developing new uses and capturing new audiences in order to ensure income meets expenditure. The Abbey has recently completed the Big Story project which involved new interpretative facilities, converting former Priory Buildings (latterly used by a Magistrates Court and the council) into a venue, a new entrance and repairs.

The Abbey has three strands of income generation – the Refectory café, the shop and the Priory Buildings (venue hire). The shop was an established, successful venture while the

Refectory café and the Priory Buildings have been developed as part of the HLF project and have only been in use since 2014. The Refectory Café is doing very well and with the support of a new General Manager (employed June 2016) with a specialism in marketing and event management, the venue hire business is beginning to develop.

The church has been forced to use some of its reserves to cover the capital costs of the repairs and projects in recent years, but does not generally run at a deficit. The Abbey credits its success to the tireless efforts of the skilled people they are fortunate enough to work with, both on the PCC, on various sub-committees and boards and also as volunteers and clergy.

The next steps for the Abbey relate to updating existing documents to keep them relevant, continue to work closely with all stakeholders, address urgent roof repairs through a grant application and ensuring all ventures become revenue generating in the next three-year period.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“The whole of the Early English architecture at Hexham is characteristically North English and finds its nearest parallels in such churches as Darlington, County Durham and Jedburgh.”⁰³

Hexham Abbey was founded in the seventh century by Wilfrid, an Anglo-Saxon noble who travelled extensively to places such as Lindesfarne, Canterbury, Rome and Lyon. Wilfrid was granted land at Hexham c.670 by Queen Etheldreda of Northumbria to found a monastery, following his recent work to establish a monastery at Ripon. Wilfrid was familiar with Roman and Gaulish church architecture from his travels and he brought back a substantial number of Roman relics and masonry, which can be found in the last surviving element of his church, the crypt. The Roman masonry is not inconsiderable, and is likely to have been brought from Corbridge.⁰⁴

Hexham was a bishopric from 681 until 821, when Viking raids began and in 876 Hexham was sacked and the church severely damaged. Little is known of what happened to the church in the following centuries until it was re-founded as a priory in 1113. There are very few remains of this building above ground, but excavations have revealed considerable evidence of the twelfth-century form. From this date, the priory entered into a period of some prosperity, building a wall around its precincts and the surviving Wilfrid's gateway. However, this came to an end in 1296, after which the priory suffered from the wars between England and Scotland. The priory was burnt and continued occupation was frequently interrupted by the ongoing unrest. Further substantial building work does not seem to have taken place until the mid-fourteenth century, when the sacristy and chapels were added to the east end and preparations made to rebuild the nave (although it is not clear whether this was completed).

Hexham Priory was dissolved in 1537 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and, as in several other places, the church (consisting of chancel, choir and transepts) continued as the parish church. The priory or claustral buildings were given to Sir Reynold Carnaby and passed out of the church's ownership. In 1725, works were carried out to improve the foundations of the tower, which led to the Saxon crypt being rediscovered. No major works were undertaken to the church itself until the mid-nineteenth century.

The priory buildings (now known as the Priory Buildings) were sold to Sir William Blackett in 1689 and later passed down to successive owners. In 1748 Sir Walter Calverley Blackett spent large sums on the priory buildings and grounds but in 1818 the residence was severely damaged by fire and some elements were entirely rebuilt.

From 1858, the church was heavily restored by John Dobson. He rebuilt the east end of the church based on Victorian perceptions of what a Medieval church should be, demolishing the fourteenth-century chapels in the process. Excavations prior to the rebuilding of the nave revealed much about the history of the site. The churchyard was lowered, as centuries of use had raised the ground level above that in the Abbey. In 1888, the architect Hodges gave his thoughts on the works:

“A wholesale ‘restoration’ was begun, which resulted in the destruction or removal of nearly all the ancient fittings of the choir. A permanent disgrace to Hexham.”⁰⁵

A three-light window in the east bay of the south aisle of the choir was ‘wantonly destroyed’, and the eastern chapels were swept away, while the Leschman chantry was pulled to pieces and placed in the south transept.⁰⁶

The nave was finally rebuilt early in the twentieth century by Temple Moore and consecrated in 1908. The nave was rebuilt on the same layout as it had been in the thirteenth century, with a single aisle on the north side. The twentieth century saw the Abbey shop installed within the vestibule of the former Chapter House and the Song School established above this. Within the last hundred years, the church has gradually re-acquired some of the surrounding buildings on the site of the historic priory, including purchase of the main range of priory buildings from the Council in 2010.

03 County Durham, Buildings of England, N. Pevsner, 1983

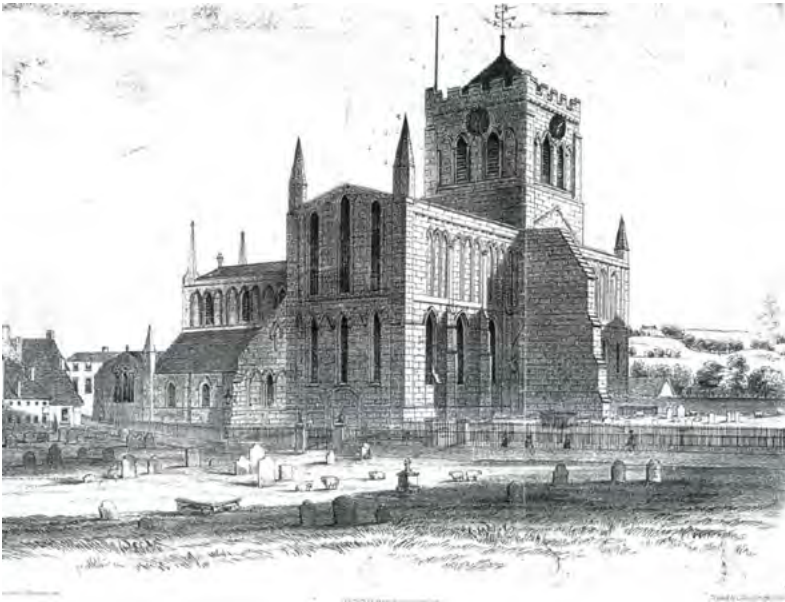
04 Hexham Abbey, Conservation Management Plan, 2010

05 <http://www.hexablinks.talktalk.net/timeline.htm> accessed 24/08/2016

06 Ibid

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **c.671-78:** Construction of St Andrew's church by Bishop Wilfrid on land given by Queen Etheldreda.
- **After 821:** Destruction of Hexham Abbey in the course of Viking invasions.
- **1113:** Hexham re-founded as a priory of Augustinian Canons.
- **1296:** Hexham Abbey burnt by the Scots.
- **c.1350:** Construction of the chapels at the east end.
- **1429:** Money left to Hexham for the rebuilding of the nave.
- **1536:** Hexham Abbey confiscated by the crown, the Abbey remained the parish church of the town.
- **1858:** Remodelling of the east end of the Abbey, involving the loss of Medieval chapels.
- **1908:** Completion and consecration of new nave.
- **1974:** The Queen visited the Abbey.
- **2002:** Renovation of Hexham Parks by Tynedale Council, including the Abbey grounds.
- **2010:** The Magistrates' Court and Council uses move out of the Priory Buildings.
- **2014:** The Big Story project is completed and the Priory Buildings converted to venue hire and café use.



Historic Hexham 2 - Drawing of Hexham Abbey from c.1823-1858



Interior, viewed from the north side

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Hexham Abbey was described by the architectural historian Pevnsner as being richer in Medieval furnishings than any other church in the country, but poor, considering its size and importance, in monuments.⁰⁷ Many items such as the stone grotesques and painted panels are Medieval, but there is also a wealth of Edwardian fittings, dating to the Temple Moore re-ordering c.1907. Even a scale model of Hexham Abbey made in wood in 1957 helps tell the story of its evolution.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Passion Paintings

The history of these timber paintings is unknown but they date from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Although badly damaged, and for a time painted over completely, the paintings were restored in 1963 and in 1990. The paintings depict the sufferings of Jesus before his death, which are known collectively as the Passion of Christ. The infra-red image investigations of each panel have helped to reveal the details of each picture.⁰⁸

Organ

The organ was installed in 1974 by Lawrence Phelps and Associates of Erie, Pennsylvania and is highly regarded as one of the best in the country. The instrument has two manuals and a pedal organ of 34 stops. The stop-list includes string tones as well as that sound so characteristic of the English organ, the full Swell.⁰⁹

Choir Stalls and Choir Screen

The choir stalls and choir screen are sixteenth-century and date from shortly before the priory's dissolution. The stalls are misericords with prayer desks and were repositioned as part of the Edwardian reordering of the chancel. The choir screen, or pulpitum, is among the most complete surviving in an English parish church. The Abbey also has a rare seventh-century 'frith stool', which was used to claim sanctuary

Stained Glass

The great West Window was completed in 1917. It is by the stained glass designer Henry Bodset and depicts saints of Northumbria. The Great North Window is of 1873 and was designed by William Bell Scott and produced by Wailes Son & Strang of Newcastle.¹⁰ The New Tyrrell Bequest Window in the north transept was installed in 2012 and was produced by Alan Davies of Whitby.

Big Story Artefacts

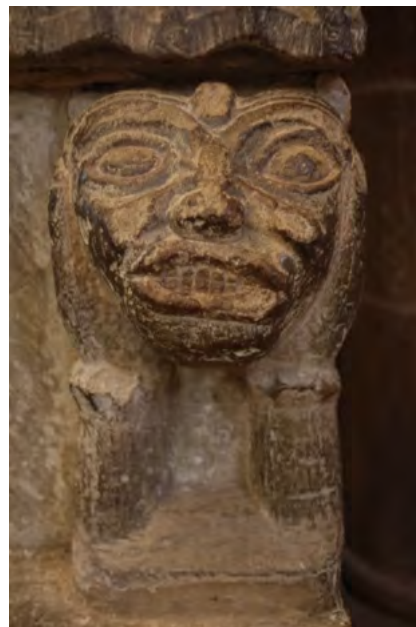
The church also has an important collection of objects which, although not strictly fixtures or fittings, form part of the experience of the Abbey. Many of these are displayed in the Abbey's 'Big Story' visitor centre and exhibition. These include the ancient and beautiful Hexham Chalice: a Saxon chalice of copper-gilt, discovered in 1860. Decorative stone fragments include Roman, Saxon and early Medieval examples.

Roofs

While the nave roof dates to 1907, the transept and chancel roofs are thirteenth-century in date with later nineteenth-century repairs. The chancel roof is wooden arch-braced and contains 37 bosses.



Timber choir screen with painted figures



Carved faces in the north choir aisle

⁰⁷ County Durham, Buildings of England, N. Pevnsner, 1983

⁰⁸ Hexham Abbey CALM catalogue

⁰⁹ <http://hexham-abbey.org.uk/worship-music/the-organs/> accessed 24/08/2016

¹⁰ Hexham Abbey CALM catalogue

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“Hexham Abbey can be considered as of outstanding significance in a national context and important internationally... There is significant archaeological potential, which, it has been conjectured, could pre-date the Saxon Crypt. In addition, the Church contains many significant objects, the earliest of which originate from Roman Britain.”¹¹

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Hexham Abbey chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.¹²

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

The church is located in the market place at the centre of Hexham. With the Moot Hall, Old Gaol and covered Market Place, it forms part of a key group of buildings that represent Hexham's history and give it its distinctive character. The open market place and green spaces within the abbey complex to the west of the church enable excellent views of the building and contribute to its sense of dominance in its surroundings.

The Abbey had high townscape value and is situated on a highly-visible location on a raised position, which is visible from long-distances and lower of the town. The Abbey is a focal point of the town.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

Hexham is of exceptional architectural interest for its Anglo-Saxon crypt. This is almost unique, the only comparable example being that at Ripon, which was also founded by Wilfrid. It has been suggested that the form of both (the layout of passages and chambers) differ strongly from other pre-Conquest examples, and may imitate the Roman catacombs or literary descriptions of Christ's tomb. The church also contains important relocated historic material such as Roman masonry built into the crypt and Anglo-Saxon artefacts built into the modern nave. Again, the Roman and continental parallels with these carvings are of exceptional artistic and architectural interest.

The Abbey contains many fixtures and fittings of extremely high artistic and architectural interest, such as the choir screen with painted panels. Artefacts such as the Hexham Chalice are beautiful and unique. Later phases of the building are also of considerable interest, including the Medieval Night Stair, the tower, crossing and transepts. The early twentieth-century nave by Temple Moore is of interest as a later phase of building.

The Abbey buildings have an aesthetically pleasing patina, with layers of history visually expressed in its built form. They have evolved over time, starting with the Saxon crypt and ending (for now) with the most recent repairs and interpretation project.

The priory buildings, now brought back into ownership of the church are also highly important for their architectural interest and as a group, illustrates the evolution of the site for hundreds of years.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The building has great historic interest for its association with Wilfrid of Northumbria and as evidence for the architecture and ecclesiastical history of his time and since. It has furthermore occupied a significant place in the Medieval history of England and Scotland and, despite nineteenth and twentieth-century alterations, retain a large amount of historic fabric. Some alterations have reduced our understanding of the earlier buildings, such as the loss of the fourteenth-century chapels in the nineteenth century.

As well as the building itself, the church holds an important collection of objects and fragments discovered near the Abbey or elsewhere, including objects from the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. They are important for the understanding of the historic development of Hexham and the wider locality. A number of these are worthy of particular mention, such as the tombstone of Flavinus, the pre-Conquest Chalice, the frith stool, the choir stalls and choir screen.

¹¹ Hexham Abbey, Conservation Management Plan, 2010

¹² Survey results

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

No archaeological evidence from before the establishment of the seventh-century church has been discovered, although it remains a distinct possibility given the site's ancient history and suitability for development. Some archaeological material from the period of Wilfrid is known from earlier excavations, but the site is of enormous interest as a potential source of further archaeological information about the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

As a key centre of the region's unique heritage, Hexham Abbey is of considerable interest to the local community. It is more than a landmark within the town, occupying a dominant position at the heart of the market square. The church contributes significantly to the status of the town as a tourist destination and is one of the main attractions in the area.

Hexham Abbey has a high level of interest as a centre of faith for over 1,300 years and having visibly experienced a fascinating history and development over that period at the heart of Christianity in the north-east.¹³



Hexham Abbey within its setting

¹³ Hexham Abbey, Conservation Management Plan, 2010

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

The international significance attached to the Roman, Saxon and Medieval fabric of Hexham Abbey, and the history associated with this, is extremely high and the impact this has on the congregation and visitors is overwhelmingly positive.

The scale of Hexham Abbey often leads to comparisons with a cathedral, particularly because its prominent location increases a sense of size from within the town and without. However, this is a superficial comparison as although the Abbey and cathedrals have some common characteristics, such as ancient fabric of a similar scale, civic functions and a high number of visitors, the Abbey does not have the resources or staff (in particular, senior clergy), to operate like a cathedral. As a parish church, Hexham Abbey continues to relish its parochial and civic duties for the town, which many smaller parish churches also carry out. The PCC is keen to embrace its opportunities to serve the wider community for civic occasions, such as Memorial Services, and to play its full part as the parish church for Hexham.

The perception of Hexham Abbey as being a cathedral in all but name, from one-off visitors, regular users and the Diocese, can be problematic. The PCC is required to explain their position as a Major Parish Church in order to alter these perceptions. Being the only Major Parish Church within the Diocese is somewhat isolating and there is limited experience to draw upon to make appropriate management decisions in this respect.

The scale and significance of Hexham Abbey's ancient fabric is considered by the PCC to be a tool for mission and is certainly not seen as a hindrance. The architecture and historic fabric of Hexham Abbey has a special character and is part of the wonder of God.¹⁴ Many people come to visit the Abbey for its architecture but stay for worship.

However, on a practical level, the scale of the building is entirely different to a small parish church, and even routine maintenance can be a major operation. The statutory obligations relating to the historic environment that come with the wealth of historic fabric, ranging from Anglo-Saxon stonework to Medieval panel paintings, can make alterations much harder. The PCC feels the weight of responsibility for the care of Hexham Abbey. There can be a lot of pressure on the team to get things right first time.

Many different groups have a vested interest in Hexham Abbey, which can often lead to conflicting or differing priorities. Each stakeholder group operates within a different sphere of interest, for example, the congregation, the local town communities, statutory organisations, patrons and visitors to the area. Many of these groups do not worship within the church but are passionate about the Abbey and very interested in any changes that are made and provide a critical eye to decision-making to ensure the PCC is taking good care of the Abbey.

This makes it crucial that the Abbey communicates its intentions and its projects to a much wider group than a smaller parish church might. For example, patrons are local but also national in their scope, such as the Worshipful Company of Mercers. The Abbey is seen by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) as one of the 'crown jewels' of the Diocese but with that accolade, the church is recognised as being different.

The Abbey is committed to new research and investigations and makes use of its Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to identify and prioritise projects. Current projects include a laser survey of the crypt and investigations into the painted Passion panels. The CMP is now six years old and should soon be updated following completion of the Big Story and Priory Buildings projects.

These recent major projects utilised the Abbey's historic assets by turning them into attractive areas that can be used to generate income and provide facilities for users. The priory buildings were returned to the Abbey from the council, after 500 years of separate ownership. This is an opportunity, but also an additional responsibility, for the Abbey as a scheduled monastic range.

¹⁴ PCC representative

The ground surrounding the Abbey is also scheduled and the requirement to obtain permission from the Secretary of State for any ground disturbances is problematic for an active and thriving Place of Worship. The possibility of installing ground source heat pumps as a more environmentally sustainable solution for example, was considered but not thought to be viable due to the archaeological risks and implications. The cost of archaeological services, and publication of the reports at the end add substantial costs to even small jobs. An alternative use for the car park has also been dismissed due to the potential archaeological implications.

Other limitations of the building are minor in comparison to the value of having such an ancient site. For example, the entrance into the Abbey is not a grand west entrance with steps and large doors, but through a smaller door next to the shop, this dark entrance is somewhat intimidating and is often overlooked by visitors. While these issues with the historic building are recognised, they are not necessarily viewed as a constraint and solutions are usually found; for example, the recent Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project addressed this issue by building a light, new entrance into the new visitor centre that was more welcoming.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Hexham Abbey considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Hexham Abbey with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁵

15 Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The PCC was thanked for their hard work and for their support. Many had gone above and beyond enabling us to survive this year. Particularly the church wardens – many felt humbled by the way they had stepped up and faced the challenge.”¹⁶

Hexham Abbey has a complex but effective organisational structure. The Abbey has a traditional PCC with legal responsibility for the building. As part of this there is a standing committee and a wide range of sub-committees totalling seven. Of particular importance is the Hexham Abbey Heritage Trust Ltd (HAHTL), which is an independent company, governed by a board of trustees. HAHTL employs eight people, both full and part-time and is a trading subsidiary that manages the shop, café and venue hire at the Abbey. The company is run independently of the PCC. The purpose of the trading company is to generate income but it must ensure its operations remain consistent with the vision of the PCC. The company has a small board of three to four directors, who are currently being recruited.

The other people responsible for the care of the building are employed by the PCC. The PCC employs nine people on a full and part-time basis and paid roles include a finance officer, education and community officer and administrator. The café is run by the refectory manager and three supervisors and is supported by a large amount of casual staff. The shop is run almost entirely by volunteers, although it is overseen by a paid shop manager. The Abbey has two paid clergy (the Rector and an associate priest), a non-stipendiary priest and four active retired clergy within the parish.

Not everyone involved at the Abbey is a paid employee and the PCC has the support of well over 100 active volunteers that assist in the smooth running of the operation. With the high-level of interest in the Abbey from outside the congregation comes a high-level of expertise and people offering their professional skills on a voluntary basis. For example, the recent series of Chairmen of the Property Committee have been invaluable volunteers. Through the work of this committee, conservation has been addressed in a proactive fashion in order to ensure there have been no surprises and that small problems are addresses before they become big ones. The most recent secretary of the Property Committee has been described as a 'Faculty guru' and is currently in the process of sharing his knowledge with the wider team prior to imminent retirement.

The Abbey also employs a part-time director of music and a part-time assistant organist. The Abbey has four sung services a week and maintains an adult, boys and girls choir (all unpaid). Choral services are popular, in particular those at Easter and Christmas. The Nine Lessons and Carols are often repeated on a second day due to overcrowding at a single service. However, the mid-week choral services are not well-attended by the community and new ways of bringing them to the public's attention are being considered. The Abbey choir reaches out across the region and is involved in a Three Choirs festival with Carlisle and Newcastle cathedrals.

Number of members on PCC	20
Number of clergy	2 paid 1 non-stipendiary 4 retired
Number of paid staff	10 - PCC 8 - HAHTL
Number of volunteers	100+
Number of sub-committees	7

¹⁶ Hexham Abbey, Annual Report, 2015

FINANCES

“We tailor our expenditure to our income! We are dependent on legacies etc and could easily spend more if we had it.”¹⁷

Hexham Abbey’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate building repairs will continue to be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs are regularly the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁸

Hexham Abbey does not have the resources available to a cathedral, but the passion and affection felt for the Abbey does attract large legacies from people who have played an active role in church life, but also from those that may have supported the church from a distance. The PCC recognises how fortunate it is to receive these legacies. Worryingly, since the last major giving campaign in 2010, planned giving is down £20,000 a year through the loss of regular givers.

Planned giving, awareness raising and fundraising campaigns are all regularly required at the Abbey in order to support the continued use of the church and support major projects such as repairs. The same strategic financial structure is employed at Hexham Abbey that would be used in a smaller parish church, but is scaled up to deal with the larger sums involved.

While the Abbey has many supporters and volunteers who willingly give their time, the church has a limited income, the majority of which comes from donations (including legacies). The three main income generating trading activities at the Abbey are the café, the shop and the Priory Buildings (venue hire). The shop has been in existence for several decades at Hexham Abbey but the café was established as part of the Big Story development in 2014. In 2015, the shop made a profit of £30,000; its biggest ever. The café also made a profit of £6,000 in 2015 but since opening in 2014, the Priory Buildings have yet to become commercially viable. In 2015, it had an income of £20,000. Heritage Lottery Funding currently supports some payroll costs at the Abbey and is due to end in 2017. The PCC and its trading subsidiary has no intention to run at a deficit and is currently reviewing their strategic financial planning for the future in order to make trading activities more sustainable.

In 2015, Hexham Abbey’s income was £1.1 million and its expenditure was £910,400. Due to the Big Story development project, Hexham Abbey’s net expenditure was higher than normal. However, the repairs, refurbished buildings and commercial spaces were all designed to generate income in the future and was developed as an investment for the long-term future of the Abbey. Some reserves have been used to fund the project, as have significant grant contributions by national bodies. The Rector believes that experimentation and new ideas are crucial to improving the sustainability of the Abbey in the future. An element of risk and deficit in the short-term is necessary to be robust in the long-term.¹⁹

In order to support the future sustainability of the Abbey, skilled people will continue to be nurtured and recruited to ensure that decisions are made based on sound knowledge and detailed understanding. Hexham Abbey considers its location within a fairly affluent town to be a benefit, as many talented people are at their disposal, which might not be the case in a small or deprived parish.

Parish share for Hexham Abbey is £125,000 a year and has been calculated at this rate in order to cover the cost of the clergy, but also to support smaller parishes across the Diocese with their costs. This is seen as a crucial role of Hexham Abbey, and one that looks beyond its geographical parish to a wider regional, national and international church. This is a function that sets the Abbey above a normal small parish church.

The figures on page 12 take into account both the activities of the PCC and HAHTL

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Hexham Abbey’s income does not meet expenditure.²⁰

¹⁷ PCC representative, survey response

¹⁸ Survey results

¹⁹ Incumbent

²⁰ Survey results

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Hexham Priory's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	Not recorded
Urgent QI cost	Not recorded
Annual maintenance cost	Unknown
Parish share cost	£125,000
Insurance Cost	£30,000
Utilities cost	£2,000
Major project cost (annual or five-yearly)	£1.8 million

Annual donations income, inc. legacies	£560,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£130,000 (charitable activities)
Events/church hall income	£380,000 (trading activities)
Other income – land/ interest/fees	£3,200 - investments £30,000 - other
Individual project income	n/a

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Prior to 2006, Hexham Abbey was functioning at a low level with only three full-time posts. Since then, the Abbey has developed a robust and effective organisational structure. In particular, the development phase of the HLF project from 2010 onwards and the arrival of the present incumbent in 2015 saw substantial changes made to increase the efficiency of governance and to increase the overall sustainability of the Abbey.

The return of the priory buildings from the council to the Abbey was an idea that formed during the initial stages of the project. The Abbey was able to successfully negotiate with the council the return of buildings following vacancy by the magistrate's court and council offices. This opened up myriad possibilities for the Abbey, as these ancillary spaces could now be used for facilities that they would have been unable to put inside the main body of the church. The suitability of the Abbey for meetings and other uses had long been discounted due to heating, noise and the impact this would have on historic significance. Historically, the Abbey had owned a church hall, but had been sold to a community group. The only other space the PCC had access to was in a poor condition and not fit for purpose.

The Abbey started working with the HLF in 2010 and completed the Big Story Heritage Grant project in 2014. Overall, the PCC see the project as having been a great success and it has been a trigger for many new activities and ideas that would not previously have been considered. While the two stage process of development and delivery was new to the PCC, and led to some frustrations on the length of time it took to gain a consensus on some elements, all agreed that it was a useful learning exercise and efficiency would be improved next time. The PCC went all out with activities to support the capital works. With hindsight, the PCC might have saved some activities for a later project as they now need to fund urgent roof repairs, and will have to develop further activities to support these repair works.

Hexham Abbey's most recent Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in 2016 and overall the structure is in good condition. However, there are substantial roof repairs needed, and the boiler requires replacement. A submission was made to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund but was not successful in the initial round.

A period of reflection and assessment followed the completion of the HLF project in 2014, which included monitoring existing conditions in order to evaluate success of the project and create new baselines. The Abbey is starting once again to plan for its future and push forward into a new phase. The biggest task facing the PCC is to ensure that the business ventures of the café, shop and Priory Buildings are meeting the objectives of the PCC and continue to support the ongoing mission of the church.

The next stage will see the activity plan, business plan, CMP, and marketing strategy updated over the next three years in order to develop community involvement, increase the number of visitors to the Abbey and promote the HAHTL businesses.²¹ Conservation management documents such as the CMP continue to be used to prioritise research agendas and are used as evidence in funding applications.

Hexham Abbey has a range of management documents in place. It has a high number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²²



The new, welcoming porch extension at Hexham Abbey © Hexham Abbey

²¹ Hexham Abbey, Annual Report, 2015

²² Survey results

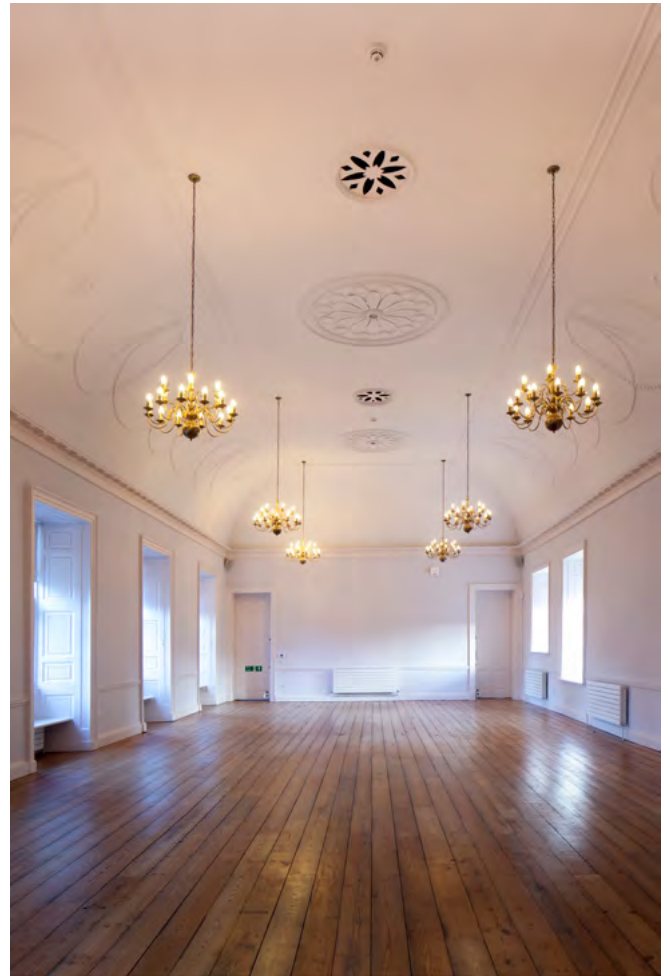
RECENT PROJECT

In 2010, Hexham Abbey was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grant of £1.8 million, including £175,000 development funding, to carry out refurbishment of the Priory Buildings, which had recently been restored to their ownership, and to create new learning facilities to engage the community with the Abbey's rich heritage.

This project was completed in 2014 and is known as the Big Story project. It included the creation of a café, the Priory Buildings venue facilities, the new entrance porch and the interpretation centre. The Big Story focuses on the visitor experience. The exhibition takes visitors through over 1,300 years of history and provides facts, activities and artefacts for people of all ages and interests. The exhibition design included state-of-the-art touch screens, interactive models and historic objects.

The project enabled the Abbey to develop historic buildings as the focal point for learning and participation, and showcase their archaeology and treasures from the seventh century onwards. Another aim was to contribute to the economy of the local area by increasing visitor numbers to the town and encouraging them to stay longer.

The wedding, conference and venue hire within the Priory Buildings saw the restoration of historically significant eighteenth-century and Medieval interiors into flexible meeting and function rooms both for the community and commercial organisations.



The renovated Priory Buildings, now a conference facility

CURRENT USE

“The Parish Church remains in ecclesiastical use and has a secondary use as a tourism attraction. The buildings within the Church’s current ownership accommodate a wide range of functions which support its mission, including teaching spaces, meeting spaces and a shop and song school.”²³

Hexham Abbey has a rich and varied programme of events appealing to a variety of users. The Abbey functions as the civic church for Hexham and the surrounding hinterland, with 2,190 people attending services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, 492 attending services on Easter Eve and Easter Day and 900 attending Advent services for schools or civic organisations. The Abbey works closely with young people through Tots’ Praise, Zoom, Take This, the choirs and the ecumenical Holiday Club. The church is used for gala dinners, concerts of all genres, exhibitions, charity launches, art installations and performances.

A significant event is the Hexham Abbey Festival of Music and Arts (a separate organisation), which runs for a week in September each year and is supported by Arts Council funding. In 2016, the Abbey will see performances by urban graffiti artists, Hexham Abbey Festival Chorus, pianists and violinists, artistic light and soundscape displays and a folk dance troupe. In 2015 free runners took over the Abbey giving spectacular displays of agility, strength and original musical interpretation.

The Abbey Fair at Christmas is another important event that sees the church and the town join together to serve local people and visitors to the town.

The Abbey establishes strong relationships with local groups and organisations who make use of the church, for example the annual library summer reading service, carol services for people with disabilities and Hospice at Home. The Abbey does not charge for charities to use the venue as this is viewed as part of the mission and role of the church. Fees may be charged to cover the organist and the verger out of hours, while commercial groups are charged to hire the Abbey as a venue. Other arrangements can be made with charities or for small events where a percentage of donations or profits from a drinks bar are taken. In other cases, a percentage of commissions from an art installation might be taken. Other uses such as a film company using the church for a significant period of time would be charged on an individual basis.

The new Priory Buildings and interpretation centre opened in 2014 and has already been used for various community events including craft fairs, the Hexham Book Festival, and drop-in sessions with a local stonemason; presentations by local historians and conservationists; a major conservation development for the Abbey’s Eastern Chapel (demolished in 1858); Heritage Open days in September and a first anniversary open day in October.

More than 70 customers made 534 bookings at the Priory Buildings during 2015. The bookings included six wedding receptions and 15 private parties, which generated more than half of the income, but significant contributions were also made by business conferences and seminars.²⁴

Baptisms	25
Funerals	26
Weddings	15

23 Hexham Abbey, Conservation Management Plan, 2010

24 Hexham Abbey, Annual Report, 2015

Civic church (town use):

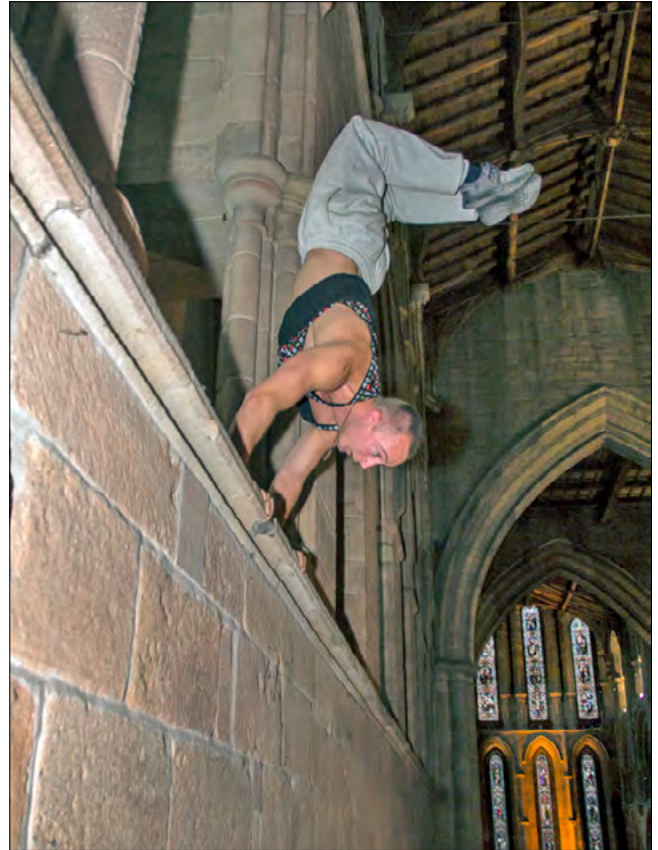
Gala dinners
Charity launches
Tynesdale Community Bank
The Abbey Christmas fair
Deanery Service
Harvest, WI and Remembrance services

Tourist church (visitor use):

Concerts – from folk to classical
Lunchtime concerts
Organ recitals
Exhibitions
Art installations
Hexham Abbey Festival
Urban graffiti
Free-running

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Weekday and Sunday services
Sung services
Carol services
School carol services
Community carol services
Hospice at home
Library summer reading service
Brownies
Mother's Union
Singing for the Brain (Alzheimer's group)
Bereavement counselling group
Youth Sleepover at the Abbey
Abseiling as a fundraiser



3RUN image credited to Rory Gibson

WELCOMING VISITORS

“This is an enthralling place with an excellent chronological exhibition. Staff are friendly and informative and you don’t have to pay, but I suggest you make a substantial contribution, this place is a northern wonder. The food in the café is great too”²⁵

Hexham Abbey is considered to be the biggest tourist attraction in the town and attracts local, national and international visitors. The Abbey works closely with the stakeholders and committees within the town in order to add value to tourism and community initiatives. A representative from the town held a position on the HLF project steering group at the Abbey and the Abbey now has representatives on key town forums. They have a strong relationship with the planned Business Improvement District as the town recognises the value of the Abbey both to local businesses and to visitors.

Many people initially visit the church for its architecture but stay for worship. Since the new interpretation centre opened in 2014, there has been a significant increase in visitors and recorded numbers are now over 110,000 a year. The role of the welcomers and tour guides are crucial to the experience of these visitors. The welcomers are volunteers, and work closely with the vergers to provide information about the history and current use of the Abbey.



New visitor centre facilities © Hexham Abbey

The Abbey is open between 9am and 5pm and offers guided tours for groups. The crypt is open on request at 11am and 3.30pm and when stewards are available. The Abbey shop has a selection of guidebooks and merchandise on the Abbey, but visitors can also make use of the newly installed Big Story exhibition, which is free to enter and has hands-on, interactive displays to allow visitors to discover more.

Overall, the Abbey is physically accessible, although the crypt and night stairs are not. A lift was installed as part of the Priory Buildings development.

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25 TripAdvisor, August 2016



New porch extension © Hexham Abbey

DORCHESTER, SS PETER AND PAUL (DORCHESTER ABBEY)

Dorchester on Thames, Oxon OX10 7HZ

Diocese	Oxford	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1193595	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	627108	Average Weekly Attendance	118
Deprivation Indices	Low	No. of Residents in Parish	1,053
Footprint (m ²)	1320	Annual Visitors	Not recorded
Building Period	Medieval	Website	http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/



Dorchester Abbey © Dorchester Abbey

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Dorchester Abbey was founded by Bishop, later Saint, Birinus in the seventh century.
- Following Birinus' death and canonisation, Dorchester Abbey became an important site of pilgrimage.
- The Abbey escaped the more destructive tendencies of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries thanks to the intervention of a wealthy local man.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Dorchester Abbey is a very large, ancient building situated in a small, picturesque and affluent Oxfordshire village.
- The Abbey considers itself to be a church for Oxfordshire.
- The Abbey is a spacious building that lends itself to public and private worship, as well as a range of complementary uses.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Dorchester Abbey must manage expectations derived from the assumption that it enjoys the resources of a cathedral but should fulfil the role of a parish church
- The Abbey building is expensive to run and maintain, which must be monitored to ensure financial stability
- The Abbey's Parochial Church Council (PCC) and incumbent must ensure that they are not distracted from focussing on developing mission objectives because of the demands placed upon them to deliver a cathedral-like visitor experience



Dorchester Abbey, interior © Dorchester Abbey

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Dorchester Abbey is an ancient and very significant parish church, located in an affluent and picturesque Oxfordshire village. The challenges facing the Abbey are largely linked to the perception of people from outside the local worshipping community that it is, or at least has the resources of a cathedral.

The Abbey's PCC and incumbent work very hard to meet the high expectations of visitors who make pilgrimages of interest or faith to the Abbey. There is, however, equal demand upon the Abbey and its PCC to fulfil the role of a local, accessible and inclusive parish church. Again, this is a challenge often met; however, the pressure of fulfilling this dual role must be managed carefully. Future sustainability should not be compromised by over-stretching resources.

Prudent and careful stewardship will ensure the future of Dorchester Abbey, and steps have been taken to strengthen governance and capacity within and in support of the PCC.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING⁰³

“[The] Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul [is] one of the early shrines of Christianity”⁰⁴

Dorchester on Thames lies west of the river Thame, near its confluence with the river Thames in Oxfordshire. Dorchester's position arguably made it strategic for both communications and defence. The Romans putatively built a vicus or largely unplanned settlement here with a road linking it to a military camp at Alchester, 16 miles to the north. Following the desertion of Britain by the Romans, what is now Dorchester became the site of a Saxon settlement.

As with most ancient churches, its early foundations are uncertain. This is compounded by the fact that the monastic records were apparently lost in the sixteenth century and the Abbey has undergone extensive phases of re-modelling, restoration and destruction over the past near-1,000 years. The narrative, so far as it can be determined, begins when Pope Honorius I sent one of his bishops from Rome to England in order to convert inveterate pagans to Christianity. Bishop Birinus's mission to the West Saxons in c.634 led to the baptism of King Cynegils of Wessex in the River Thames, close to where Dorchester Abbey now stands.

In c.634-635 King Cynegils granted the Bishop Birinus some land in Dorchester to build a cathedral church which would also act as a missionary centre for the south of England. This small cathedral was built of wood, most likely on the site of the current Abbey. However, because it was constructed of wood, no trace remains of this structure. Birinus was buried there in 650.

In c.660 the threat of war between Wessex and Mercia precipitated the transferral of the bishop's seat to Winchester. The diocese was then divided into two, with the Kingdom of Mercia gaining control of the northern part and transferring the bishopric to Lindsey and Leicester. This administrative arrangement endured until the Danish raids of the ninth century, leading to the bishopric being translated back to Dorchester, extending its boundary, under Bishop Wulfwig, from the Thames to the Humber.

The first Norman bishop to preside over Dorchester Abbey was Remigius of Lincoln (the place of the bishop's cathedral and residence having transferred from Dorchester to Lincoln), installed in 1070. Parts of what was now a collegiate church dating from Remigius tenure, are detectable in the current Abbey's fabric. In 1140 Bishop Alexander refounded Dorchester Abbey as an abbey of Augustinian canons. The twelfth-century Abbey was of cruciform plan, with a long nave without aisles, the nave possibly serving as the parish church. It is uncertain as to whether it had a central tower.

In 1225 the tomb of the now St Birinus was opened for veneration and the Abbey became a place of pilgrimage. Over the next 100 years or so the north and south choir aisles, the tower and a new shrine for St Birinus' relics were added. In 1293 the motivator-to-action that was the papal indulgence inspired a programme of works that would continue into the fourteenth century. The eastward extension of the sanctuary with its sculpture, tracery, stained glass and outstanding Jesse window, were added in c.1340, as was the People's Chapel. Then, in 1536, during the reign of Henry VIII, the Abbey was dissolved and St Birinus' shrine destroyed.

Dorchester Abbey largely escaped the most destructive effects of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. This is arguably because Sir Richard Bewfforeste (Beauforest), 'a great riche man' of Dorchester, paid the king the value of the lead on the chancel roof (£140), and in so doing saved the church for the parish. The majority of the monastic buildings were, however, destroyed. The tower was rebuilt in 1602. According to Pevsner Anthony Wood, writing in the seventeenth century, described substantial monastic structures still extant to the north of the Abbey.⁰⁵ These, except for the school house/guest house, are now lost. As with most other centuries since its construction in stone, major repairs to the Abbey were carried out in the eighteenth century.

Restoration was overseen in c.1845 by James Cranston; then in 1846-1854 by William Butterfield, who re-introduced the original pitch of the chancel roof after it had been lowered in the seventeenth century. It was restored again in 1859-1874 by George Gilbert Scott, who took over from Butterfield, perhaps at the behest of the new, personally-wealthy incumbent William Macfarlane. Scott carried out extensive and holistic repairs, including underpinning the east end in 1860. Scott was also responsible for the Abbey's Lychgate (1867 although Pevsner credits its construction to Butterfield c.1852-1853),⁰⁶ several items of furniture and the re-instatement of the Georgian altar rail that Butterfield had removed.⁰⁷ Further urgent repairs were carried out in the 1960s (supported by the American Friends of Dorchester Abbey) and again in the 1970s. In 1998 a major refurbishment programme was begun and is still ongoing. A timber-framed cloister gallery (pentine) was constructed against the north wall of the nave in 2001, in which are exhibited stone fragments.

⁰³ The 'History' section of this case study is in large part indebted to: www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/abbey-history/

⁰⁴ Pevsner, N, 'Pevsner Architectural Guides: Oxfordshire, Penguin, 1974

⁰⁵ Ibid

⁰⁶ Ibid

⁰⁷ Rodwell, R 'Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire', Oxford, Oxbrow, 2009

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **By 635:** Bishop Birinus established the first cathedral, a wooden structure, on or near the site of the present Abbey building.
- **c.660:** The bishopric is moved from Dorchester to Winchester.
- **870s:** Dorchester is once again a See with a diocese ranging from the Thames to the Humber.
- **1070-1072:** The bishopric was moved to Lincoln and Dorchester Abbey became a collegiate church. The church is constructed in stone.
- **c.1140:** Dorchester Abbey is refounded as an abbey for Augustinian canons.
- **c.1140 to c1350:** Dorchester Abbey is extended and rebuilt.
- **1225:** the shrine of Birinus is established as a site of pilgrimage.
- **1536:** Dorchester Abbey is Dissolved by Henry VIII.
- **1554:** Dorchester Abbey is bequeathed to the people as their parish church by Sir Richard Beauforest.
- **1602:** Dorchester Abbey's Tower is re-built.
- **Eighteenth century:** Extensive repairs to the Abbey are carried out.
- **1845:** Restorations works overseen by James Cranston.
- **1846 to 1854:** Restoration by William Butterfield.
- **1853 to 1874:** Restoration by George Gilbert Scott.
- **Twentieth century:** Various restoration, repair and conservation works.
- **2001:** Construction of a timber-framed cloister gallery (pentice) against the north wall of the nave.



Decorative corbel within Dorchester Abbey

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Dorchester Abbey has a spacious interior that retains many Medieval features. Work in the nineteenth century and later has impacted upon the general aesthetic of the interior space through the restoration of existing features and the introduction of furniture and other items.

A selection of fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Font

c.1170 with Apostles in cast relief around the drum, set into arcading. One of the best-preserved lead fonts in England and a rare, if not unique, survivor of the destruction wrought upon monastic institutions by the Reformation.



lead font dating to c.1170

Pulpit

Designed by William Butterfield in 1852-1853.

Stalls with Poppy Heads

Given to the Abbey in the sixteenth century by Abbott Beauforest. A crozier, complete with a scroll bearing his name, is carved on the end of one stall.

Wall Painting of the Crucifixion

Fourteenth-century wall painting in the People's Chapel. Restored, arguably excessively so, by Clayton & Bell in the late nineteenth century.

Corbel

Mounted on a pier in the nave, an early fourteenth-century sculptural corbel depicting sleeping monks and foliage.

The Jesse Window

Rare and very significant fourteenth-century window situated on the north wall of the chancel and combining tracery, sculpture and stained glass for a complete narrative and decorative effect.

St Birinus Roundel

Among Dorchester Abbey's collection of Medieval glass is a c.1250 stained glass roundel depicting Birinus being blessed by Archbishop Asterius of Milan before embarking upon his mission to Britain.

Effigy of William de Valance the Younger⁰⁸

Among a number of fine effigies in Dorchester Abbey is a thirteenth-century effigy with an unusually naturalistic pose, shown in the act of drawing his sword. Traces of blue, red and green can still be seen in the folds of the cloak.

Bells

Eight bells in all, the oldest cast in 1375, the most recent in 1867. The tenor bell bears the inscription '*Protege Birine quos convoco tu sine fine Raf Rastwold*', translated as '*Do thou, Birinus, protect for ever those whom I summon. Raf Rastwold*' (the donor of the bell).

⁰⁸ There is some dispute about who the effigy memorialises, with the other candidate being Sir John de Holcombe.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“As well as being a prominent and nationally significant building in a relatively small community, Dorchester Abbey boasts a multitude of significant fixtures and fittings.”⁰⁹

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Dorchester Abbey chose its community and people. 22.41% of Major Parish Churches also chose community and people.¹⁰

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

The character of Dorchester has been shaped by the imperatives of history, the natural topography and geography, the availability of building materials, and the fluctuations of fortune, evident in the street patterns and in the buildings. It could be said that there are two characters to Dorchester, one urban, the other rural; but there is also a unifying thread embedded in the style and scale of the buildings, and in the use of traditional building materials which have formed these structures.¹¹

Dorchester Abbey is situated in a Conservation Area which it dominates (from some vantage points), from a slightly raised prospect near the River Thames. A linear settlement replete with listed buildings, mostly of a domestic aesthetic, central Dorchester has a sense of continuence. It is slightly compromised by the volume of twenty-first-century traffic that passes and pauses in the village.

Among the earliest surviving buildings in Dorchester are timber-framed structures, which are complemented by eighteenth-century, red brick dwellings, apparently the product of increased wealth during the period. Chalk and Cob (a mixture of straw and earth and normally be-hatted by a thatched roof) were also deployed as construction materials and can be seen in a number of surviving houses and public buildings. George Gilbert Scott was responsible for the girls' and infants' school (now village hall) in Queen Street. It is one of a number of public and institutional buildings in Dorchester that were arguably inspired by the Gothicking and Romantic influences of Ruskin.¹² The far more rural character of the outlying village is significant because it encompasses the site of the Roman settlement.

Within Dorchester Abbey's curtilage there are a number of significant, listed structures and headstones, including:

- Medieval cross – Grade I
- Dantredg memorial – Grade II
- Four chest tombs – Grade II
- A row of four and a row of three headstones – Grade II
- Lychgate by George Gilbert Scott – Grade II

All contribute to the character of the Abbey's immediate environs.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

Because the history of Dorchester Abbey is somewhat obscured by time and a relative lack of historical documentation, the architecture of the building must be de-coded. A close reading of the stages of architectural development, destruction and restoration still has the potential to inform, through evidence, the narrative of the Abbey's history. Materially, Dorchester Abbey is significant for what it retains from the Medieval period, the seventeenth century (particularly the tower) and the interior interventions of the nineteenth century. The Abbey building is also significant for its contribution to an understanding of how the changing status of church (from cathedral, to Abbey, to parish church) impacts upon its fabric.

The fourteenth-century Jesse Window, which has an almost incomparable significance as an example of integrated sculpture, architecture and glass, has exceptional architectural and art historical significance; as does the fourteenth-century sedilia and piscina, which incorporate stained glass. The sedilia's significance is a little undermined however by the Victorian altar steps, which compromises its use. The fourteenth-century wall painting of the crucifixion arguably retains its exceptional significance despite over-zealous restoration by Clayton and Bell in the late nineteenth century. The Abbey's memorials are generally of a very high quality, but special mention must be made of the effigy of William de Valance the Younger. The naturalism of this thirteenth-century sculpture is both unusual and aesthetically arresting. There is a perhaps apocryphal story of it influencing the sculpture of Henry Moore. The modern (1960s) shrine of Birinus, although visually strident, is of little art historical or architectural significance; however, its aesthetics are a matter of taste.

⁰⁹ Dorchester on Thames Statement of Significance

¹⁰ Survey results

¹¹ South Oxfordshire District Council, Dorchester Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2005

¹² Ibid

HISTORIC INTEREST

Dorchester was a tribal settlement, before becoming a Roman settlement, which eventually gave way to the Anglo Saxons. Dorchester Abbey was founded by Birinus in the seventh century and was subject to the vicissitudes of ecclesiastical politics which saw its power as a See ultimately removed to Lincoln in the eleventh century. Nevertheless, Dorchester Abbey continued to acquire land and relative religious influence until the Dissolution of 1536, when it was arguably saved from destruction by the beneficence of Sir Richard Beauforest. Following this it shed its remaining monastic buildings until all that remained of the former ecclesiastical complex was what can be seen today.

The narrative of Dorchester Abbey's founding, development and physical diminution is far from clear. Nevertheless, it makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the fluctuating fortunes of ecclesiastical institutions, particularly the monastic; the effect of religious schisms on material culture and the influence individuals can have of the fortunes of buildings. Any appraisal of the significance of those individuals must begin with Birinus and will, of course, demand an assessment and re-assessment of significant contributions from Richard Beauforest, William Butterfield and George Gilbert Scott.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

*Dorchester on Thames is a key site in British history. It is the only site in the country that has seen towns dating from the late Iron Age (100 BC to AD 43), the Roman, and the Anglo-Saxon periods which have not been obscured by later development.*¹³

*No evidence has been found of the first Dorchester Cathedral but it may have been built on the site of the present Abbey, outside the Roman walls...Evidence of an earlier Saxon church having existed on the same site has been found in the stonework of the nave and choir aisles of the present church, itself possibly the second cathedral.*¹⁴

¹³ www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/archaeology/

¹⁴ South Oxfordshire District Council, Dorchester Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2005

The 'Discovering Dorchester' archaeological project (a partnership between Oxford Archaeology, the University of Oxford's School of Archaeology and Dorchester Abbey Museum) has, since 2007, made a number of finds in Dorchester, including:

- Late Roman pottery.
- Early Saxon pottery.
- Two ring-shaped loom-weight fragments.
- A fine copper-alloy Medusa head mount, probably of third or fourth century date.
- The remains of a late Roman grave on the top of the southern bank of the Dyke Hills, containing the remains of an adult male, an iron axe head and components of a belt set, which included a large elaborately decorated buckle. The burial dated to the first half of the fifth century.¹⁵

Excavations at Dorchester Abbey, outside of the 'Discovering Dorchester' project and often carried out as part of watching briefs for capital works projects, have yielded finds dating from the Roman to Medieval periods, including the discovery of evidence for earlier ecclesiastical buildings on the site. The potential for further discoveries is exceptionally high, particularly relating to earlier constructions and monastic life on the site.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Dorchester Abbey is a significant contributor to life in Dorchester. It is its historic, spiritual and cultural heart. It is the principal place of large-scale religious, cultural and community congregation in South Oxfordshire and a draw for tourists from across the region, nation and beyond. The consistent pattern of peak tourism in the summer months does much to contribute to the local economy and can, in part, be considered to play a significant role in sustaining the local hospitality industry.

The historic associations with institutes and official offices of the village and region, such as the High Sheriff's office, mean that local people take pride in the inherited prestige of the Abbey and are keen to nourish relationships with historically significant public figures. There is a strong sense in which many local people view Dorchester Abbey, rather than Christchurch, Oxford as the diocesan cathedral. This perception is emboldened by the suffragan Bishop of Dorchester drawing his title from the ancient Abbey.

¹⁵ www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=5

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

"The heritage and power of Dorchester Abbey is part of its mission."¹⁶

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Dorchester Abbey considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Dorchester Abbey with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁷

Dorchester Abbey's PCC considers the Abbey building, its management, maintenance and use in serving the local and wider communities, as a 'privilege of responsibility', with some members also considering the Abbey as a significant tool in delivering the PCC's mission objective: 'Furthering relationship with God by building the kingdom in our own community and beyond'.

The PCC utilises Dorchester Abbey's appeal beyond the worshipping community. It does so by enlisting volunteers who are interested in the history and heritage of the Abbey building. These volunteers deliver mission-based work, such as outreach through learning and hospitality. This example of using heritage as a key to unlocking mission potential is not without its challenges. Dorchester Abbey can be overwhelming in its material demands and its demand of volunteer time. If unchecked, this could lead to mission objectives being compromised rather than met.

There is a sense in which Dorchester Abbey is expected, locally and regionally, to operate like a cathedral in accordance with its significance, yet fulfil the role of a parish church in accordance with its relatively rural location. For example, there is a demand for the Abbey to deliver high-quality cultural events and activities, such as can be regularly found in cathedrals. However, the Abbey is also expected to be an inclusive and accessible parish church.

The fact that the suffragan Bishop of Dorchester occasionally attends services and events enhances the perception that Dorchester Abbey is a cathedral, despite its not housing a cathedral. Perceptions about Dorchester Abbey's status are further enhanced by its 'Abbey' titling. The title clearly and effectively communicates the Abbey's longevity and its accrued significance by virtue of its age, former function and continued importance.

This can, however, lead those unfamiliar with the peculiarities of the Church of England's conference of titles upon churches to conclude that the Abbey's current status is analogous or greater than its former, resulting in those high expectations that can be challenging, but rarely impossible, for the Abbey's PCC to meet. The notion that the Abbey has ecclesiastical authority beyond its parish boundary is not, however, necessarily discouraged by the PCC, which recognises the value of caring for a building that has the profile and cultural reach of a cathedral. Its last fundraising campaign's strapline, for example, read 'a building for Oxfordshire' in recognition of the Abbey's wider ministry. In a reflection of Dorchester Abbey's regional significance, its incumbent is expected to attend county events, such as the High Sheriff's inaugural party. She also assumes the role along with, unofficially, the Bishop of Dorchester, of chaplain to notable local individuals and families. These expectations are placed on the incumbent because of the perceived status and significance of the Abbey and the generation-to-generation expectation that the incumbent of the Abbey will represent it at Society gatherings.

The traditions of worship at Dorchester Abbey are similar to those to be found at a cathedral, with a robed choir employed during services such as evensong and sung Eucharist. There is an expectation locally that Dorchester Abbey should continue in its traditional pattern and style of worship, not least because there is a feeling the Abbey building demands it. The PCC has often found, though, that the more relaxed the eucharist service is the greater the number of worshippers there are in attendance. This is particularly the case at family services. This arguably results in a slight disjunction between tradition and developing expectations of how the Abbey should serve its congregation. The question about whether or not to make Dorchester Abbey a cathedral was raised at a diocesan level in the 1970s. Any move to alter the Abbey's official status was, however, quickly abandoned and there has been no serious attempt to address the question since.

¹⁶ Gerald Adler, 2012

¹⁷ Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“Between six to ten people are regularly involved in the management and maintenance of Dorchester Abbey including churchwardens, the church architect, volunteers and local skilled people.”⁸

Dorchester Abbey is a member of the Dorchester Team of 12 parishes, each of which has its own PCC and member of clergy; although, there is not one member of clergy per parish. The rector of Dorchester Abbey is, however, solely responsible for the Abbey, but fulfils an overseeing, pastoral role within the Team. A limited degree of tension between the Abbey and other members of the Dorchester Team occasionally arises as the Abbey is in the pastoral care of a single clergyperson, whereas other parishes must share clergy with each other. This issue is mitigated through the Parish Share system, which sees Dorchester Abbey pay for 95% of the clergy appointment proportion of the Team’s contribution – a situation the Abbey’s PCC feels is morally correct. The incumbent estimates that she spends around 40% of her time on Team matters.

The governance structure employed at Dorchester Abbey, although a PCC in the traditional sense, operates as though it were a cathedral Lay Chapter. A Standing Committee prepares material for PCC meetings and a series of other sub-committees are largely project based, i.e. they meet when they are required. Those that meet more regularly include Pastoral Care, Worship, Museum, Tea Room, Stewards (guides), Education Management Group and the Family Service Group.

Following what is described as a ‘crisis of growing’ in 2009 which resulted in no churchwardens being in post, the Abbey’s PCC looked carefully at the distribution of churchwarden and other responsibilities. It found that too much pressure had been placed on a single churchwarden. To address this situation, the PCC created a number of co-ordinator positions designed to support or complement the work of the churchwardens and PCC, which would be overseen and supported by two new churchwardens. These posts were duly created and continue to be reviewed and developed. At the time of writing they are:

- Fabric Co-ordinator
- Finance Co-ordinator
- Worship Co-ordinator
- Mission Co-ordinator

Of these, the fabric co-ordinator is the post that carries the greatest workload and, arguably, responsibility. The post holder works closely with the churchwardens to ensure all responsibilities are executed in a timely fashion. The mission co-ordinator is thought to have had the greatest visible impact on life at the Abbey through work to articulate the mission of Dorchester Abbey and the provision of community facilities and events. The finance and worship co-ordinators ensure that the day-to-day life of the Abbey is underpinned by sound financial governance and the good-practice of its core purpose. Ultimately, the system of responsibility distribution established since 2009 has resulted in more work being done at Dorchester Abbey in a more efficient and balanced manner.

As part of the review process brought about by the ‘crisis’ of 2009, the PCC has had greater success in recruiting and sustaining volunteers. This has been achieved by offering greater clarity about what volunteers would be asked to do; preaching vocational sermons; and taking steps to establish a scheme of volunteer succession. This has had a significant impact on the efficiency of operations at Dorchester Abbey.

It is clear that the work of the PCC would not be carried out so effectively if it and its co-ordinators were not supported by a large number of volunteers. These volunteers give of their time generously and execute duties at the Abbey such as guided tours; security; and other, complementary liturgical tasks, such as refreshing candles. Volunteers also staff the Abbey’s Tea Rooms. The PCC makes every effort to thank volunteers for their contributions, such as at Harvest Festival, for example, and participates in the diocesan award for excellence – the St Birinus award – to ensure proper recognition is afforded to those whose contribution to Dorchester Abbey is outstanding.

All Dorchester Abbey’s paid staff work on a part-time basis. Staff include two administrators, an events officer, an education officer, a director of music and a vergger, who is employed on an as-and-when-required basis.

The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance and management of adjacent buildings that house the Abbey Guest House, Tea Room and Museum.

The separately-constituted Friends of Dorchester Abbey contributes to the conservation and repair of the fabric of the Abbey, the beautification of its fittings, and the improvement of its facilities. It raises funds through membership subscriptions, donations, legacies and special events and appeals.

Number of members on PCC	18
Number of clergy	1
Number of paid staff	6
Number of volunteers	100
Number of sub-committees	8 to 10



Wall painting of the crucifixion, dating to the fourteenth century but heavily restored in the nineteenth century

FINANCES

“Dorchester Abbey pays over £47,000 per year in parish share, which the PCC pays in full.”¹⁹

Dorchester Abbey's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate adaptations and additions will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.²⁰

Dorchester Abbey experienced a net deficit of £98,601 in 2015, which was primarily due to expenditure on the new lighting system. There was, however, a surplus of £8,170 on unrestricted funds. The PCC always aims to hold general reserves equivalent to at least two months' expenditure. The current level of unrestricted reserves is £44,104, which is equivalent to three months' expenditure.

Designated funds had a deficit of £32,110 (compared with a deficit of £10,548 in 2014) primarily due to PCC-funded expenditure on the lighting system and heating repairs. There was a deficit on restricted and endowment funds of £74,661, comprising completion of the spending from the Discovering Dorchester fund of £6,215, net expenditure from the restricted fabric fund on the lighting project of £73,156 and interest received of £28 of the curate's housing fund. Restricted funds now comprise only the Song School fund and Curates Housing fund, which is represented by the PCC's share of a property and the balance on the Church of England Deposit Fund, which is held as a contingency fund for repairs and any future purchase of a larger share of the aforementioned property.

Among other income generated in 2015, the PCC raised £24,448 through hiring the church for music recordings and concerts, the Abbey Guest House generated £2,039, and the Tea Rooms £13,857. Solar panels, which were paid for by a gift to Dorchester Abbey several years ago, generated an income of £3,259.

Donations arising from the Dorchester Festival comprised £13,623 from the abseil and a donation from monies raised of £10,650. The income from this biennial event helped the PCC maintain a small surplus in 2015, despite an overall drop in income of c.£7,000 and increased irregular and day-to-day costs, including additional support costs of the verges and the relatively new assistant administrator (c. £5,000)

The Abbey's Mission Giving totalled £14,960 for 2015 which included £10,500 distributed by the Mission Giving Committee to a number of local, national and international charities. In addition, the congregation donated £4,460 to specific causes at services such as Harvest, Christmas and Maundy Thursday.²¹

Dorchester Abbey's parish share contribution currently stands at c.£47,000 per annum, which the PCC pays in full. The Abbey does not have access to any discounted, group buying of utilities scheme through diocesan means, but the PCC's treasurer has had some success in negotiating favourable utility rates with various providers. A new stewardship campaign is thought by the PCC to be overdue, so is being planned at the time of writing. It is hoped that fundraising efforts in this respect will match or exceed the c.£10,000 raised in 2013.

Overall, and despite a comparative lack of historic endowments generating guaranteed income, Dorchester Abbey is in a relatively strong financial position. It does not rely on grant aid to carry out repairs and adaptations to the Abbey building, and is helped by the invaluable support of the Friends of Dorchester Abbey. A judgement that the Abbey is located in a wealthy area of England and therefore be financially sustainable through giving, local fundraising and the support of the Friends is largely justified.

¹⁹ St Paul's Annual Report, 2015

²⁰ Survey results

²¹ The first four paragraphs of the 'Finances' section of this case study are indebted to: 'The Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Paul Dorchester on Thames: Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2015'

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Dorchester Abbey's income does not meet expenditure.²²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Dorchester Abbey's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total Quinquennial Inspection (QI) cost	Not specified
Urgent QI cost	Not specified
Annual maintenance cost	£180,504
Parish share cost	£47,000
Insurance Cost	Not specified
Utilities cost	Not specified, but general running costs total £25,004
Major project cost	£250,000 (lighting) and £500,000 (repairs), of which the Friends contributed £122,395.
Annual donations income	£167,234
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£1,607
Events/church hall income	£98,907
Other income	£0
Individual project income	£122,395



Touchscreen welcoming visitors to the Abbey

²² Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

The PCC carried out a competitive process to appoint a new church architect, who conducted a QI in 2015. Dorchester Abbey is described in the QI report as being:

‘... in a good state of structural repair and, to a large degree, this reflects the ongoing efforts by the Parish to ensure that suitable repairs to the fabric are undertaken in a timely manner.’²³

The PCC addresses the repair issues raised in each QI report by forming a sub-committee to review and divide the report’s recommendations into manageable, complementary projects. It then seeks the advice of the architect as to the suitability of its approach. The PCC seeks further advice and guidance from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), with which it has a productive working relationship. A new DAC Secretary is expected in post in the near future and the PCC expects to develop its working relationship with the new post-holder in due course. A former DAC Secretary is a trustee of the Friends of Dorchester Abbey, which reflects the personal as well as professional relationships the Abbey enjoys with diocesan staff.

In addition to diocesan staff, Dorchester Abbey enjoys support for the maintenance and development of the Abbey building and its facilities from the Local Authority, which recognises the Abbey’s worth to the local economy through its ability to attract tourists to the area. A retired and distinguished professor of built archaeology, who is resident in the village, is also very supportive of the PCC’s work to research and maintain the Abbey. Occasionally, however, tensions arise with regard to proposed adaptations to the Abbey. This was the case several years ago when the PCC proposed to remove an historic door from the Abbey’s south-west entrance and replace it with a glass porch. This scheme was eventually executed, but not before a consistory court judgement in support of its implementation. A discussion about the provenance of the Abbey’s pews, the outcome of which could affect any future re-ordering plans, is ongoing.

Future plans for the adaptation of the Abbey building include the development of the current exhibition centre to include an education suite, WCs and office space. This project is in the planning stages and, at the time of writing, drawings are being prepared.

Dorchester Abbey’s PCC is in the position of having sufficient funds to maintain and adapt the Abbey building without continual recourse to grant aid. The good condition of the Abbey reflects this, but also reflects the dedication and hard work of the PCC and its supportive volunteers. Because the PCC has both the resources and capacity that extend beyond the necessary maintenance of the Abbey building, it is able to plan for and execute schemes that serve educational, community and missional functions. That it does so effectively is testament to its good governance and generous stewardship. Barring any unforeseen material or financial calamities, the future of Dorchester Abbey should not be cause for concern.

Dorchester Abbey has a range of management documents: statement of significance, maintenance plan, accessibility audit and draft strategic plan. It has an average number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁴



Cloister gallery in its twenty-first-century extension

²³ Caroe and Partners Architects, ‘Dorchester: The Abbey Church St Peter and St Paul, Report on the Quinquennial Survey for 2015’

²⁴ Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

Dorchester Abbey has completed two major projects over the last two years. The first was a major programme of stonework (south and east elevations) and chancel roof repairs, identified in the Abbey's 2010 QI report and carried out at a cost of c.£250,000 in 2012-2014. This work was paid for by the PCC, monies raised by a large fundraising campaign, the Friends group, and a legacy, following the refusal of a Historic England/HLF Repair Grant for Places of Worship (RGPOW), reportedly due to a lack of financial need.

The second project, carried out in 2014-2015, delivered a complete upgrade of the Abbey's lighting system, plus additional improvements to its smoke detection and protection system. This project is considered to have had an enormously positive impact upon music and other cultural performances in the Abbey, as well as improving working conditions for volunteers. There is a sense, however, that the planning of the project could have been more carefully considered. The intensity of light in particular areas of the Abbey, for example, were not as the PCC would have wished them to be upon installation. The project is considered to have provided an invaluable learning experience for all those involved and, as previously stated, is held to be a great improvement on the lighting scheme it replaced.



Exterior of the cloister gallery

CURRENT USE

Dorchester Abbey holds regular Sunday services and daily morning prayers. Worship is usually conducted within an inclusive parish church model but often with a musical and visual aesthetic more usually found at cathedrals. Every effort is made during Sunday services to engage with people; however, because of the size of the Abbey a certain degree of anonymity is afforded to those who wish it, particularly at larger festival celebrations, where attendances increase by up to 400%.

When notable local people die, the Abbey is expected to host a memorial service. A Lord Lieutenant's dinner is held annually, as is a bishop's dinner.

There are regular children's activities, supper and lunch clubs as well as a tea room in the Abbey grounds. Twelve village organisations took over the Tea Rooms for a day each during the year and raised £3,573 between them for their own causes. Dorchester Abbey is also used as an exhibition space for contemporary art and a concert and recording venue. Local choral societies regularly use the Abbey and many have done so for decades.

The PCC does all it can to support long-standing users of the Abbey to adapt to new models of administration and standards of practice that will enable traditional and new uses of the Abbey building to develop together. The appointment of an events officer has helped to ensure an increasingly professional approach to booking and event delivery, including the introduction of a loyalty scheme for multiple bookings and an obligation on promoters to provide a minibus service for concerts with more than 250 attendees.

Car parking for events at the Abbey is a challenge given the lack of designated parking spaces in a small, already-congested village. There is an unfortunate perception locally that the Abbey is responsible for parking congestion and it should do more to provide adequate parking provision. Discussions with the local council about solving this issue are ongoing.

Many of the activities Dorchester Abbey delivers have a community focus and are delivered by volunteers that have an interest in and dedication to the community and the Abbey, but not necessarily the Christian faith. The PCC and incumbent of the Abbey are entirely supportive of people who do not share their Christian motivation delivering their Christian objectives. However, it is felt that a faithful presence at some activities is helpful to ensure they are anchored by mission.

Dorchester Abbey also hosts the notable Dorchester Festival, a ten-day family arts festival that is held bi-annually. It is centred on Dorchester Abbey and used as a vehicle for fundraising and mission activity, raising money for the Abbey and an additional charity, which changes every festival. It regularly attracts over 3,000 people and is a showcase not only of the talents of participants but also the versatility of the Abbey building.

Baptisms	Not provided
Funerals	Not provided
Weddings	Not provided

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

There is a feeling locally, perhaps, that Dorchester Abbey is wealthy enough to look after itself; that we don't need people from outside the worshipping community to contribute financially. This means we have to work hard to secure enough income to implement our mission objectives.

The rector acts as a representative of the Abbey, attending events such as the annual Mayors and Chairs dinner. At the last Mayors and Chairs dinner she spoke about our upcoming Narnia event – re-creating scenes from the story in the Abbey in October and November, 2016. We had been finding it a little difficult to reach people with this event, to get them involved – perhaps if we were a cathedral it would have been easier? But, after the rector had spoken at the Mayors and Chairs dinner, we now have the chairperson of the Council coming to the event's opening, it has been publicised in county literature, and we believe we received some additional income as a direct result of our rector's address, which will help us to deliver a superb thing for Dorchester and Oxfordshire.

The dinner was obviously a great opportunity for marketing the Narnia project. It goes to show that we have a two-way relationship with local society – we have great ideas, thanks in this case to our cathedral-standard education officer, and we provide a beautiful church for high-quality events; our friends in the community help us to make sure we can meet our ambitions, for the good of everyone. Sometimes that means helping us out with a little extra money!

Civic church (wider use):

Mayors and Chairs dinner and various other civic events as requested. These include presentations, receptions, high profile fund raising concerts.

Diocesan use e.g. Ordinations.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Tours run by the Abbey and by third parties.

Significant number of musical events including two regular extended weekend music festivals.

Occasional exhibitions.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Sunday services.

Moring prayer.

Tuesday coffee morning.

Concerts.

Exhibitions.

Song School.

Education workshops.

WELCOMING VISITORS

Dorchester Abbey is open 365 days a year. Virtual and audio tours of the building are available on site for visitors, as are information panels about the history and heritage of the Abbey. The Abbey is staffed by volunteers whenever possible and tours are offered by pre-arrangement. Dorchester Abbey also welcomes third parties who wish to bring their own groups for a casual or formal tour of the site. Offering a strong visitor welcome that addresses interests in faith and history is considered to be central to the PCC's mission.

The Dorchester Abbey Museum is housed in the oak-panelled, sixteenth-century Old School Room in the Abbey Guest House and in the Abbey's Cloister Gallery, which was longlisted for the Gulbenkian Prize in 2006 and is particularly noted for its fine collection of well-displayed, carved stonework. It is thought that the Cloister Gallery's profile has encouraged a greater number of people to visit the Abbey, with an increase in coach tours stopping in Dorchester a particularly noteworthy development.

Dorchester Abbey has plans to become a destination along the 'Midsummer Murders' tour of Oxfordshire. Dorchester has been used as a location for the popular television series and it is hoped that participation in the tour will bring more people to the Abbey who would not otherwise have visited.

Dorchester Abbey features on the TripAdvisor website, which the PCC occasionally uses to engage with people who have visited or plan to visit the Abbey. Evidence found on the website suggests people have visited Dorchester Abbey from as far away as Kenya and are generally very impressed with welcome they received and the condition of the building.

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The notice board at Dorchester Abbey

NOTTINGHAM, ST MARY

High Pavement, Nottingham NG1 1HF

Diocese	Southwell and Nottingham	Settlement Type	City Centre
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	134211	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Poor)
Church Heritage Record No.	638298	Average Weekly Attendance	160
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	20,200
Footprint (m ²)	1667 (very big)	Annual Visitors	16,600
Building Period	Medieval	Website	http://www.nottinghamchurches.org/



Exterior of St Mary's © Martine Hamilton Knight

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- A church has stood on the site occupied by the current St Mary's since the Saxon period.
- St Mary's is the principal Church of England building in Nottingham.
- St Mary's is the Civic church for the city of Nottingham.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- St Mary's is an iconic building in Nottingham.
- St Mary's is among only a few Grade I listed buildings in Nottingham.
- St Mary's has a great tradition of music and a strong community focus.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Financial stability.
- Operating like a cathedral but having the status and structures of a parish church.
- Maintaining the building.



The high altar at St Mary's

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Mary's is the principal ecclesiastical building in Nottingham, and among only ten Grade I Listed buildings in the city. Its surroundings evince Nottingham's nineteenth-century commercial prosperity as a centre for the lace and textile trade, yet St Mary's history extends back into the Saxon period: it is located in what was once the heart of the Saxon borough of the early-Medieval town.

St Mary's is governed by a Parochial Church Council (PCC) that also has responsibility for two other churches in the city. Of the three, St Mary's focus is predominantly city-wide. It is Nottingham's Civic church and is a contributor to the cultural life of the city. There is arguably an expectation that St Mary's should function as Nottingham's de facto Church of England cathedral. It is, however, very much a part of the parish system and so must contend with all this system's concomitant challenges.

St Mary's is a demanding building to maintain in good repair. The PCC tries to satisfy this demand whilst thoughtfully adapting the building to enable wider use. Financial pressures are taking their toll on the PCC, however, with reserve funds depleting at a concerning rate.

Ongoing dialogue with the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham may result in changes to St Mary's role in the city. Whatever substantive or philosophical changes these discussions yield, it is clear that there is a determination, driven by the PCC, its staff and volunteers, that St Mary's will continue to support the people of Nottingham spiritually and practically long into the future.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“[St Mary’s is a] large urban Church built to a grand scale. The current Church completed late fifteenth century in the Perpendicular style with a tower at the crossing, large windows including an extensive glazed west gable to the Nave, delicate tracery, and slender ribbed pillars (now slightly out of vertical). Various later reconstructions and alterations to create current church with Nave, crossing Tower, Chancel, North and South Transepts, South Porch, North and South Aisles, North side vestry, south Chapel and meeting rooms. Tower roof copper, Nave, Chancel and Aisles are lead covered to parapet gutters. Vestry roof plain tiled. Masonry throughout is coursed squared ashlar, crenulated parapets and pinnacles.”⁰³

The parish church of St Mary’s is the principal ecclesiastical building in Nottingham. It is sited on a sandstone promontory overlooking the flood-plain of the river Trent in the centre of the Saxon borough of the early-Medieval town and is now surrounded by the buildings constructed as lace-works and textile factories of the more recent past. The town of Nottingham was divided into two boroughs by the Norman Conquest, the French borough around the castle to the west and the English, or Saxon borough to the east. St Mary’s was the only parish church in the east, while there were two further parishes with churches in the west; a Cluniac priory in the western suburb of Lenton, a Franciscan friary sited in the Broad Marsh below St Mary’s, a Carmelite house beneath the castle in the western half of the city, one hospital to the north-east, and possibly three others sited elsewhere.

The town had two fairs and a market and was a flourishing trading centre, benefiting from having had a bridge across the river Trent since the tenth century. The current church substantially dates from c.1380 to 1475, although evidence of a grand thirteenth-century predecessor and some Romanesque structure still survives. St Mary’s has a light and spacious interior; characterised by slender arcades and large numbers of paired windows. The relative plainness of the chancel may be a result of the different patronage of this part of the building – it was built by the patrons, Lenton Priory whilst the remainder was built by the wealthy Medieval merchant community of Nottingham.

The south transept of St Mary’s was begun in c.1400 and built to house a chantry chapel, side chapel and the tomb of John Samon (d.1416). The South porch was begun in the early fifteenth-century. Externally, it comprises an ogee arch with Perpendicular panelling above. The porch’s interior boasts a vaulted ceiling and bare plinths, which may have once borne the weight of ecclesiastical statuary.

Construction of St Mary’s nave began in 1386 at the behest of the Mayor of Nottingham, John Samon. It was completed in 1475. During a storm of 1558 part of St Mary’s tower collapsed. The current oak and plaster fan vault was the work of William Stretton and dates to 1812.

The rebuilding of St Mary’s Medieval west front in 1726 in the Neo-classical style. Over a century later, it was re-modelled in the Gothic style by William Bonython Moffatt (1846). From 1848 various restorations were carried out by George Gilbert Scott and William Bonython Moffatt. In 1890 the Chapter House was built by George Frederick Bodley, then in 1916 the Chapel of the Holy Spirit was added by Temple Lushington Moore. The choir vestry and other facilities on the north side of St Mary’s were built in 1940; A war-time incendiary bomb hit the south transept of the church in 1941 causing major damage requiring post war reconstruction. Underfloor heating was installed in 2013, along with a new stone floor, designed by Tess Jaray. Jaray’s floor has a striking geometric, chevron motif that references traditional or historic aesthetics whilst appearing distinctly modern.



Historic engraving of St Mary’s

⁰³ Llewellyn, D HAR Architect/ Surveyor, 'Summary Building Description: Church of St Mary's in the Lace Market, Nottingham; 2015 Repairs Project: English Heritage Report for HLF's Grants for Places of Worship Scheme', January 2014.

KEY DATES⁰⁴

- **c.1380 to 1475:** Current church was built.
- **c.1400:** South porch and south transept Samon tomb built concurrently with nave – marked with mason's marks indicating the same mason as nave.
- **1625:** Chancel recorded in the Register of 1625 as having been "in great decaye", and had been repaired.
- **1840s:** Tower late fifteenth-century, piers rebuilt.
- **1890:** Chapter House built.
- **1916:** Chapel of the Holy Spirit built using some masonry from south wall of chancel.
- **1940:** Choir vestry, kitchen and toilet built on north side of nave.
- **1941:** Post war reconstruction following bomb damage.
- **2013:** Substantial restoration project.

NOTABLE FEATURES

The former wealth of the Lace Market is embodied in many of the building's fixtures and fittings, which are of a very high quality, comparable with those of other major churches that have served prosperous areas. The interior is not a complete single scheme installed at one time but an accumulation of fine elements that reflect the generations of civic engagement with a thriving community that took pride in its church.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

West Window

St Mary's west window is a memorial to Thomas Adams, a lace manufacturer who built a warehouse in Stoney Street. The window, which illustrates the life of Christ with accompanying Biblical figures, was designed and manufactured by Harman & Co in 1876.

Lion and Unicorn

These Heraldic beasts have flanked the west doors since the early eighteenth century. They were probably commissioned to commemorate the occasion of the queen-to-be Anne's temporary residence in Nottingham during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The Lion and Unicorn would become the symbol of the union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1707, during Anne's reign. They have been a presence in St Mary's since the early eighteenth century.

The Font

The font dates to the fifteenth century and is carved in the Perpendicular style, so is in aesthetic sympathy with the church that houses it. Around the font is cut a Greek palindrome, translating into English as: 'Wash thy sins, not only thy face'. It is the same text that adorns a ninth-century fountain in Istanbul, in a courtyard that stands before Hagia Sophia.

South Doors

Located inside the Medieval south porch are a pair of sculpted bronze doors and tympanum executed by Henry Wilson (1904-05). The cast relief panels on each door illustrated the life of Christ and the tympanum above depicts a Pieta, or an image of Mary cradling the body of her dead son.

The doors are dedicated to Canon Francis Morse, who was St Mary's priest between 1864 and 1886.

Alabaster Sculptural Relief in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit

A Medieval alabaster carving depicting Thomas Beckett visiting Pope Alexander III is located in the chapel of the Holy Spirit. Medieval Alabaster carving and the city of Nottingham have become famous through association, so famous that much alabaster carving of the period is termed 'Nottingham Alabaster'. The presence of a concentration of carvers in the city, or a 'School of Nottingham', is, however, disputed.

Another, rather damaged, Medieval alabaster relief is located in the north transept, within the tomb canopy of Thomas Thurland. This panel, depicting what is probably a bishop, almost certainly decorated the tomb chest of Robert Englyshe (d.1475), which is now lost.

Robert Englyshe Effigy

Located in the north aisle is what is thought to be an effigy of Robert Englyshe, who was mayor of Nottingham in 1470. It is thought that Englyshe's tomb (located in the north transept), was damaged by the Puritans during the Civil War. The effigy was apparently sold in 1839 but the buyer neglected to collect his purchase.

Chancel Screen

The chancel screen was designed by Bodley and Garner in 1885 and was a gift of Thomas Hill in memory of Jane, his wife.

Reredos

The reredos, located behind the High Altar, was designed by Bodley and Garner in 1885, with two wings added in 1938, creating a triptych.

Madonna and Child painting

This painting dates to around 1500 and is from the school of Fra Bartolomeo, who was influenced by Raphael. It was presented to St Mary's in 1839 by Thomas Wright.

Choir Stalls

Carved stalls designed by G.G. Scott in 1872, the Medieval originals having been removed and sold for £10 some years earlier. The quire contains a canopied 'Cathedra' for the bishop, designed by Bodley in 1890.

⁰⁴ Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project: <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/harchlgy.php>

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When asked to select the one thing that makes their building special, St Mary's chose its architecture. 31% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁵

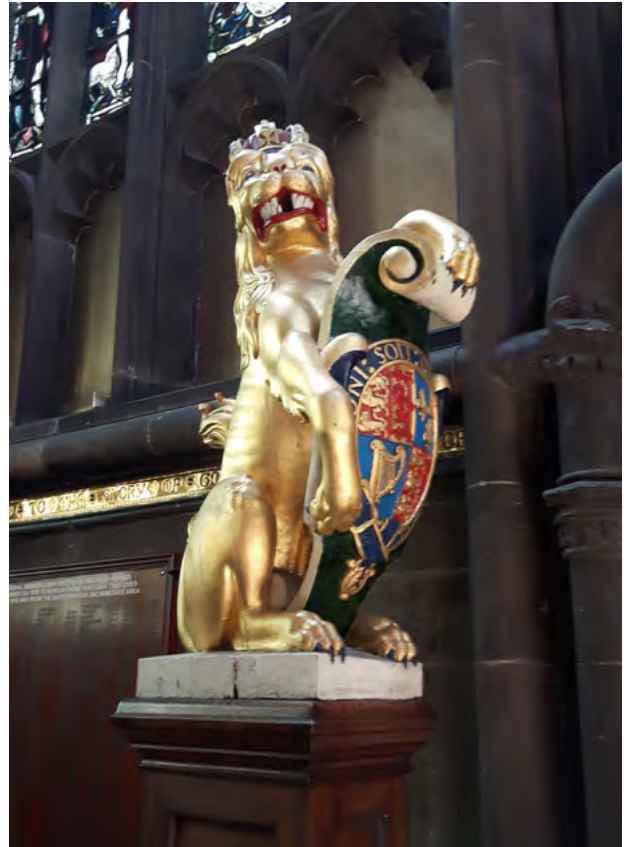
SETTING AND LANDSCAPE

Formerly owned by Lenton Priory and situated prominently in the heart of the Nottingham's Lace market area (now called Nottingham's Creative Quarter), the largely Medieval church of St Mary's is the Civic church to the city. The Creative Quarter is heavily urbanised and a designated Conservation Area that sits outside the principal retail centre of the city. The name of this quarter mile-square area of the city denotes its status as the former centre of the world's lace industry during the British Empire. As a result, it has many notable examples of Victorian and Georgian architecture. The Galleries of Justice (Shire Hall) a former law court, now a museum and tourist attraction, is located adjacent to St Mary's.

St Mary's is a significant landmark within the city that can be seen from many vantage points located at a distance from the church. St Mary's does, however, become increasingly obscured by its urban setting the closer a visitor gets, until it emerges, bold and authoritative, on High Pavement.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

Its interior is predominantly a harmony in fifteenth-century Perpendicular, punctuated by surviving artefacts from earlier periods and self-conscious but high-quality ecclesiastical design from the Victorian period and later. St Mary's has in its curtilage a churchyard wall, railings and gates, which are all Grade II listed; a Pipeclay headstone, (currently stored inside the church) which has a Grade II listing and a City, County and Parish War Memorial at the south west corner of churchyard, also with Grade II listing.



Heraldic Lion

HISTORIC INTEREST

“In 1724 a very dramatic incident occurred in St. Mary’s Church. Dr. Reynolds, the Archbishop of York, had conducted a confirmation service in the church and at its conclusion he retired to the vestry and called for pipes and ale. A messenger was sent to procure these, and on his return was met by the Rev. Mr. Disney, the Vicar, who refused to allow him to enter the church, saying that in his time St. Mary’s Church should not be made into a tippling house to please the Archbishop or anybody else.”⁰⁶

St Mary’s features in the fourteenth-century ballad ‘Robin Hood and the Monk’. It tells of the occasion that Robin Hood visited St Mary’s to confess his sins but was, by way of a monk, delivered into the hands of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Robin was consequently imprisoned beneath the town hall on High Pavement, before being liberated by Little John.

Nottingham lost around half its population to the Black death in 1348-1349, which led to a general deterioration of the town; however, its fortunes revived in the late fourteenth century with the rise of the mercantile class. Wealthy merchants rebuilt St Mary’s (largely completed in 1475) and endowed it with Guild and Chantry chapels. The roll of the “Gylde of St Mary in her own church, Nottingham, on the Feast of St Michael, 1371” features the names of 167 members of the Guild and shows prominent local residents included knights, clerks, carpenters, drapers and priests. This roll was auctioned at Sotheby’s in December 2007 and saved for the nation by the Nottinghamshire Archives Office and others.⁰⁷

George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers), visited St Mary’s in 1649. His diary describes how he disagreed with what was being preached at the church; interrupted the service by correcting the preacher, for which he was imprisoned; and in so doing converted Nottingham’s sheriff, whose name was Reckless, which arguably led to the development of the Quaker community in Nottingham.⁰⁸

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

During disturbances in the twelfth century, Nottingham was burnt down three times. It is believed that at least three churches have existed on the site. A church was mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) and the present, largely fifteenth century, Perpendicular structure replaced a Norman church, archaeological evidence of which was discovered in the nineteenth century. In 1842 it was feared that the church tower might fall. LN Cottingham was asked to investigate in an attempt to identify the cause of cracking that had appeared in the tower structure. Remnants of the Norman church were discovered beneath the floor and Sir J Charles Robinson FSA made line drawings of what was found, before Cottingham covered over the discoveries with concrete. A remnant of this previous

⁰⁶ Holland Walker, J, ‘An itinerary of Nottingham: St Mary’s church’, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 32, 1928

⁰⁷ Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project: <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/hhistory.php>

⁰⁸ Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project: <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/hhistory.php>

church can now be seen through a glass panel – installed when the nave floor and heating was renewed in 2013 – at the foot of a pillar.

Nineteenth-century restorations will probably have had a significant impact on subterranean archaeology, as well as within the standing fabric. Landscaping and drainage of the churchyard will also have had a significant impact on archaeological remains. The potential for discovering surviving Medieval archaeology is considered generally to be high.⁰⁹

COMMUNITY INTEREST

St Mary’s was, for many hundreds of years, a site of social, civic and legal purposes, including the election and swearing in of the Mayor and corporation. Additionally, its porch was one of only three depositories of the Standard Forest Foot measure, used in evaluating forest land. St Mary’s played a significant social role in the eighteenth century through its establishment of a Sunday school (1751) for children unable to attend day school and its financial support of almshouses and charities for the destitute and decrepit, which extended, in 1811, to the founding of an Asylum. From 1716 St Mary’s housed Nottingham’s fire engine, which was kept at the west end of the church until at least 1770. In 1725 St Mary’s founded a workhouse that survived for nearly two hundred years. The people’s use of the church for a range of purposes in the eighteenth-century was described pejoratively by Holland Walker as transforming St Mary’s into ‘a sort of public resort for the town’!¹⁰

A cathedra (bishops’ seat) designed by Bodley was installed in the chancel in 1890. This occurred when it was thought that a bishopric would be created for Nottinghamshire and St Mary’s would assume cathedral status. In the end, this did not happen, but the seat remains.

Today, St Mary’s has value within the community as the Civic church for Nottingham, the university church for the University of Nottingham and as a venue for concerts and large services. St Mary’s is a symbol of a Christian presence and significance in the city; the natural place for the city’s people to direct their collective focus when the need arises.

⁰⁹ The Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project, <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/harchlgy.php>

¹⁰ Holland Walker, J, ‘An itinerary of Nottingham: St Mary’s church’, Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 32, 1928

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“Caring for a building the size of St Mary’s is challenging with relatively limited resources, but its size and prominence are useful for attracting people to the church, where they can experience and learn about their Christian heritage.”¹¹

St Mary’s, as Nottingham’s oldest and most iconic church, and the church with Civic status, is tantamount to Nottingham’s Church of England cathedral. This, despite plans in the late nineteenth century to establish St Mary’s as the seat of a new Nottinghamshire bishopric never being realised.

Attendances at large services and public expressions of solidarity, in recent memory dating back to the aftermath of the deaths of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997 and Brian Clough in 2004, demonstrate a great affection and need on the part of the people of Nottingham for the existence of St Mary’s. Its landmark status and the weight of history it both carries and expresses through its architecture affords St Mary’s unrivalled symbolic status in Nottingham. It embodies the continuance of the city from the Medieval period and before as well as Nottingham’s cultural life.

The church has chairs rather than fixed pews so events such as theatre and music recitals can take place ‘in the round’. Its role as Nottingham’s Civic Church endows St Mary’s with a public function as servant of and proxy for the whole city. This can lead to St Mary’s incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) being present in discussions of local importance with Local Authority representatives, but can also place substantial pressure on the PCC, that also has custodianship over the churches of All Saints and St Peter’s, and maintains St Mary’s on behalf of the city, the health of the building’s condition being considered as symbolically reflective of that of the city. There is some concern regarding the present reluctance of the city council to engage with the PCC.¹²

When asked to select either ‘help’ or ‘hindrance’, St Mary’s considered the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places St Mary’s with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹³

St Mary’s is on the 2015 Heritage at Risk Register where it is described as being in ‘poor’ condition. This is considered by the PCC to be potentially advantageous for the purposes of grant applications and validating the need to ask people for donations toward the cost of repairs. It does, however, reflect the need to keep on top of a substantial repair programme that is not untypical of a church the age and size of St Mary’s. The responsibility to repair and maintain St Mary’s are, of course, accompanied by commensurate financial costs, which are borne or met by means of grant-aid and from the very stretched resources of a PCC that has responsibilities that include two other churches with their own urgent repair needs. St Mary’s has suffered repeated theft of lead from lower level roofs, including from the south porch, choir vestry and chapter house. These areas are now alarmed.

Visitors are invariably attracted to St Mary’s because of its history and significance, but also because it is a place of worship that is open to all every day. This is made possible through a combination of employed part-time vergers being on duty and volunteers acting as stewards. Because of the profile of St Mary’s there is a continuous pressure to keep the church open for visitors and provide interpretative materials. The PCC considers the combination of St Mary’s functioning as a place of worship as a focal point for a wide range of community and some commercial events and as a tourist attraction as being helping to fulfil the purposes of mission.

St Mary’s has an ongoing issue with people climbing into the churchyard when it is locked. They then engage in activities such as substance abuse, rough sleeping and toileting. Quite a lot of mess results from these activities. The PCC tries to assist people and make referrals but not everyone wants help.

St Mary’s is a member of the Greater Churches Network.

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ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“St Mary’s conservatoin architect is very local to the church and is an invaluable resource for the PCC. He is always the first port of call for building-related matters.”¹⁴

The PCC has had responsibility for All Saints, St Peter’s and St Mary’s since 2007. St Mary’s is the largest of the three churches. Between them the three churches provide different ‘church experiences’: St Mary’s is ‘liberal Catholic’; St Peter is akin to a ‘market town’ parish church; and All Saints, surrounded by student housing, provides a wealth of opportunities for a broad range of Church of England members to find a church with a style of worship that is right for them. The balance of attention the PCC gives to each church in the group is equal and the historic rivalry between St Mary’s and St Peter’s is good-natured and teasing, rather than hostile. Many issues are resolved by the PCC’s finance and standing committees that present their reports to the 27 members of the full PCC for ratification or, in rare cases, reconsideration.

St Mary’s has its own Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project sub-committee and a Health and Safety sub-committee operating under Terms of Reference. Work is currently being undertaken to formalise these Terms further. A separately constituted Friends Group has a remit to assist with the beautification of the church.

The PCC employs a full-time parish administrator, office assistant and vergers, with two additional part-time vergers. An events manager is also employed on a part-time contract basis for St Mary’s. All other staff operate across the three churches in the group. The vergers is vital to the day-to-day running of St Mary’s, carrying out regular maintenance tasks and ensuring the church is open for visitors and secure when closed at the end of the day, tasks which fall to volunteers on the three days every week when the vergers is not on duty. The total number of volunteers at St Mary’s numbers around 65 to 70, carrying out tasks as diverse as, but not limited to, stewarding the building, flower arranging, gardening, bell-ringing and singing in the choir. There is an ambition to increase the number of volunteers supporting the church.

The PCC looks to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) for advice and guidance on building-related matters. The DAC, while very supportive, does not always have the resources to help St Mary’s, which means the PCC has to seek the advice of its church architect, who has occupied this role since 2010.

St Mary’s church architect has offices a matter of yards from the church. His professional input into identifying and planning schemes of work has been invaluable to the PCC. His close proximity to St Mary’s has meant that there has been a tendency for the PCC to become over-reliant on his services. The PCC recognised this and steps have been taken to ensure that the architect is not over-burdened unnecessarily or unreasonably with non-professional tasks. Any over-reliance on an architect’s guidance and influence can be viewed as a risk as there is no guarantee of the arrangement’s long-term continuance.

Through its fabric committee, the PCC’s recognition that there was a danger of suppressing the development of its own knowledge and expertise through deference to a third party has negated this risk. A contingent risk has occurred, however: the limited capacity to address or respond to the needs of a demanding building with only very limited financial or human resources. Any anxiety this creates is compounded by St Mary’s status as the civic church of Nottingham and the feeling that the building is cared for on behalf of the entire city.

Number of members on PCC	27
Number of clergy	4 (1.5 stipendiary)
Number of paid staff	8 (all part-time)
Number of volunteers	65 to 70
Number of sub-committees	PCC 3 St Mary’s only 3

¹⁴ PCC representative

FINANCES

“The PCC is asked to pay parish share at c.£163,000 per annum, which means the PCC must attract grants year after year just to survive. This is a large if not the largest contributory factor to the deficit the PCC is running, which currently stands at c.£86,000 across the PCC’s three churches.”¹⁵

St Mary’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Building Fabric Repairs. They anticipate Parish Share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs and Parish Share are regularly the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁶

The PCC sets an annual budget and spending is reviewed by its finance committee every three months. The finances of all three churches are managed as single unit by the PCC and funds are allocated to any of the three churches as need dictates from the ‘unrestricted funds’ pot of money. In addition, there are restricted funds tied exclusively to each church. St Mary’s restricted funds, for example, include monies raised through the HLF for roof repairs and associated heritage outreach work. There is no general designated or restricted fabric fund but the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham does administer a small restricted fund on behalf of the PCC for use in keeping St Mary’s chancel waterproof. It is unclear if this linked to Chancel Repair Liability.

Each of the three churches in the City Parish has its own insurance policy. The insurance cover is set up within the Southwell and Nottingham diocesan scheme which was negotiated with Ecclesiastical, resulting in a 25% discount for a long term agreement. The cover is 75% of the repair/restoration costs. For utilities, the PCC uses an energy consultant recommended by the diocese who checks the market & sets up the contracts.

The income of St Mary’s does not meet its annual expenditure. PCC reserves are being used at such a rate that it is predicted they will run out in 10 to 15 years; the PCC is already running an annual deficit of c.£60,000. As well as repairs, the outstanding major cost to the PCC is parish share. This is set at c.£163,000 for the three churches in the group. The PCC is currently in dialogue with the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham about the level of parish share it is asked to pay, especially given that 1.5 clergy have left the group and not been replaced in the past five years. The PCC is strongly supportive of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham’s mission to ensure there is a Church of England presence in every community and is determined to contribute to this endeavour as it is able, but it is fearful that

current financial pressures, exacerbated by the amount of parish share it is asked to pay, which is consequently impacting upon individuals, is threatening the long-term sustainability of the churches in the group. Paying for parish share from reserves is not a viable solution.

The PCC received a substantial donation from two members of St Mary’s congregation towards the cost of installing a new floor and heating system in 2013; however, such donations are infrequent. The Friends of St Mary’s usually raises money for work to be done at St Mary’s, particularly its fixtures and fittings. It recently paid for the floor around St Mary’s Jacobean Communion Table to be cleaned, for example. In 2015 The PCC, on behalf of St Mary’s, received £217,600 from the HLF, plus £42,737 from the Listed Places of Worship VAT Grant scheme plus £55,000 in other grants as contributory funding towards repairing St Mary’s nave roof and introducing a new scheme of interpretation into the church. The ‘other grants’ also enabled work on improved access to the roofs and tower. The guidebook, published in 2016 as part of the HLF-funded project, currently retails at £3.00.

Day-to-day income is generated through visitor donations, an annual stewardship campaign, St Peter’s Coffee House (based at St Peter’s church) and the hiring of St Mary’s as a venue. The hire charge for St Mary’s is set on a sliding scale: £2,000/day for commercial operations; £1,000 for community groups; and discretionary fees for Christian activities. An events manager has been employed on a freelance basis in an attempt to facilitate an increase in the revenue generated from hiring out the church. Staffing costs at St Mary’s total £55,000 for their proportion of parish office admin support, a part-time director of music, part-time verger and part-time events manager. Other costs include £4,300 in office costs and £7,600 in music costs. £4,000 is spent on investment management fees.

¹⁵ PCC representative

¹⁶ Survey results

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Mary's financial position has been extracted from the most recent budget projections for the parish.¹⁷

The churches in the group have a long history of philanthropy and supporting those in need. Amongst other charitable giving, the PCC supports Emmanuel House, a parish-wide initiative based in the Hockley area of Nottingham that helps the homeless and others in desperate need. The PCC's ambition is to raise £10,000 per year for three years. It has met this target for past two years.

Through its honorary Treasurer and Finance Committee the PCC executes the complex and not insubstantial task of managing income and expenditure admirably; however, its task is not assisted by having to respond to the demands of three different, but administratively interdependent, buildings with different needs and different roles to play in Nottingham's diverse community. In the context of operating joint finances across the three buildings it is hard to make a clear assessment of St Mary's financial strengths and weaknesses since it is difficult to consider it in isolation.



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¹⁷ Estimated costs for St Mary's Church 2017

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Mary's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁸

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Mary's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURES 2017	
Total QI cost	Not provided
Urgent QI cost	Not provided
Annual maintenance cost	£19,000
Parish share cost	£60,000
Insurance cost	£15,400
Utilities cost	£21,000
Major project cost requirement (annually for five years to address needs currently identified by conservation architect).	£250,000

Annual donations income	£88,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£27,000
Lettings Income	£14,000
Other income i.e. land/ interest	Uncertain
Individual project income	Not projected

¹⁸ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“Generally the Church is well cared for but the scale of the structure causes many principal capital expenditure projects to be beyond the ability of the parish to fund.”¹⁹

RECENT PROJECT AT ST MARY’S

A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant awarded through the Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) stream enabled the nave roof’s lead covering to be removed, recast and re-fixed at a cost of c.£220,000 (the total project cost, including improved access to the roofs and tower and heritage activities was c.£256,000).

The project was originally intended to include repairs to the tower roof and other roofs, but, following investigations by English Heritage (now Historic England), and the exponentially increasing costs, it was re-orientated and focussed exclusively on replacing the nave roof. The original estimate for re-covering the nave was c.£92,000, some c.£130,000 short of the actual cost. Because the project focussed on the nave roof, this has left the tower roof in even greater need of repair.

St Mary’s latest Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was carried out in 2013. The report does not include costs but offers a detailed assessment of the needs of St Mary’s over the next five years. Urgent (required within two years) works include, but are not limited to, repairs to window tracery and mullions; extensive re-pointing; considerable external stone repairs and pre-emptive or precautionary measures to prevent stone repairs becoming unmanageably wieldy; and improvements to drainage. The QI report also recommends a period of systematic monitoring as there has certainly been structural movement of St Mary’s in the past.²⁰



Welcome board outside St Mary’s

The report is now three years old and the PCC has addressed as many of its recommendations as possible. The PCC has, for example, had a number of items from its backlog of repairs costed, including repairs to the tower’s access turret at a cost of c.£30,000, work on which is actually underway, and drainage repairs at £15-20,000. Restricted access between the chapter house and chancel roofs is also a primary concern: currently checking whether there is water build up requires climbing on the roof, so this makes frequent monitoring difficult. The PCC would like to install access door and additional drain at a cost of c.£25,000. A total of £18,000 has been raised so far. An English Heritage/Historic England inspection in 2014 paid tribute to the efforts of the PCC by describing St Mary’s as ‘well cared for’.

Other than the total renewal of St Mary’s nave roof, the PCC has carried out a range of repairs and new works over the last 20 years or so. These include a £250,000 restoration of the exterior; replacing decaying stonework and large sections of the roofing; a complete renewal of electrical services; the installation of new kitchen and lavatory facilities; the installation of a new nave floor (including some structural laser-monitoring), complete with underfloor heating; the installation of a new sound system; and the conservation of nine badly buckled panels of stained glass from the west window.

There is a project underway, led by the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS), to conserve a set of early twentieth-century vestments. Of these projects, the installation of the new floor was the costliest and has arguably had the greatest impact. Designed by internationally-renowned artist Tess Jaray, incorporating a new heating system and installed in 2013 at a cost of c.£250,000, St Mary’s ‘new’ floor is both aesthetically bold and very useful. Its installation, at the expense of the former raised pew platforms, has allowed the PCC to broaden the range of activities it offers to include dinners, theatre ‘in the round’ and fashion shows.

The Victorian Society values St Mary’s interior very highly, commenting in 2012, with regard to the then-proposed, now installed new floor, that ‘Installing such a floor would be a mistake the church – and its visitors – end up regretting in future years.’²¹ There is little evidence to suggest that Jaray’s design has led to regret in the years following its installation, with the PCC reporting overwhelmingly positive reactions to it. It was paid for thanks in large part to a generous donation from two parishioners.

¹⁹ Llewellyn, D, ‘Summary Building Description’, 2014

²⁰ Rogan, P ‘quinquennial inspection: church of st mary, nottingham’, July 2013

²¹ www.victoriansociety.org.uk/news/church-design-mistaken/

The PCC's medium to long-term ambition includes:

- Resolving all damp issues.
- Cleaning and restoring all monuments.
- Cleaning and restoring all windows.
- Cleaning all internal stonework.
- Renew or replace the lighting system.
- Install a glazed porch at the west end and make this, rather than the south door, the principal entrance to St Mary's.
- Establish a new welcome area at west end, possibly with a shop/coffee space.
- Ensure the tower is as fully accessible as possible for visitors, with accompanying interpretation.
- Install modern interpretation of the whole building, linked to smartphones.

The installation of modern interpretation is an ambition fostered by the nave roof repair project. As part of the HLF funded GPOW repair project the PCC was encouraged to form a volunteer research team, who assembled material that was then edited into a guide book. Although this took a proportionately large amount of time to achieve compared with amount of money made available through the grant, the PCC found it a rewarding exercise and is encouraged to carry out further work.

The PCC has a range of documents to help it manage the building, including an accessibility audit, maintenance plan and a statement of significance. These documents are considered to be occasionally helpful, with a health and safety assessment, valued especially in preparation for school visits.

St Mary's has a range of management documents: Accessibility audit, maintenance plan, strategic document, and a Statement of Significance. It has an average number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²²

Comments left in the visitors' book, although usually fairly general, can sometimes encourage change.

The PCC has demonstrated a huge determination to ensure the future of St Mary's. The size of the PCC (see: 'Organisation and Responsibility') may encumber its ability to effect change rapidly; however, this can be viewed as a mechanism for encouraging carefully planned, incremental change, as, arguably, befits an historic and nationally significant building. The PCC benefits from the specialist inputs of the standing, fabric and finance committees when making decisions.

It must also be remembered that the PCC has two other churches in its care. Evidence suggests that St Mary's has not suffered any neglect as a result of the PCC's attentions being divided among three churches. St Mary's role as the Civic church of Nottingham requires that its good condition is assured for the sake of its symbolic as well as material value. With the PCC's diminishing funds and wider remit the future sustainability of St Mary's is perhaps dependent upon its increased usage beyond scheduled worship. The desire and will of the PCC to do this is evident, but much rests on its ability to manage and market St Mary's as a city venue as a complement to its role as a place of worship.

OUR EXPERIENCE OF ST MARY'S *As Told By The Churchwarden*

As the Civic church for Nottingham, St Mary's has role that extends far beyond its immediate surroundings. The people of Nottingham look to St Mary's at significant times, particularly when they are grieving or worried. Relatively recent examples include when Diana, Princess of Wales died in 1997, and then when Brian Clough – the ex-Nottingham Forest football team manager – died in 2004. And then there was the 75th anniversary of the incendiary bombing of Nottingham; we commemorated the firefighters whose job it was to deal with that horror.

We are there for everyone when they need us to be and sometimes this can be challenging when it is our job to bridge the divide between people. Take politics, for example. Most people, not all, but most people in Nottingham are Labour people. Earlier this year a former Conservative County Councillor, Martin Suthers, passed away. Martin was the Lord Mayor of Nottingham in the 1980s. People respected Martin; not least because of his ardent support for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. St Mary's hosted his funeral service. Ken Clarke, the Conservative MP for Rushcliffe, spoke brilliantly; he came along with former members of Margret Thatcher's cabinet. Labour people were sitting alongside Conservative people in the church.

St Mary's is apolitical. It's not our job to make political statements or show political bias; it is our job to support people from all walks of life, spiritually. For Martin's funeral we worked with undertakers and Councillors to make sure everyone was welcome at a time the city needed us to help it remember the life of someone who was important to Nottingham. That's another of our roles, to bring people together. It's a challenge, but it's a pleasure, and it is what people need us to do. And at Martin's funeral our state-of-the-art sound system really helped. People like to be able to hear what's going on!²³

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CURRENT USE

“The PCC is working with the archdeacon and bishop in order to try to understand the role St Mary’s plays as a very large parish church in the city.”²⁴

The area surrounding St Mary’s once prospered through trade, which is reflected in its architecture. This area, the Lace Market, has been ‘re-branded’ as Nottingham’s Creative Quarter due to the proliferation of creative-economy businesses springing up. Residents live in flats.

St Mary’s is a parish church that embraces the more ‘Catholic’ colours of the Church of England spectrum. It offers a range of daily acts of worship, including a service based on the use of the Taizé community, Evensong on Wednesdays and Sundays, where attendances are 35 and 40 respectively (June 2016), including members of the church choir. A high proportion of the congregation will be occasional visitors. Services are generally socioeconomically mixed, including high number of single adults. Most of the Sunday congregation is from the suburbs, drawn by the architecture, the choral style or the traditional language and formal liturgy to be found at St Mary’s. Visiting preachers from cathedrals, churches and academic institutions are a feature of services in Lent and at other special services.²⁵ The mean attendance at services on a week by week basis is 160.

St Mary’s robed choir attains a high standard, but must deliver a great deal of music with a limited amount of rehearsal. Choral scholars are recruited from the universities and are part-funded through a choral scholarship scheme (restricted funds tied to St Mary’s). As well as services, the choir performs three formal concerts per year, plus a Bach Passion, plus various informal concerts. The choirs certainly helps to draw people into the church.

St Mary’s also participates in Nottingham’s ‘Light Night’. St Mary’s involvement is, as much as anything else, reflective of its geographic location in the city’s Creative Quarter. ‘Light Night’ takes place every February and can attract 5,000 plus people to St Mary’s over the course of one evening. St Mary’s also hosts, making use of the flexibility afforded by its new, level floor and chairs, fashion shows plays and receptions, which reflect and contribute to the cultural life of its immediate vicinity.

St Mary’s doesn’t have any formal weekday groups apart from a monthly ‘Ladies who Lunch’. There are several groups meeting regularly for specific purposes, however, such as bell ringers, flower arrangers and NADFAS.

St Mary’s wider role within the city is most clearly expressed through and encapsulated by its status as the Civic church to the city of Nottingham. This role presents opportunities and challenges in equal measure. Expectations that St Mary’s will provide Civic services; support the city in times of need; nurture expressions of the Christian faith through sung acts of worship; and fully participate in the cultural life of Nottingham make it the de facto Church of England cathedral for the city. Yet it has the status of parish church and is managed by a PCC that also has responsibility for two other churches. This means St Mary’s has a wide reach that arguably arcs over its immediate environs, gathering in the wider city, perhaps at the cost of connecting with those residents in the immediate area around it. The PCC and the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham are in dialogue about the future function and status of St Mary’s; indeed, there have been discussions under previous administrations about conferring Minster status upon St Mary’s, which came to nothing. Whether the current dialogue results in any change, and what that change may mean for St Mary’s, St Peter’s and All Saints will become clear in due course.

Baptisms	1
Funerals	6
Weddings	9

²⁴ PCC representative

²⁵ www.nottinghamchurches.org/churches/stmarys

Civic church (town use):

- Civic Carol Service
- Soldiers' Homecoming Services
- Sherriff's Service
- University and Schools' Services
- Funerals and Memorial Services for significant figures
- Food bank
- Charitable activities

Tourist church (visitor use):

- Concerts
- Recitals
- Theatre
- Fashion shows
- 'Light Night' participation
- Lectures
- General visits

Parish church (traditional parish use):

- Choral Eucharist
- Choral Matins
- Choral Evensong



June Concert 2015 (© Kevin Marston (www.kevinmarston.com))

WELCOMING VISITORS

“The HLF grant (GPOW) has been very helpful with the renewal of the church’s existing interpretation and St Mary’s increasing commitment to heritage and learning.”²⁶

St Mary’s is open Monday to Saturday but visitor numbers are not regularly recorded. There is always a volunteer steward and/or a paid verger on site during opening hours. St Mary’s has its own pages on a website dedicated to Nottingham’s churches, and the Friends of St Mary’s also has a website. These websites contain a wealth of information about the history and life of St Mary’s. Additional material about St Mary’s and the work of the PCC is available on site. This includes information about Emmanuel House; causes the PCC supports; interpretation of the building, including a new guidebook; activity trail for children; and information leaflets, focusing on people, the church building and Christian worship. Nottingham’s schools use St Mary’s as a learning resource for Religious Studies and History classes.

The PCC has made a great effort to increase the number of complementary activities hosted by St Mary’s, whilst maintaining the integrity of its worshipping life. The material infrastructure appears

to be in place, but the full potential of the church is yet to be realised. Developing a strong network of stakeholders and increasing capacity, particularly in volunteering, will likely create new opportunities for St Mary’s to attract people and funding. Nottingham Castle, for example, is currently expending a lot of effort and money on interpretation and the PCC wants to participate in this drive to help people learn about Nottingham. To do this effectively St Mary’s must establish better links with the Castle, Council and other local stakeholders. There is a possibility, for example, to establish strong links with the nearby Galleries of Justice, one of Nottingham’s principal tourist attractions.

Access to St Mary’s is generally good, but the PCC would like to improve access to the tower so that more visitors and appreciate the spectacular cityscape views from its parapets.

²⁶ PCC representative

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View of St Mary's within its setting © Kevin Marston www.kevinmarston.com

STOW-IN-LINDSEY, MINSTER CHURCH OF ST MARY (STOW MINSTER)

Stow Minster (Minster Church of St. Mary), Church Road, Stow, Lincoln, LN1 2DE

Diocese	Lincoln	Settlement Type	Commuter Rural
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	Yes
National Heritage List Entry No.	1146624	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Poor)
Church Heritage Record No.	621312	Average Weekly Attendance	12
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	1,700
Footprint (m ²)	725 (Big)	Annual Visitors	3,500
Building Period	Medieval	Website	http://www.stowminster.co.uk/



Exterior of Stow Minster

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- One of the oldest and most significant parish churches in England.
- The church occupies ground that is scheduled as an ancient monument, both surrounding it and beneath its structure.
- Stow Minster appears on the World Monument Fund's list of 100 of the world's most endangered historic sites (2006).

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Architectural development from the Saxon to the modern period can be traced in Stow Minster's architecture.
- Stow Minster has associations with notable people from history, including Lady Godiva and St Hugh of Avalon.
- Stow Minster lacks the infrastructure to maximize its potential as a parish church that is also a premier visitor destination.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Stow Minster is a Major Parish Church in a small, rural community.
- There is great uncertainty about Stow Minster's future ministry.
- The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is small, dedicated but frustrated.



High altar within the chancel

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Stow Minster is a huge, ancient building. Its historic significance is arguably incomparable among the over 600 church buildings in Lincolnshire. Stow Minster may be massive, but the community in which it stands is small, numbering only around 300 people in the old village of Stow; although, the parish is populated by around 1,700 people. Care of the Minster falls to a PCC of only six members. The PCC works, as it has done for many years, tirelessly to sustain Stow Minster for the benefit of all as part of its mission.

The PCC submitted an unsuccessful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2014 to fund a c.£3.5 million project that would have seen a fully-repaired Stow Minster established as a site of learning about the ecclesiastical history of Lincolnshire, complete with treasury of church plate, research centre, viewing gallery, café and other new facilities. It was this ostensible failure that was the catalyst for the Diocese of Lincoln to initiate a discussion about Stow Minster leaving the parish system and becoming an Extra Parochial Place (EPP), governed by a board of trustees. Since 2014 the PCC has been uncertain about Stow Minster's future ministry, which has led to anxiety and frustration among members, who, despite challenging times, continue to manage and maintain Stow Minster with determination and optimism about what the future may hold.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING⁰³

“The church of St Mary is one of the oldest historic parish churches of Lincolnshire, the site of Christian worship since at least the early eleventh century.”⁰⁴

Stow has been a settlement since at least the Roman period, although it is likely its history as a site of human occupation stretches back into pre-history. Stow Minster is one of the oldest parish churches in England and once served as the cathedral church of the ancient, and huge, Diocese of Lindsey, stretching from the Humber to the Thames. According to legend a church at Stow was founded by St Etheldreda in the seventh century. A church building certainly occupied a site in Stow prior to the arrival of the Danes in 870, who, it is alleged, burnt it to the ground.⁰⁵ The development of the present building in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth century is a matter of academic contention and many details are as yet unclear. Florence of Worcester states that the church was built or rebuilt by Bishop Eadnoth, in office from 1034-1050 AD, which is now thought to be the most likely date for the earliest phase of the present building.

The Minster was endowed in 1054 by Leofric and Godiva, encouraged by Bishop Wulfwig, as a Minster of 15 Secular Canons with the Bishop at its head. Stow and the church of St Mary was recorded in Domesday in 1086. After Remigius had moved his cathedral to Lincoln, he decided to make Stow into a Benedictine monastery by transferring monks from Eynsham Abbey near Oxford. This was done the year before he died in 1091, but his successor quickly moved them back again in 1094-5, and Stow became a parish church which it has remained ever since.

The arches of the crossing and the two transepts survive from the structure built about the time of the foundation of the minster of secular canons. The nave was lengthened and rebuilt, together with the chancel, in the late twelfth century. In 1156, most of Stow was traditionally said to have been destroyed by fire. This may have been an attempt to explain the rebuilding of the Minster about this time, and the fire damage on the lower, eleventh-century walls, and also debris including molten lead, which has been discovered under the floors.

The manor of Stow belonged to the Bishops of Dorchester and Lincoln from the time of Edward the Confessor until 1547. They had a market here, known as the Moot Stow. Stow Park, located approximately one mile to the west of Stow, is identifiable as the site of the Bishops' palace from the thirteenth century. Thirteenth-century additions include the Early English windows in the transepts, but there were no major structural changes in this period. The fine font was, however, installed. In the fifteenth century a new tower was built, and the roofs were lowered, the chancel's stone vault being removed.

There was a port on the River Trent at Marton four miles west, and much of the trade coming in here went through Stow. Following the decline of this port towards the end of this period, Stow declined economically and shrank as a settlement.

After the Reformation the church continued to be used as a parish church. The nave roof was repaired in 1685 and the fifteenth-century tower rebuilt. The eighteenth century saw reordering and refurnishing of the interior with box pews, although some of the Medieval benches were retained. The crossing became the most important part of the church, the chancel used only for the comparatively infrequent celebrations of Holy Communion.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the condition of the church was poor and it was even suggested that it should be demolished. Instead, the incumbent the Revd. George Atkinson, raised money for the restoration, bringing in the renowned architect John Loughborough Pearson. The chancel was restored in 1850-1852 with new east windows and entablature and an extraordinary new stone vault by Pearson. Remains of the old vault were discovered during the works to the chancel. The remainder was restored 1864-1878, with added vestries in the angle of nave and north transept and reordering also by Pearson. The stair turret previously at the north-east corner of the nave was rebuilt by Pearson in the external angle of nave and north transept. He also restored the roofs to their original pitch.

There were restorations again in 1927, when the pulpit was relocated. A further move in 1984 re-positioned the pulpit as part of the pew ensemble on the south side of the nave. Further works took place in 1963. Repair work has continued periodically up until the present day; the latest being a programme of works to replace the lead on the south slope of the nave roof and completely restore a stained glass window following damage caused by a tornado in 2014.

⁰³ The 'History of the Building' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the church of St Mary', 2012

⁰⁴ PCC Representative

⁰⁵ Criddle, P, 'Lincolnshire and the Danes', 2008

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **c.100:** Some form of Roman settlement, possibly a villa, at Stow.
- **c.300:** A Christian community and church? No firm evidence.
- **c.420:** Roman troops leave Britain – could a church have continued in use? No proof.
- **c.900:** Saxon settlement in Stow suggested by finds from the churchyard
- **c.950:** Earliest church and burials.
- **c.1050:** Building on the present plan has been built and is a Minster.
- **1066-88:** Norman Conquest, Stow St Mary in the hands of the Bishop at the time of the Domesday survey. Value in 1066 £32, in 1086 £30. Households: 20 villagers; three freemen; one priest; four ploughlands.
- **1091-1094:** Declining Minster briefly refounded and rebuilt (?) as Benedictine Abbey by Bishop Remigius, then becomes parish church.
- **Mid-twelfth-century:** nave and chancel rebuilt.
- **Thirteenth century:** New font and windows.
- **Fifteenth century:** Restoration, and tower rebuilt.
- **1536-1540:** Reformation, destruction of wall paintings, glass etc.
- **1685:** Tower repaired, restoration and changes to interior – preaching box.
- **Eighteenth century:** Reordering and refurnishing of interior with box pews and galleries.
- **1848-1878:** Alterations and restoration by JL Pearson.
- **1927:** Repairs and changes to interior
- **1963-1964:** Repairs
- **1983:** Repairs. Excavations on north side find portico of earlier church
- **2008-2009:** New lead roof's north and south transept
- **2011-2013:** New lead Chancel roof with some timber and stone work
- **2014-2017:** New lead roof to south slope of nave, repairs to stonework and restoration of stained glass window following tornado damage



View west towards the nave (the west window blew out in a storm)

NOTABLE FEATURES⁰⁶

Stow Minster is characterised by an ancient and austere interior, with large Saxon arches and soaring walls, the poor condition of the decoration gives a sense of slow decline. Internal fixtures and fittings are high-quality and each have their own story to tell.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Benches

Benches with fourteenth-century bench ends on the north side of the nave, those to the south are copies.

Pulpit

Seventeenth-century polygonal pulpit with decorative panelling, restored in 1877 and moved to present position, in the nave, in 1984.

Chests

One sixteenth-century chest in nave (another chest in the nave replaces an ornate sixteenth-century chest that was stolen in the 1990s) and an ornate sixteenth-century chest in north transept.

Chair

Highly ornate seventeenth-century wooden chair with decorated arms and back.

Statues of St John and St Mary the Virgin

Two life-sized Victorian wooden statues (1882) of St Mary the Virgin and St John in the north transept. Formerly part of a Cavalry (or Rood group) – the crucified Christ is missing – that was reputedly made by Harry Hems of Exeter for Buckfast Abbey.

Wall painting of Thomas Becket

Fragment of a twelfth or thirteenth-century depiction of Thomas Becket., re-discovered in the nineteenth century. Much of what was clearly a very fine painting has been lost, with not inconsiderable loss occurring since its re-discovery.



Thomas Becket Wall painting

⁰⁶ The 'Fixtures and Fittings' section of this case study is indebted to: Elders, J, 'Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the church of St Mary', 2012

Lectern

The brass lectern, manufactured by Hardman & Co. of Birmingham; memorialises Revd. George Atkinson.

Font

A late thirteenth-century font, each side bearing a single motif; a green man; serpent; Star of David and flower heads. Bowl supported on eight shafts or pillars.

Stained Glass

Chancel east window contains Victorian stained glass of 1880-1881, depicting the Annunciation, Christ the King and six roundels illustrating the Creed, from 'Born of the Virgin Mary' to 'Ascended into Heaven'.



The font at the west end of the church

Monuments

- Four fragments of mid-tenth to early eleventh-century grave covers have been found in the church during restoration, although only one now remains. A fragment of another is built into the nave north wall exterior.
- Monument on south wall of nave to Thomas Holbeach, died 1591, of stone with coat of arms and scrolls.
- Fourteenth-century fragmentary tombstone inscribed with ornate cross and other ornate fragments.
- Coffin lids in chancel floor, probably thirteenth-century, both with faces and hands clasped in prayer viewed through round openings. That on the south side has an inscription in English which probably reads "Alle men that ben in lyf prai for Emme was Fuk wyf".
- On the north pier of the chancel arch is a brass memorial to Richard Burgh of Stow Hall (d.1616). It also commemorates his son, Sir John, 'a noble and valyeant souldyer' killed while serving as Colonel-General of Charles I's expeditionary force to the Isle of Rhe in 1627.

Bells

In the tower is a ring of eight bells:

- 1998 J Taylor & Co
- 1998 J Taylor & Co
- 1888 J Taylor & Co
- 1770 Henry Harrison, Barrow
- 1888 J Taylor & Co
- 1888 J Taylor & Co
- c.1550 Henry I Oldfield
- 1762 Walker & Co, Rotherham

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE⁰⁷

“Stow Minster is ancient and massive. People love it but its size, particularly in such a tiny village, can be intimidating.”⁰⁸

Stow Minster is Grade I listed, the Minster, is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Stow Minster appeared on the World Monument Fund's list of the world's most endangered historic sites (2006) When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St Mary's chose its architecture. 32% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Stow (or Stow-in-Lindsey) is a small village and civil parish within the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire. It is located 11 miles north-west of Lincoln and six miles south-east of Gainsborough, with a total resident population of 355. Stow is located in a flat landscape of small fields mostly used for growing wheat, oil seed rape and vegetables, about a mile north of an old Roman Road which continued westwards to a major crossing of the River Trent where it continued to the Romano-British settlement of Littleborough in Nottinghamshire.

The old village consists of brick and stone-built cottages, a number of the latter being Grade II listed buildings, including very fine seventeenth-century cottages and mill buildings. An earthwork walkway and accompanying ditch can be seen directly to the west of Stow Minster, in the grounds of Manor Farm. The site may have a Medieval origin. The churchyard in which Stow Minster stands is raised over 1m above the surrounding roads, defined by a stone wall, with a simple iron gate leading via steps to a slightly raised concrete path to the south door.

One mile to the south-west of the village at Stow Park are the remains of the Medieval palace of the Bishops of Lincoln. This site is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Stow Minster is also responsible for the costs and maintenance of a churchyard extension in an adjoining village which is used as an open churchyard for Stow Minster.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The Anglo-Saxon and Norman parts of Stow Minster are of exceptional architectural significance, bridging the interface between pre- and post conquest architecture. The tower is a good example of the Perpendicular style of the mid-fifteenth-century in Lincolnshire. The plan form of the church is of exceptional significance, aiding, as it does, the historic development of Minster churches. The finely executed chancel vaulting by JL Pearson is of very high significance.

The Medieval and seventeenth-century monuments are of exceptional art historical significance. Generally, the eighteenth- to twentieth-century wall monuments and ledger slabs are of some or considerable art historical significance for the development of funerary art and lettering during this period. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century liturgical items are also of considerable art historical significance.

The east wall of the north transept has an ornate niche heavily restored in nineteenth century, containing remnants of very rare early thirteenth-century wall painting of the murder of Thomas Becket, exposed at the time of restoration, and since badly degraded.

Low down on the south crossing pier, a rough scratching of an oared sailing ship can just be distinguished. Previously considered to be the earliest known representation of a Viking ship in England, it is, however, more likely to date from the late tenth or early eleventh century.

⁰⁷ The 'Significance' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the church of St Mary', 2012

⁰⁸ PCC Representative

⁰⁹ Survey results

HISTORIC INTEREST

The first named historical figure who could be associated with Stow is St Etheldreda (c.630-679), who according to legend rested at a place called Stow while travelling from Northumberland to Ely. Her ash staff, planted in the ground, is said to have miraculously burst into leaf to provide her with shelter, after which the church of 'St Etheldreda's Stow' (later renamed Stow St Mary) was built to commemorate the event. The 'Stow' where the saint is said to have rested may, however, have been elsewhere.

The earliest phase of the present church was possibly built under Bishop Eadnoth II (1034-1050), and enriched and endowed by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and his better-known wife, Lady Godiva famed for her legendary ride through Coventry. Stow Minster is also the alleged site that St Hugh of Avalon (1135/40 – 16 November 1200; Bishop of Lincoln, re-builder of Lincoln Cathedral) ministered to his flock and met the swan that would become his dedicated companion and saintly attribute

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The ground under Stow Minster and its churchyard are designated a Scheduled Monument, partly because excavations there have discovered pre-Conquest burials.

There exists the possibility that there was a Roman and/or sub-Roman church on or near the site of the present church, though evidence is scarce. Roman stones reused in the church fabric, and Roman pottery has been found in the village, but this is not conclusive; a villa is thought to exist in the village, perhaps even under the church. The theory that Stow was the Roman Sidnaster, an early seat of the first Anglo-Saxon bishopric has however fallen out of favour.



Ancient headstamps installed within the walls of Stow Minster

The church building itself is of exceptional archaeological significance. Despite the many changes including window and fabric replacements, much original and cumulative fabric remains.

The site has exceptional potential for the archaeology and history of the Early Medieval period and has exceptional archaeological significance as a burial ground used for at least 1,000 years, particularly with regard to its potential for the study of human remains and burial practice over this long period.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The role of Stow Minster was from the beginning a high profile foundation, closely bound up with the history of the historic village and region of Stow and Lindsey and the development of Christianity and the region. There is a strong sense that it belongs to the people of Stow and the surrounding area, not only to the regular worshipping community.

Stow Minster is normally open throughout the day, every day. It hosts cultural events, such as concerts and a Christmas Fair and is also home to a pop-up post office.

The size of the church for this small community has continued to be challenging up to the present day, but is also a source of local pride.

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“The congregation at this church is small in comparison to the huge task of maintaining and repairing such a large and nationally important listed building.”¹⁰

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is relatively small but is unwaveringly dedicated to maintaining Stow Minster on behalf of the local community, the region and the nation. There is a deep understanding of the importance of the task of doing so among members of the PCC. It also understands, however, that some members of the local community, particularly, can feel overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the building in comparison with its village setting, making entering it a rather intimidating prospect. The sense of magnitude is compounded by the recognition of Stow Minster's significance, which has often manifested itself in support, by national and international organisations such as Historic England, the Church Buildings Council and the World Monuments Fund, who included Stow Minster on its 2006 Watch List of the world's 100 most endangered, historically significant sites.

Local people, however, do feel a sense of ownership of Stow Minster and express this affection in often small but meaningful ways, such as donating cakes to the Christmas market. The steady flow of tourists throughout the year affirms a sense of pride in Stow Minster locally; although, there is a feeling within the community that the number of tourists visiting the Minster should be carefully managed so as not to spoil the ambience of the quiet village.

The size and demands of Stow Minster also affect the way in which it is managed. Carrying out routine maintenance is difficult, with high level gutters difficult to inspect and impossible to clean out without scaffolding; even changing lightbulbs is challenging. There is currently an issue with water ingress at the site of a recent roof repair; however, to inspect this properly will take the construction of a scaffold at a PCC-estimated cost of c.£10,000. Even Stow Minster's churchyard is of such a scale that it takes six to eight hours to mow the grass. The impact of Stow Minster's footprint and curtilage bearing designated status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument has been thrown into sharp relief by the occurrence of a water mains leak encroaching upon scheduled ground. This cannot be rectified without statutory permissions, which can take up to six weeks to be

secured, and an archaeological watching brief. The fact that the churchyard is technically open, but subject to scheduled monument restrictions and permissions, has effectively closed the churchyard as regards to digging graves, means there have been no requests for a burial since 1921 and the local cemetery is used instead. Whilst Stow Minster is not immune to the threat of heritage crime – a number of attempts have been made to steal lead from the roof of the modern extension that abuts the north side of the church – it is not considered by the PCC to be an overriding concern.

The Diocese of Lincoln has recognised the importance of Stow Minster and the enormous task of maintaining it. There are discussions about alternative models of governance and management underway at the highest level within the Diocese. The PCC, however, is not involved in these beyond occasional intimations from senior clergy as to the direction discussions may be taking. This has arguably impacted upon the ageing PCC's ability to recruit both new members and volunteers to support its work, exacerbating a situation whereby the majority of tasks associated with managing Stow Minster fall upon a core group of three people. This is a source of anxiety for the PCC, who feel paralysed by the uncertainty the situation has brought over the past several years, particularly as Stow Minster is currently in interregnum and so without clergy leadership.

The PCC have made enquiries about joining the Greater Churches Network, but believe Stow Minster is ineligible due to the lack of paid staff at the church. Stow Minster is included on the 2015 Heritage at Risk register, where it is described as being in a 'poor' condition.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Stow Minster considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a hindrance. This places Stow Minster with a minority of other Major Parish Churches.¹¹

10 St Mary's Annual Report, 2015

11 Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The parish is in vacancy – without a priest we have no leadership and nobody to represent us, particularly in discussions about the future of the church”¹²

Stow Minster is in a group of churches that also includes Coates by Stow, St Edith; Torksey, St Peter; Sturton by Stow, St Hugh; Willingham by Stow, St Helen. Of these, St Hugh's, which was originally built in the nineteenth century as a mission hall, is under the governance of Stow Minster's PCC, and is held, in plurality, with another group which includes St Botolph's, Saxilby, St Peter and St Paul's, Kettlethorpe and St Peter's at Newton, to form one Benefice.

Stow Minster's PCC, which comprises six members, is in a transitional phase at present, as has been the case for the past several years. This is due to the Diocese of Lincoln's ongoing re-appraisal of its vision for Stow Minster, which includes consideration of the way it is governed. Following an unsuccessful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2014 for a c.£3.5 million grant to carry out repairs and adaptations to the church building, the PCC took the decision to ask the Diocese to explore the possibility of removing Stow Minster from the parish system, with a view to conferring the status of Extra Parochial Place (EPP) upon it and forming a Board of Trustees to take over its governance. There is some confusion and anxiety among PCC members as to what this means and what impact it will have on Stow's ministry, particularly to the local community.

The PCC acknowledges that the pressure of managing and maintaining such a substantial and significant church is a difficult challenge for it to meet, is appreciative of the Diocese's support and respectful of the discretion with which the Diocese carries out its work. There is, though, a developing anxiety within the PCC that protracted discussions about Stow Minster's future coupled with an ongoing period of interregnum will result in a decline of both local support and the condition of the building; a decline which the PCC is currently staving off as best it can in an environment of uncertainty, perceived isolation and relative, but unavoidable, inaction. The PCC does, however, believe the future of Stow Minster could be dependent upon its successful establishment as an EPP and acknowledges that such a change of status will take time.

The churchwardens have, out of necessity, assumed sole responsibility for carrying out what maintenance is possible and commissioning urgent repair works. A Friends group, which had previously worked on behalf of and in consultation with the PCC to support the Minster's repair and maintenance, has fallen into abeyance due to uncertainty about the future.

The PCC employs a part-time organist on a freelance basis and enjoys the support of volunteer flower-arrangers and cleaners.

Number of members on PCC	6
Number of clergy	2 ordained lay ministers
Number of paid staff	1 (organist, Sundays only)
Number of volunteers	6
Number of sub-committees	0

¹² PCC representative

FINANCES

“We always pay 100% of our Parish Share, no matter what other costs we have to meet. It’s a matter of duty and honour.”¹³

Stow Minster’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Parish Share. They anticipate building fabric repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs and Parish Share are regularly the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁴

The PCC relies heavily on planned giving and donations from the congregation, both of which are its principal sources of income and total c.£15,000 per annum. Many of those who give regularly are elderly and donate generously as an expression of their affection for the Minster and its ministry. There is, however, little evidence of an emerging, younger generation willing to support the church financially, beyond occasional donations. In addition to donations the PCC benefits from the yield on investments held by Stow Minster which total £22,000 which are held in Restricted Funds for specific purposes.

A separate charity, St Mary’s Restoration Trust holds £51,000 on deposit with a working capital of £800. These funds do not belong to Stow Minster but are administered by Trustees who make grants to Stow Minster. The Trust’s reserve capital may soon be called upon to fund scaffolding to inspect the leaking roof, and pay for stained glass window protection for the soon-to-be restored and re-installed west roundel. A restricted Bell Ringers’ Fund currently holds c.£2,900 and the currently-suspended Friends Group holds c.£4,500, of which £235 is working capital. Stow Minster also benefit from a small income from land.

The PCC makes little income from activities held at Stow Minster. The Parish Council pays £150 to hold its meetings in the church; concert promoters are invited to split their profits from concerts held at Stow Minster 50/50 with the PCC; and a charge of £200 is levied for use of the Minster as a Polling Station when required. The pop-up post office held in Stow Minster does not incur a charge beyond paying for light and heat (c.£170 per annum) as the PCC sees its hosting of this service as part of its mission. It is relatively rare for external groups to use the church; however, when this does occur a charge of £200 per day is made. Church tours, which are often conducted by the churchwardens, do not incur a charge but donations are invited. Tea towels and other small gifts are available for purchase from Stow Minster through an ‘honesty’ system, but this income is relatively negligible.

The PCC insures Stow Minster at a cost of c.£4,400 per annum, which covers 100% of the rebuilding costs, estimated to be c.£9 million. The insurance does not cover the chancel, for which the Church Commissioners hold the liability as Lay Rectors.

The PCC does not incur a charge for water, but heating and lighting costs stand at c.£1,500 per annum. The PCC pays the organist, who is employed on a freelance basis, £55 per month. The PCC’s Parish Share contribution has been re-calculated by the Diocese as part of a Diocesan-wide review, and has reduced from c.£9,500 in 2015 to c.£8,500 in 2016. It will reduce further in 2017, falling to £7,400. Paying Parish Share is the PCC’s principal financial priority.

The PCC does not set an annual budget but manages its finances prudently and efficiently. Spending is necessarily reactive given the limited resources available and substantial costs incurred by maintaining a building the size of Stow Minster. Recent repairs, for example, incurred a cost of c.£21,000 and have resulted in the PCC running a current deficit of c.£12,800 for the year 2015, with the expectation that restricted fabric funds (separate from the St Mary’s Restoration Trust funds and currently totalling c.£42,000), will have to be used to meet ongoing repair and maintenance costs. Unrestricted funds total c.£52,000. There is no fundraising strategy in place and the PCC is anxious about any unforeseen major costs it is unable to meet.

13 PCC representative

14 Survey results

The PCC has been in receipt of a number of grants and other awards for repairs over the past near-decade, including:

2007

- English Heritage: £75,000
- World Monument Fund: £41,500
- Historic Churches Preservation Trust: £32,000
- Miscellaneous: £18,961.00

2008

- English Heritage: £23,000
- World Monument Fund: £10,499.26
- Stow Church Restoration Trust: £3,700
- Miscellaneous: £10,000

2009

- World Monument Fund: £1,500
- Lincolnshire Churches Trust: £40,000
- Miscellaneous: £2,150

2010

- English Heritage: £3,500
- Headley Trust: £10,000
- Allchurches Trust: £750
- Miscellaneous: £1,610

2011

- English Heritage: £72,500
- Miscellaneous: £2,020

2012

- English Heritage: £23,000
- Stow Church Restoration Trust: £3,500
- Church Commissioners: £55,900; 43% of contract price of chancel repairs £130,000

2014

- The insurance claim lodged following tornado damage resulted in an award of c.£200,000

Like over 50% of other major parish churches, Stow Minster's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁵

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Stow Minster financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	c.£483,000
Urgent QI cost	c.£378,000
Annual maintenance cost	c.£1,700
Parish share cost	c.£8,500
Insurance Cost	c.£3,400
Utilities cost	c.£1,500
Major project cost (annual or five-yearly)	c.£21,000
Annual donations income, inc. legacies	c.£15,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	c.£1,400
Events/church hall income	c.£1,800
Other income – land/interest/fees	c.£7,500
Individual project income	Insurance claim – c.£200,000 – repair damage to the Minster's roof and restore a stained glass window

¹⁵ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Work on the external and interior fabric of Stow Minster is an ongoing concern that is largely shouldered on behalf of the PCC by the two churchwardens and treasurer. Other than repairs following the tornado damage, leadwork to the chancel roof was renewed in 2013, along with the associated structural timbers, high level stonework and rainwater goods were repaired and overhauled, paid for through the Church Commissioners' liability as Lay Rectors with responsibility for 55% of costs. A current, major concern is a small water leak in the scheduled curtilage of Stow Minster, identified by Anglian Water, the origin of which cannot be determined without excavation, which requires scheduled ancient monument consent and an archaeological watching brief. Consent has been received and work will shortly commence at an estimated cost of £2,500.

Further works prioritised by the churchwardens include replacing the failing lead covering and carrying out structural timber and stonework repairs to the north slope of the nave, identified as being urgent within the next 24 months in the Quinquennial Inspection of 2013; repairing stone work to the tower and repairing the drainage system, also identified as being urgent within 24 months of the 2013 QI; and re-leading the tower. Internally, investigations to determine the condition of the extant internal plastered surfaces are required.¹⁶ There is also a need to address the damage the heating system is thought to be inflicting upon stonework in the chancel, which is visually deteriorating at an alarming rate. The churchwardens also have an ambition to carry out conservation work on the Beckett wall painting in the south transept, which has been earmarked for a grant under the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division of the Archbishops' Council's *100 Church Treasures* scheme.

The PCC submitted an application to the HLF's Heritage Grant stream in 2014, which was unsuccessful in large part because of the capacity of the PCC to deliver a c.£3.5 million repair, re-ordering and interpretation project. This project would have seen a fully-repaired Stow Minster established as a site of learning about the ecclesiastical history of Lincolnshire, complete with treasury of church plate, research centre, viewing gallery, café and other new facilities. It was this ostensible failure that was the catalyst for the Diocese's consideration of Stow Minster becoming an EPP—the PCC felt it couldn't meet the HLF's expectations with such a small rural community to draw upon for support.

Stow Minster receives significant practical and moral support from its church architect, who provided a maintenance plan as part of the latest QI; representatives of the Church Buildings Council (CBC), who compiled a conservation management plan (CMP) for the PCC; Historic England; and a number of academics. The Diocese of Lincoln has also done much to support the mission, ministry and management of Stow Minster. Without its dedicated and indefatigable PCC, however, it is arguable that Stow Minster would have fallen into an irretrievable cycle of decline. There is a danger that the current stasis brought about by the combination of an interregnum and uncertainty about the future could erode the work done by the PCC to sustain Stow Minster. It is difficult to envisage a scenario whereby the PCC would wash their hands of the church; however, its own vision for Stow Minster's future sustainability is in danger of becoming ever more elusive as time passes. Should the discussions about the establishment of Stow Minster as an EPP, complete with a highly skilled and experienced board of trustees with both local and wider community interests at heart, come to fruition, the future could be both exciting and secure.



Repair works to the high-level roofs

¹⁶ E.B.McEvedy Historic Building Consultants, 'The Church Of Saint Mary, Stow, Lincolnshire: Quinquennial Inspection', 2013

RECENT PROJECT

In 2014 a tornado ripped through the heart of Stow damaging the south slope of Stow Minster's nave roof and destroying the Victorian stained glass roundel window set into the west wall. Sections of the lead roof covering were severely buckled and the window blown inward, shattering the glass and embedding ferramenta in the floor tiles, missing the ancient font by mere centimetres.

An insurance claim was duly lodged and, with close, productive work between the churchwardens and Stow Minster's insurers, work carried out to rectify the damage done to the roof. Specialist advice was sought from the Diocesan Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), and a plan devised for the restoration of the window, retaining as much original glass as possible. The PCC is yet unsure whether it will be required to re-install the restored window with protective glazing.

At the time of writing work on the window was yet to begin, but was expected to take around 26 weeks to complete. Following completion of the main element of work water ingress has been detected which is thought to emanate from the repaired roof covering. It is anticipated that a scaffold will need to be constructed, at a cost to the PCC, in order to confirm these suspicions so that further corrective work may take place. No practical completion can be issued until this is resolved, which is another pressure on the PCC.



Water ingress and the damaged stained glass window

CURRENT USE

Stow Minster holds services three or four Sundays in the month, and a Eucharist takes place every Wednesday in a parishioner's home. The congregation rarely exceeds 12, except for occasional offices. There is a certain level of anxiety within the PCC, particularly because of the current interregnum, about the level of attendance at Stow Minster as compared with more evangelical churches such as Lincoln, St Swithin, which attracts upwards of 200 congregants to its services. This anxiety is compounded because the other church in the PCC's care, Sturton by Stow, St Hugh, which had been built as a mission hall in the nineteenth century but functioned as the more regular site of worship up until its enforced closure, has been subject to a seven-year insurance claim. This has led to a period of enforced inactivity, resulting in a deterioration of the building and requisite repairs now estimated at a cost of c.£140,000. The PCC is determined that this situation should not be repeated at Stow Minster due to the discussions around its becoming a EPP.

A pop-up post office is held in Stow Minster every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Community-focused activities, such as a parents and toddlers group and coffee morning are held at Sturton by Stow village hall. A lunchtime group is provided at the primary school in Sturton by Stow village and a breakfast club has just started, also in Sturton by Stow village. Stow Minster hosts two to three services of the Orthodox Chapel of St Cuthbert every year which are well attended.

This is the case as the PCC does not feel it has the necessary facilities in Stow Minster to host such activities; although, the Stow Parish Council holds its regular meetings there. Concerts are held intermittently, as are dinners. An annual Christmas Fayre is always a popular event with local people.

Baptisms	4-5
Funerals	4
Weddings	3-5



The location of Stow Minsters Post Office

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

At around 3pm on Saturday, high winds caused a large stained glass window at Stow Minster to implode and large sections of the roof to buckle.

When the tornado hit the Minster in 2014 people were curious. We saw them coming out onto the street to see what was going on, quite tentatively at first, and then into the Minster. They asked if they could do anything. They helped us to gather up the hundreds, probably thousands, of pieces of stained glass from the floor of the nave, carefully sorting them out so we could see what we were dealing with. They didn't move the ferramenta, though; that was stuck fast! It was a real demonstration of the affection local people have for the Minster, which didn't go unnoticed. On reflection, the window needn't have blown out the way it did. If we'd have been able to inspect the mortar that was holding it in place, we would've seen that it had degraded. It goes to show what an impact the size of the building can have, the window is so high we couldn't get to it to have a proper look.

As for the pieces of glass that can't be used in the restoration of the window, we're going to ask the insurance company to donate them to Algarkirk, St Peter and St Paul's as they have a large project, funded by the HLF, to set up a heritage skills centre in the church. Hopefully those pieces will be useful to help with teaching.

Parish Council meetings
Pop-up post office
Dinners

Concerts
Church tours
Christmas Fayre

Regular services on Sundays and Wednesdays
Occasional Offices
Two or three services each year by the Orthodox Chapel of St Cuthbert

WELCOMING VISITORS

Stow Minster is open every day from dawn until dusk and attracts over 3,000 visitors every year. The PCC sees this as a key element in its mission. Physical access to all quarters of the church is problematic due to an uneven floor; the floor being on five different levels. The PCC had planned to level this and install under-floor heating as part of the proposed scheme of work for which it applied unsuccessfully to the HLF for funding. Both tourism and education are central components of the PCC's vision for Stow Minster's sustainable future; again, as articulated in the application to the HLF. The PCC is keen that this is retained in any new model for Stow Minster's ministry, but it is unclear as to whether it, or levelling the floor, are ambitions of those partaking in discussions about the Minster's future.

A printed church guide is available to visitors, but there is a keen awareness that this requires revision: research on the history of Stow Minster is ongoing, carried out by both amateur and professional historians, and new information is constantly coming to light. A new website is under construction, which is being built by a local IT professional and paid for by a member of the congregation as a gift to Stow Minster. It is hoped that this new website will extend the reach of Stow Minster and present a more 'professional' image to the wider community.

Stow Minster's PCC strives to offer a ministry of welcome. It does all it can with the resources it has at its disposal and is not without an ambition to improve the visitor experience substantially. It finds itself, however, unable to effect changes beyond the rudimentary given the current climate of uncertainty.

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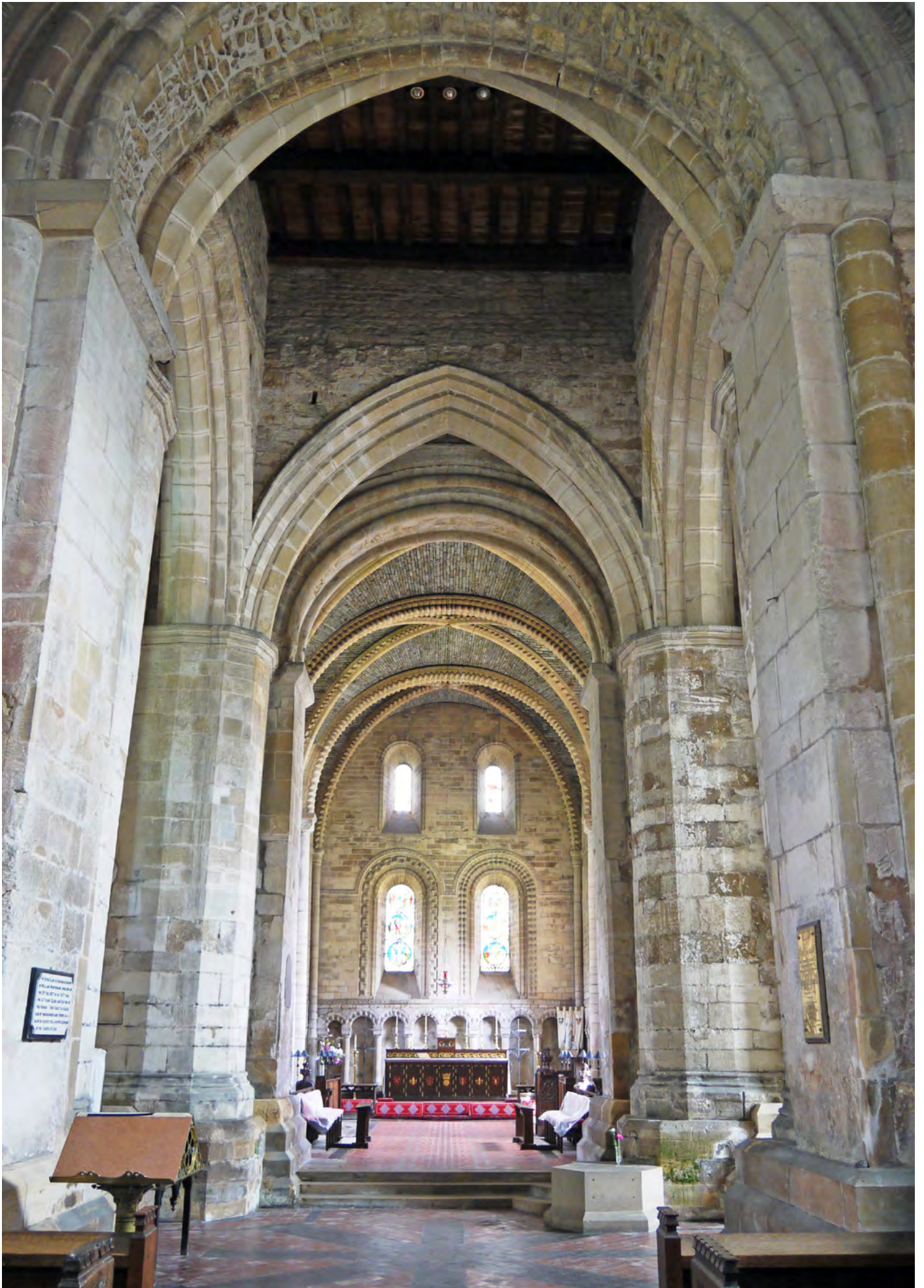
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Interior view of Stow Minster

BEVERLEY MINSTER AND BEVERLEY, ST MARY

Beverley, HU17 0DP

N Bar Within, Beverley, HU17 8DL

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1084028	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	643223	Average Weekly Attendance	351.25
Deprivation Indices	Medium ⁰¹	No. of Residents in Parish	20,500
Footprint (m ²)	3489 (very big)	Annual Visitors	80,000
Building Period	Medieval	Website	http://beverleyminster.org.uk/

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1162693	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	643227	Average Weekly Attendance	172.5
Deprivation Indices	Low ⁰²	No. of Residents in Parish	5,000
Footprint (m ²)	1552 (very big)	Annual Visitors	25,000
Building Period	Norman	Website	https://stmarysbeverley.org/



Beverley Minster Exterior



Beverley St Mary Exterior

⁰¹ Statistics based on the Government's 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation. For Church of England ecclesiastical parish statistics, please see <http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-lookup-tool>

⁰² Ibid.

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Beverley boasts two Major Parish Churches.
- St Mary's was founded in the twelfth century.
- Beverley Minster was founded in the eighth century.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Beverley Minster is one of the finest Gothic buildings in Europe, while St Mary's is regarded as one of the finest examples of a late medieval church.
- St Mary's is thought of as the 'town's church'. Its quality demonstrates the generosity of the town's trading and mercantile community over 400 years.
- Beverley Minster is long-established as a site of pilgrimage and has had a strong influence in the region.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- St Mary's has a repair costs of over £5 million (£6 million including the organ).
- Beverley Minster has repair costs of over £8 million.
- Both churches are expected to operate as places of pilgrimage and tourism and as centres for wide-reaching community activity in addition to parochial ministry.



Beverley Minster Interior



Beverley St Mary East Window

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Beverley boasts two fine churches, one at either end of the picturesque town. Beverley Minster is huge, imposing and among the finest Gothic structures in Europe. It is an icon of Beverley and the East Riding of Yorkshire, with a profile that extends across the country and beyond. St Mary's is lesser known, but equally fine in execution. It is often mistaken for the Minster by visitors to Beverley who are unaware that the town is home to two Major Parish Churches. Historically, a rivalry between St Mary's, the 'town's church' and the establishment's Minster has been played out through different approaches to ministry and purpose.

The challenges facing each church are different, but there is commonality. Building repairs are among both churches' principal anxieties, with St Mary's having to meet urgent repair costs of over £5 million plus £1 million to rebuild the organ and the Minster has repair costs of over £8 million. To avoid competing for the same, limited sources of grant aid, St Mary's and the Minster have begun working more closely together, eschewing historic rivalry in favour of collaboration and forging a future of mutual support that will also have a significant benefit to the town of Beverley. This is likely to be the first time two parishes in one town have developed such a project and approached funders jointly.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDINGS⁰³

“The history and heritage of these buildings, and how we communicate this, is bound up with our mission”⁰⁴

BEVERLEY MINSTER

The site of Beverley Minster has been home to a place of worship for approximately 1,300 years. It is widely accepted that it derived its pre-Conquest influence from association with Bishop John of Beverley (also previously bishop of Hexham and York) and is the site of Inderawuda, where, according to Bede, John founded a monastery on his retirement in c.700. This was completed in 731. Pilgrimage to John of Beverley's tomb, which is thought to have remained in its original position at the east end of the nave since his burial in 721, undoubtedly contributed to the Minster's accrual of both wealth and power, and facilitated successive building campaigns which continued until the fifteenth century.

The Minster's re-foundation as a collegiate church of secular canons is commonly attributed to King Aethelstan in the early tenth century, although some scholars consider its establishment to be the result of a gradual process of endowment, retrospectively assigned to Aethelstan for the prestige of royal patronage. Although little is known of this late Saxon church, it is clear that Archbishop Cynesige (1051-1060) was responsible for the addition of a stone tower to the existing church which received a new presbytery and gilded ceiling between 1060-1069 under Archbishop Eadred.

There is no written record of building work in the Norman period, although chevron-decorated masonry of c.1120-1160 reused in the nave triforium, and excavated twelfth-century buttresses beneath those of the present nave, indicate a substantial Romanesque structure. It can be assumed that this was the building seriously damaged by the fire of 1188, recorded by Roger of Howden. The fall of the central tower catalysed the complete rebuilding of the church, and the building which followed, with its double transepts and rectilinear footprint, has survived to the present day.

A new shrine for St John was commissioned in 1298, and it was completed in 1309, a year after the high altar was consecrated. The workmen of the fourteenth century replaced the Norman nave with a structure that, despite being under construction almost a century later than its eastern counterpart, is in architectural unity with that existing work.

⁰³ The 'History' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

⁰⁴ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher (incumbent of Beverley Minster) and Revd Becky Lumley (incumbent of St Mary's)

As a result of the Reformation, the college of secular canons was dissolved alongside any remaining religious guilds and chantries in 1547, and the Minster and associated buildings were granted to Sir Michael Stanhope. It became a parish church and by 1552 was reported to be in a state of decay; the town of Beverley itself was also in decline. At the end of the seventeenth century the Medieval central tower had developed serious signs of structural stress. There followed a substantial restorative building campaign in the early eighteenth century led by Nicholas Hawksmoor and implemented by William Thornton. Many of the Georgian alterations, however, did not survive the next century.

The increased wealth allowed the Minster to instigate significant programmes of work in the nineteenth century, primarily concerned with aesthetic and liturgical considerations. Re-ordering in the 1820s under Thomas Rickman was followed by restoration in the 1860s and 1870s by George Gilbert Scott.

The arrival of the railway in Beverley and the opening of the line to Hull in 1846 transformed trade in the town and resulted in the development of industries including shipbuilding, ironworking, engineering and tanning. Expansion of these industries, and development of the racecourse, resulted in revival of the town and allowed investment in both the Minster and St Mary's.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES – BEVERLEY MINSTER

- Bishop John of York, later St John of Beverley, founded a monastery on his retirement in c.700 at the site of Inderawuda. This may be apocryphal.
- The Minster is re-founded as a collegiate church of secular canons in the early tenth century.
- A new stone tower was added to the existing church, which also received a new presbytery and gilded ceiling between 1060 and 1069.
- The church is severely damaged by fire in 1188 and extensively re-built.
- A new shrine of St John of Beverley is completed in 1309.
- The college of secular canons is dissolved in 1547 and the church rapidly falls into a state of disrepair.
- In 1664 the relics of St John are re-discovered and re-interred.
- A substantial programme of repair is carried out in the eighteenth century, overseen by Nicholas Hawksmoor.
- George Gilbert Scott undertakes a programme of restoration in the 1860s and 1870s.

ST MARY'S

The development of St Mary's is a product and symbol of the wealth of the residents and guilds of Beverley in the Medieval period. The church, begun in 1120, steadily grew in popularity amongst the town's trade guilds and mercantile class, resulting in 400 years of almost continuous addition. The north-east transept chapel was built c.1280. The hidden Priest's Rooms were built above St Michael's chapel c.1320s. They are a Medieval time capsule of items discarded there over the centuries from 1330s onwards.

St Mary's was substantially rebuilt in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, spanning the Decorated and Perpendicular styles. This included the construction of clerestories in 1380 which almost doubled the church's height, giving the building additional grandeur.

In the fourteenth century the level of the town was raised to try and avoid water and streams damaging property. This left St Mary's, and in particular the west door, at the same level as the original town with steps down into the building. When the porch was built at the beginning of the fifteenth century it was at the new level of the town.

The tower was rebuilt after its partial collapse in 1520, which also necessitated extensive rebuilding of the nave. The church was restored and the magnificent bosses and the stops to the hood-moulds of the nave were carved to represent the men and women who paid for the work.

The town remained wealthy until the end of fifteenth century when the wool trade moved to the west of England. It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that wealth returned and eloquent brick houses were built, surrounding the church. Beverley became a fashionable town and people came for the races, the assemblies, the theatre and concerts.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES – ST MARY'S

- St Mary's is founded in 1120.
- The north-east transept chapel is constructed in c.1280.
- The Priest's Rooms were built above St Michael's chapel c.1320s-1340s.
- The tower and nave are rebuilt in 1520 following the collapse of the tower.
- 1530 saw St Mary's complete.
- Nineteenth-century prosperity saw investment in the restoration of St Mary's, carried out by A.W.N and E.W Pugin in the 1840s-1850s and by George Gilbert Scott in the 1860s.
- Later restorations were carried out by Temple Moore, George Pace and John Bilson, among others.

The changing economic situation in the town benefitted St Mary's as well as the Minster and the main nineteenth-century restorations were carried out in the 1840s-50s by A.W.N and E.W Pugin, and in 1864-7 by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Later campaigns of work were carried out at St Mary's by architects including Temple Moore, George Pace and John Bilson.



The Percy Canopy at Beverley Minster. Credit Mervyn King

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Beverley Minster's interior is as grand and arresting as one may expect from one of the most significant and important parish churches in the north of England.

St Mary's has a less publicly-minded aesthetic than Beverley Minster, but is no less impressive. Fine craftsmanship and a range of historically significant fixtures and fittings reward the observant visitor.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within both churches are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

BEVERLEY MINSTER⁰⁵

Misericords

Beverley Minster has 68 misericord seats, the largest number of any church in the country. Carved in 1520, they are most probably the work of the Ripon School of Carvers and represent the final flowering of skilled Medieval woodcarving.

Organ

The organ is by John Snetzler from 1769. It was rebuilt and restored by William Hill & Sons in 1884 and by Hill, Norman and Beard in 1962–1963.

Organ screen Carvings

The nineteenth-century organ screen of carved oak at the entrance to the chancel was designed by George Gilbert Scott and was carved by James Edward Elwell of Beverley.

Percy Canopy

Built between 1340 and 1349, the Percy Canopy portrays the concern of the tomb owner for the fate of the soul after death. The exact identity of the person commemorated is uncertain. The most likely candidate is Eleanor, daughter of Richard Fitz Alan, earl of Arundel, and widow of Henry Percy, first Lord of Alnwick who died in 1314. The canopy is believed to be the work of five highly skilled early fourteenth-century masons and represents the finest stone carving example of the time.

Frith Stool

Anglo Saxon stone seat known as 'Frith Stool'. Anyone wanting to claim sanctuary from the law could do so in Beverley as it was a designated 'Sanctuary town'. It is traditionally held that judgement would then be made from the Frith Stool. Only two other Frith Stools are thought to still be in existence; one at Hexham Abbey in Northumberland and another at Sprotborough, St Mary's in Doncaster.

Stained Glass

Stained glass of the Perpendicular east window is one of the major examples of Medieval glass-painting in the north of England. The original glazing scheme is connected by association with John Thornton of Coventry, famed for York Minster's east window. It was re-ordered in the nineteenth century.

Medieval Minstrel Carvings

There are over 70 carvings of musicians in the nave. Carved in wood and stone and depicting around 20 different instruments, it is believed to be the largest collection of its type in the world. Many carvings at lower levels were damaged by iconoclasts and have been restored but those at a higher level have survived intact.

⁰⁵ The majority of this section of the case study is indebted to: <http://beverleyminster.org.uk/visit-us-2/new-artwork-2004/> and Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY⁰⁶

Medieval Woodwork

Medieval woodwork from the original rood screen, parcloze screen and rood loft which are stored in the Priest's rooms. The 28 misericords in the chancel are fine examples of the wood carvings of the Ripon carvers dating from 1445.

The Ceiling of Kings

The chancel ceiling, dated 1445, includes the Kings of England from Eggbert in 827 to Henry VI, who died in 1471. Each is set in a gold panel surrounded by scarlet ribs and gilded bosses. The style, dress and facial features are all remarkably similar. Overall, the church contains a collection of 625 ceiling bosses, including St. John, Athelstan, evangelic symbols, monograms of the Virgin, musicians, demons, Adam and Eve, and in many instances beautifully foliated designs.



Ceiling boss at St Mary's © St Mary's PCC

The Pilgrim Hare

The Pilgrim Hare dating to c.1330's on the side of St Mary's sacristy door and overlooking St Michael's Chapel may be the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit. The scalloped shell carved on the rabbit's wallet indicates pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela: St Mary's was an important starting point for Medieval pilgrims making that journey to Spain.

Minstrels' Pillar

The minstrels' pillar includes five carved and painted minstrels dating from the 1520s. They are the Medieval Waites; musicians who performed at civic events and played music as they sang out the hours as part of their duties as the night watch. This is one of only two contemporary illustrations of them; the other being a drawing from the third quarter of the 17th century which is now in the Pepysian Library in Magdalen College, Cambridge.

West Window

The great west window was designed by A.W.N Pugin.

Portion of Corporation Pew

A remaining part of two pews that once stood at each end of the north aisle of the nave. The beautifully carved and undercut lettering recounts the disaster which befell the church in 1520, when the tower collapsed.

⁰⁶ This section of the case study is indebted to: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – BEVERLEY MINSTER⁰⁷

“There has been a worshipping Christian community at Beverley for at least 1300 years, since the foundation of St John of Beverley’s original monastery. The Minster, also a parish church, has had a wider role for a millennium, and is still today a place of pilgrimage for visitors from across the world.”⁰⁸

Beverley Minster is among the most significant Gothic churches in Europe.

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Beverley Minster chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Beverley Minster, located at the south of the town, makes an exceptional contribution to the local environment, and visually dominates most approaches to Beverley, giving it a significant regional presence.

The churchyard and the precinct of the Minster provide the immediate context of the building. To the south of the Minster is Hall Garth, of exceptional national interest as recognised by its protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and of potential interest as an attractive space providing views of the Minster from the south. The precinct area, originally the location of the Minster’s associated collegiate buildings and later prebendal houses, contains some buildings of historic interest, with Medieval origins.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The architectural quality of Beverley Minster is of exceptional international interest. Built to its original thirteenth-century design, the Minster remains an architectural entity with little accretion or loss, making it exceptionally significant internationally for its art-historical and architectural value. The double transept plan gives the Minster its quintessential ‘English’ profile, shared with the cathedrals of Canterbury, Lincoln, Salisbury and Worcester. The highest standards of architectural design at Beverley Minster strengthen its claim to cathedral-quality craftsmanship.

The fabric of the north transept provides evidence for the innovation of the early eighteenth-century restoration, which is of exceptional national interest not only for the preservation of the Minster, but for its place in the history of technology and engineering. The restoration is also exceptionally significant both regionally and nationally for its association with the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor; and of local importance for the historical connection of the Minster to the locality.

The east-end and the west-front are considered superlative examples of their respective periods of Gothic architecture and are of exceptional national and exceptional international interest respectively. The west-front in particular is considered a triumph of Perpendicular design, which, before the removal of its imagery, would have constituted one of the most extensive programmes of sculpture in the country.

Considered as an ensemble, the fourteenth-century Percy Canopy, reredos and sedilia are of exceptional international interest for their art-historical value. Regarded as one of the finest Decorated funerary monuments made in Northern Europe in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, the Percy canopy is remarkable for the survival of its full programme of canopy sculpture and the richness and versatility of its carving. The screen which supported the lost shrine of St John is thought to be of the same workshop, and equals the canopy in the superlative execution of its carving.

The stained glass of the Perpendicular east window is of exceptional significance as one of the major examples of Medieval glass-painting in the north of England. The original glazing schemes, connected by association with John Thornton of Coventry, who designed York Minster’s east window, were reordered in the nineteenth century. This could be considered of negative historical significance for the understanding of the Medieval schemes; however, the window’s successful rearrangement is of some interest as evidence of Victorian restoration practices.

The misericords of c.1520, produced by a distinctive northern school of carvers are of exceptional interest as a representative body of late Medieval iconography and as a source for the understanding of late Tudor culture, particularly within the context of the North of England.

⁰⁷ This section of the case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

⁰⁸ Quote from ‘Message from the Vicars and PCCs’ in: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

⁰⁹ Survey result

HISTORIC INTEREST

The Minster, arguably the reason for the Beverley's existence, historic fame and trading success, has been instrumental in defining the urban characteristic of the town, and its importance is evident in the granting of historic privileges and rights of sanctuary within a mile radius of the church. The Minster's constitutional arrangement as a prebendal college and its status as one of three collegiate Minster churches in the Diocese of York confers upon it exceptional national significance for its contribution to the understanding of the pre-Reformational structure of the Northern Church

St John of Beverley was the Bishop of Hexham and then of York, and founded a monastery on the site where Beverley Minster stands. Bishop John died in 721 and his body was buried in a chapel of the Saxon church. He was canonised in 1037 and the present church was built around his tomb. The relics of St John, as an important national saint, bestow upon the Minster the exceptional associative significance of royal veneration, centuries of pilgrimage and the historical attribution of military success.

A key figure in the turbulence of the Reformation was John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. He was born in Beverley and educated at Beverley Grammar School, then attached to the Minster.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The historic and archaeological significance of the churchyard itself is considerable and of local relevance with the potential to reveal major new findings which could transform the understanding of the Minster. Anglo-Saxon burials in the churchyard, excavated south of the present nave, provide crucial evidence for the location and orientation of previous church structures, whilst the archaeology of the north east churchyard contains the foundations of the lost thirteenth-century chapter-house. The churchyard monuments themselves are of some local interest as a source for local and family historians.

Masons' and carpenters' marks on the fabric are of archaeological value and have considerable local interest alongside the potential to reveal more through their ongoing study. Graffiti, both abundant and diverse within the Minster, is of some interest as a tool for understanding social engagement with the building, and is potentially of greater significance for its association with pilgrimage and trade. The 'frith stool' is of exceptional significance as the oldest tangible part of the Minster's history, able to testify to centuries of the Minster's evolution, whilst its rarity as a historical object makes it of considerable interest.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Beverley Minster is of exceptional interest as a symbol of local and regional identity and inspires a sense of connection within the community of Beverley and, more broadly, the East Riding.

The diversity of Beverley Minster's historic use is reflected through its current role as a centre for spirituality, music and tourism, giving it exceptional interest in its continuity and connection with the past. It has exceptional regional significance as a leading visitor attraction with potential to exploit this role further. Simultaneously, it is of considerable significance for its distinctive sense of intimacy, its non-commercial atmosphere and its un-cluttered appearance.

The building, rich in stories and tradition, is able to illuminate the lives of those connected to the Minster in the past through its architecture, monuments and artefacts. In this sense it is an inexhaustible building with great potential significance to connect people with objects and with collective local or national narratives. Beverley Minster is used as a venue for secular events alongside its role as an active place of worship, and the popularity of the building for cultural activity demonstrates the interdependence between Minster, town and wider region.

The present, secular uses of the Minster afford it a historic cultural continuity and considerable regional significance as a venue able to accommodate cultural needs. The size and spatial flexibility of the building enables its simultaneous religious and secular use, and facilitates the meeting and interaction of different communities.

One of the great pilgrimage churches of England, often acting as a local cathedral, in the Diocese of York and also fulfilling the role of parish church serving the surrounding area, Beverley Minster bears witness to over 1,300 years of occupation and worship, and is a symbol of civic identity and source of civic pride.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – ST MARY’S BEVERLEY ¹⁰

“The church of St Mary was from the beginning fully integrated into the life of the community, as the parish church of the town.”¹¹

St Mary’s is not only a significant, Grade I listed building, it enjoys the adopted status of being the ‘town’s church’¹²

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St Mary’s chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.¹³

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St. Mary’s church is of considerable interest as a landmark visual feature in the town of Beverley, and part of the Beverley Conservation Area. Mary’s is visible from almost every point in the town centre of Beverley, from which its particular landscape value arises. Its physical presence dominates and frames the historic town, which, together with the Minster, contributes greatly to the identity of Beverley and its tourist trade. Connecting these churches with the town in between is of major importance if this significance is to be retained and enhanced.

St Mary’s lies at the corner of North Bar Within and Hengate. It stands in the south-west corner of the large churchyard; the north-eastern part is partly taken up by the modern church hall building erected in 1994. St Mary’s and its churchyard sit within the urban fabric with Georgian and early Victorian houses lining the south side of Hengate. To the east is a small garden with the town’s war memorials. The Beverley Arms Hotel, opposite the church across North Bar Within, is another handsome Georgian building with an impressive portico. Traffic is generally not heavy coming through the North Bar, though Hengate is often congested, and there is a sharp and sometimes busy crossing at the junction to Hengate, making access for visitors to the church difficult at those times.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

St Mary’s is a well-preserved example of a prosperous Medieval urban church whose plan form and standing structure provide a palimpsest through which the principles of Gothic design, and the changing demands of Medieval and post-Medieval liturgy, can be understood. These qualities have been preserved and enhanced by major restorations from the country’s leading nineteenth-century architects.

The church’s exceptionally high design value is a product of its age and the quality of its craftsmanship. The evidence it provides for the evolution of ecclesiastical architecture demonstrates a distinctive break from Beverley Minster in ecclesiastical design.

The 1325-1345 addition of St Michael’s chapel, the Sacristy and the Priest’s room is of exceptional interest as an example of the work of Richard and Ivo de Raughton, derived wholly from its unique design and aesthetic values. This work, of the highest quality, is believed to have been used as a model for later work at York Minster and therefore may be of considerable significance, though this is subject to further investigation. The key interest of this scheme is its revolutionary stone vaulting, and uniquely traceried windows, the forms of which create a consistent overall aesthetic reflective of St Mary’s unique position in the episcopal firmament of Beverley. Portions of carved stone from the Easter sepulchre and other internal monuments, stored in the Priest’s room, are of considerable significance for their quality and associations. One particular stone, adorned with graffiti and a mason’s mark, is believed to be the work of Richard and Ivo de Raughton. There are also panels from the original Ceiling of Kings in gold leaf on oak depicting Edward III and Henry VI (dated 1445).

¹⁰ This section of the case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

¹¹ Quote from ‘Message from the Vicars and PCCs’ in: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

¹² Survey result

¹³ Survey result

The principal architects involved in the restorations of St Marys' in the nineteenth century were AWN and EW Pugin and George Gilbert Scott.

The principal architects involved in the restorations of St Marys' in the nineteenth century were AWN and EW Pugin and George Gilbert Scott.

The restoration campaigns of the two Pugins during the nineteenth century are of considerable regional and, potentially, subsequent to further study, national interest, for their exquisite craftsmanship and skill in execution.

The significance of these particular schemes arises from their highly sympathetic approach to the Medieval fabric, enhancing the west window, the south transept, and much of the interior, without detracting from its Medieval character. Fully understanding these schemes, as well as the other nineteenth and twentieth-century campaigns of GG Scott, J Oldrid Scott, Temple Moore, Leslie Moore, George Pace and John Bilson have great potential and are of major importance if this significance is to be enhanced.

One particular feature worth noting is the Pilgrim Hare or Lewis Carroll Rabbit flanking the door to the sacristy. Believed to have been the inspiration for the fictional character, this piece of carving is of exceptional interest for its potential literary association.

The painted ceiling of the chancel, originally built in 1445, and sympathetically restored under William Padgett in 1863, is of exceptional art historical interest as a unique scheme of paintings. Two of the panels, removed during the nineteenth-century restoration, are of exceptional interest, not only for their aesthetic value, but also their evidential value for understanding the original scheme. The extensive suite of additional ceiling paintings in the porch, the nave, the chapel of Holy Trinity, the tower and the aisles are of considerable significance for their design value alone; however, their aesthetic value contributes greatly to the general aesthetic and identity of the church.

Medieval woodwork from the original rood screen, parclose screen and rood loft which are stored in the Priest's room are of exceptional interest as architectural relics of the Medieval church. The collection of 625 ceiling bosses throughout the church are of exceptional significance and have great potential for further study. The 28 misericords in the chancel are of exceptional interest as an example not only of the fine wood carving of the Ripon carvers, but also characteristically represent the typological development of the wild man misericord in English art in the wider context.

A Maiden's Garland on display in the Priest's room and dating to 1680 is of exceptional significance as the oldest surviving example in the country. St Mary's nineteenth-century weather-vane, allegedly designed by AWN Pugin before his death in 1852, and completed by his son EW Pugin in the second half of the nineteenth century, is of considerable interest for its associations and design value. The great west window, designed by AWN Pugin, is of considerable significance for its design, aesthetic and architectural interest. Finally, the three-light window to the north of St Michael's chapel contains the only piece of Medieval glass in the church and is therefore of considerable interest in its own right.

HISTORIC INTEREST

St. Mary's has stood as a beacon of continuous Christian mission for over 996 years.

The archaeological evidence for the development of the site, from its humble twelfth-century origins to the church we see today, has considerable historical significance and potential in connecting visitors with the history of the site's long relationship with Christianity. As a centre for Christian worship for over 800 years, the church is a highly important illustration of past attitudes to Christianity, past Christian practices and changing approaches to religious architecture.

Its long and often complex architectural history reveals not only the evolving Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular fashions of the time, but also the institutional value of St Mary's as the 'town's' church, a building divided from its mother house, the Minster. A special part of this historical interest is the strength of its ties with the town's mercantile history, which find physical expression in many of the chapels in the church, and to which the church owes its great size. Although the patrons of this church are not celebrated, the mercantile community are collectively significant in their own right. It can therefore be argued that much of St. Mary's historical significance derives from the continuity of community value of the 'town's church'.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

St Mary's has considerable significance deriving from its archaeological value. Despite some changes, fabric replacement and restoration, much of the fifteenth-century fabric remains. In 2004, the removal of the existing staircase revealed locally significant evidence for an earlier stair, presumably contemporary with the construction of the south aisle wall of the nave in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries.

In 1993, substantial fourteenth-century limestone wall foundations and a number of pad-stones, together with associated hearths and mortar/clay floors, of some interest, were observed and recorded in the Northern graveyard of the church.

The full extent of St. Mary's archaeological interest has not yet been realised because so much of the church has not yet been investigated. Such study has great archaeological potential to bring about a better understanding of the original twelfth-century structure.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Just as St. Mary's is a place of collective faith, religious worship and experience, it is also one of considerable communal significance as a centre for mission, community outreach and cultural heritage tourism. Its considerable communal significance springs from its value to the community, providing concert and festival venues, community services and exhibitions at a local level, acting as a focus for community life in Beverley. Its communal significance is also derived from its amenity value, and its active and sustained use by worshippers, residents and tourists, providing religious services, civic services beyond the worshipping congregation and cultural heritage tourism. Having maintained its capacity as the 'town's church', a large part of this communal significance derives from the continuity of this role throughout its long, varied history.



A service in Beverley Minster Credit Mervyn King

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDINGS' SIGNIFICANCE

'These two huge and significant churches have helped Beverley to punch way above its weight as a town. Interestingly, the local community often describe the Minster as grand and St Mary's as beautiful.'¹⁴

Beverley Minster is an iconic building that can be viewed as the symbol of Beverley. It dominates views of the town for miles around. When in the town, however, it is not so readily visible and it is St Mary's that comes to the fore. It is interesting that both churches are used as symbols of the local press and both serve to represent the town. The churches are situated at either end of Beverley and each church has its own identity and ministry, distinct from the other but joined in a shared faith and missional determination. The prospect of two major parish churches, each occupying a geographically opposite sphere of a modestly-sized historic market town and adjoined by the principal street that runs through it, inevitably leads to not-unfounded perceptions of entrenched rivalry, both from within and without.

Historically, the relationship between the Minster and St Mary's has waxed and waned, partly as a reflection of national events or regional power and wealth and partly because of local personalities and politics. To understand the significance of the present shared efforts to engage with the challenges of repair, development, mission and ministry it is important to understand and respect the heritage of both buildings. It is also necessary to acknowledge the differences between their ecclesiastical, liturgical, community and cultural roles. In each case the respective buildings make distinctive contributions to the ethos, opportunities and challenges of the current environment.

Both churches are recognisable on a local, regional, national and even on international level but the Minster tends to have a greater reach whereas St Mary's has a profile that has greater impact locally. There is a universal recognition that Beverley would not be the town it is today if these churches had not been built. The extensive ministry of both churches is arguably facilitated by the beauty of both the buildings.

The Minster has an historic function as a site of pilgrimage, now closely connected to tourism. The combination of architectural and spiritual aesthetics and integrity gives the Minster agency to 'alter and change people's lives'.¹⁵ St Mary's has always focussed primarily on the spiritual and social experience of the townspeople, rather than travellers. Today the distinction is not so clear cut as tourism is important to all Major Parish Churches and universal expectations can be challenging.

Visitors to Beverley who enter the town, particularly from the north, sometimes find themselves at St Mary's and then leave St Mary's believing they have visited the Minster, having not realised that the town boasts two substantial and significant churches. (See 'Welcoming visitors' for further insight).

It is arguable that the two churches' respective titles as shorthand for degrees of 'importance'. 'Minster' implies a high status and a wide reach; 'St Mary's' is more parochial. For the Minster, which is larger than many cathedrals (and has a profile equal to some cathedrals), its perceived status can distort perceptions about its resilience. It is deprived of the resources available to these recognised group of mother churches (guaranteed clergy that are paid for by the central Church of England, for example), yet bears the expectation that it will fulfil the role of a cathedral, and most of what that entails. Both St Mary's and the Minster, have, however, used their respective titles to communicate succinctly the differing scope and nature of their ministries.

¹⁴ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher and Revd Becky Lumley

¹⁵ Quote from Revd. Jeremy Fletcher

This is clearly a misunderstanding in respect of both sites and many local people will have only some idea of how either building is funded or its ministry sustained. Whilst the Minster benefits from the Beverley Old Fund it still needs to raise funding to fill the gap between the income from that and the actual costs of repairing and maintaining an enormous building. It also, like St Mary's, faces costs of parish share, management of the building and delivering parochial ministry. (See Finance, below.)

There are shared issues relating to archaeology, in that any changes to either building would require archaeological evaluation. There is, however, a great deal of research evidence for the Minster and comparatively little post-nineteenth century analysis for St Mary's. Similarly, both buildings are vulnerable to heritage crime, including vandalism, metal theft and anti-social behaviour, but St Mary's tends to experience more problems of this sort.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Beverley Minster and St Mary's both consider the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Beverley Minster and St Mary's with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁶

¹⁶ Survey result

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The historic rivalry is deep, but everyone is working hard to keep everything together.”¹⁷

St Mary's is served by the incumbent and four churchwardens due to an historical anomaly (the usual number is two). St Mary's also employs a part-time administrator, a freelance cleaner and has a director of music and assistant director of music (paid nominally). The PCC has assumed the responsibility of its Medieval guild member forebears, as it now has oversight over the fabric of the building and the curtilage.¹⁸ The incumbent oversees everything that goes on at the church. She occupies a leadership role and delegates responsibilities. She is felt by the churchwardens to be very supportive, particularly as she gives people the freedom to develop within their roles.

The PCC oversees various sub-committees, including a fabric committee. All committees and groups operate under Terms of Reference. The PCC is supported by a separately constituted Friends group, which raises money for various projects. It is not confined to building-related projects but, rather, is involved in all aspects of church life. The PCC employs two part-time administrators and a freelance consultant as a grants manager. Volunteer welcomers, who are managed by St Mary's non-stipendiary, part-time curate, keep the church open every day.

The fact that most people involved in managing the church building are volunteers can be problematic. This is because there is a lot of pressure on people's time and continued participation cannot be guaranteed. This is particularly the case with welcomers. If they decide to stop volunteering the church cannot be opened and people have an expectation that a church of the size of St Mary's will be open every day. In order to increase St Mary's sustainability, it is felt that paid staff are required to keep the church open and to help visitors understand the building. This will not only relieve the pressure on volunteers, but would also free up the PCC to develop its mission work.

Beverley Minster has two full-time clergy, a non-stipendiary curate, three volunteer lay readers and a number of retired clergy. It is served by five churchwardens. The Minster parish also includes three 'daughter' churches, and is associated with the Parish of Routh, where the Minster's incumbent is priest in charge. The current incumbent is also rural dean of the Beverley Deanery and Chair of the Greater Churches Network.¹⁹

The Minster is managed by a traditional PCC governance structure. The PCC has various sub-committees:

- **Finance:** advises on financial matters and gives detailed scrutiny to financial affairs.
- **Mission Action:** advises on mission in the parish and beyond, including the distribution of financial support.
- **Plant and Facilities:** advises on property issues, manages and maintains PCC property.
- **Worship:** advises the Minister and the PCC about worship within the Minster.
- **Minster Youth and Children:** oversees all aspects of Youth and Children's Ministry.
- **Enterprise:** has an overview of all income generation, and "outward facing" parts of the Minster's life.
- **Staffing:** reviews the terms and conditions under which staff are employed and advises on staffing issues.²⁰

¹⁷ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher and Revd Becky Lumley

¹⁸ Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

The PCC employs two youth and children's ministers, three virgers²¹, a shop manager, a director of music, an assistant organist, three secretarial and reception staff, and an accountant. Most roles are part-time.

The PCC is supported financially by the long-established Beverley Old Fund. The relationship between the PCC and the Old Fund is regulated by a 'memorandum of understanding', which is renewed annually. The Friends of Beverley Minster contribute to projects that enhance the church building and improve the welcome for visitors. Over 100 people currently volunteer at the Minster, helping across many areas of parish life, including both financial support and invaluable help in fundraising activity, manning reception in the Parish Centre (for which the PCC is also responsible), stewarding at events and other mission-related activities.²²

In 2015 the Minster and St Mary's formally constituted a Joint Board, chaired by the Archdeacon of the East Riding, to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project to secure and develop the material, spiritual and missional future of both churches. This constructive and forward-looking proposal respects the particular historic qualities and heritage of both parishes whilst seeking to unite in all that they have in common. It will enhance the sustainability of both buildings without diminishing the important and distinctive ways each church serves Beverley and the wider community.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Number of members on PCC	32
Number of clergy	1 Incumbent 1 non-stipendiary Curate 1 House for duty
Number of paid staff	16
Number of volunteers	100+
Number of sub-committees	9

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Number of members on PCC	23
Number of clergy	1 Incumbent 1 non-stipendiary Curate
Number of paid staff	1 Split between an administrator and musical staff
Number of volunteers	100+
Number of sub-committees	9



Beverley Minster choir. © Mervyn King

²¹ Beverley Minster employs the term 'virger', rather than the more common 'verger'. 'Virger' derives from the virge or rod with which the Virger carries out his or her duties.

²² Ibid

FINANCES

“In 2011 it became apparent that at the current level of deficit, [Beverley Minster] PCC’s reserves would be exhausted by 2017...Substantial legacies received in 2013 have had a positive impact on the Minster’s reserves, and so it was felt safe and appropriate to continue a high level of support to the Diocese and to other charities, even though this results in a continued budget deficit. Consequently, the budget for 2014 adopted by the PCC was for a deficit of almost £137,000, to be covered from reserves.”²³ – Beverley Minster

“The overall result for the General Unrestricted Fund was a surplus of £34,980. Total receipts in this [year] were £144,457... this was an increase on the previous year of about 20%. Total expenditure for the unrestricted fund was £109,477...Also planned giving has shown an excellent increase of nearly 15% on the previous year rising to £52,606. The Parish Freewill Offering of £65,000 was paid in full to the Diocese.”²⁴ – St Mary’s

Beverley Minster PCC sets a budget annually, which the finance committee reviews six times per annum. The Minster’s budget and income and expenditure are fairly stable; however, the PCC runs a structural deficit, relying on legacies to break even. It is the policy of the PCC to maintain unrestricted general funds at a level which equates to three months general operating expenses plus one extra month’s salaries. The reserves policy was amended in 2015 to include an additional £50,000 capital reserve.²⁵ It holds c.£300,000 in disposable reserves and expects to run a deficit of £85,910 in 2016. Total funds as of 31 December 2015 stood at £1,892,930; up from £1,783,841 in 2014.

The PCC received £85,500 in bequests and c.£20,000 in donations in 2015; however, income from catering, concerts and the Minster shop was down on 2014. The 2015 wedding fair, Prince’s Trust dinner, festival of food and drink and the Christmas tree festival all showed financial success. The Beverley Old Fund provides an annual fund of £250,000 for repairs and employs the church architect, surveyor and three maintenance workers. While the fund finances relatively routine repair and maintenance works, it cannot fund major projects of the order currently required. This means that securing external grant aid income is vital.

The Friends of Beverley Minster help to fund various projects. The Friends, for example, donated 50% of the total cost of replacing the old chairs in the Minster (total cost of £95,218) and contributed to the upgrade the Minster’s sound system (cost of £18,893). The PCC manages endowment funds, which include bequests from Cecil Bainton (deceased), CH Barringer (deceased) and CML Walker (deceased), and the Naylor Fabric Fund of Tickton Church.²⁶ Recent grants received by the PCC include c.£45,000 for stained glass window repairs.

The PCC’s annual insurance premium is £27,070 for the building (approx. 70% cover) and £1,876 for the contents. The Beverley Old Fund contributes 50% of the insurance cost. Utilities are purchased through brokers. The PCC made charitable donations of £9,964 in 2015 and, because of the receipt of a generous legacy, increased its voluntary contribution to the Diocese of York to £175,000, up from £148,000 in 2014. Total staffing costs for 2015 stood at £176,087²⁷

St Mary’s PCC sets an annual budget, which is reviewed regularly, and administers a restricted fabric fund and a designated fabric fund. It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on the unrestricted fund, invested or on deposit, to provide interest income to the General Fund as current income from all other sources does not meet the expenditure required to pay for the general running of the church. It is also PCC policy to maintain a balance in the Restoration Fund, Organ Fund, Tower Bell Fund and the Parish Hall Management Fund to pay for essential work on the maintenance of the fabric of the church, organ, tower bells and parish hall.²⁸ St Mary’s PCC accounts for 2015 show a surplus of £34,980. The increased surplus was mainly due to a legacy and an un-used budget for a youth worker. After accounting for gains on investment assets the General Fund balance, as of 31st December 2015, the PCC had a surplus of £77, 808. The balance of all PCC Funds as of 31st December 2015 stood at £994,427, an increase of £111,235 on the year.

23 Ibid

24 St Mary’s PCC, ‘Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

25 Beverley Minster PCC, ‘Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 St Mary’s PCC, ‘Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

The PCC's voluntary contribution of £65,000 was paid in full to the Diocese of York.²⁹ Its charitable giving totalled £8,520 in 2015. Church running costs totalled £13,339 and staffing costs stood at £9,065. Planned giving income shows an increase of nearly 15% on 2012, rising to £52,606; legacy income totalled £37,461 (thanks largely to a single substantial bequest; 2014s legacy income totalled £5,929 by comparison). Hire of the parish hall for which the PCC also has responsibility, raised £13,519 in 2015, which was an increase of 20% on 2014. The PCC did, however, carry out repairs to the hall at a cost of £9,607 in 2015, following repairs which totalled £16,889 in 2014. Hiring out the church generated an income of £5,201 and sales from the church bookstall made £4,238.

The PCC also manages a range of endowments, some of which can be used for the general running of the church, whilst others are restricted to the Restoration Fund and Organ Fund. The 'Save St Mary's Restoration Appeal' has been running for over 18 months and has raised approximately £85,517. Church repair costs in 2015 totalled £22,538 while routine maintenance cost £7,834.³⁰ The PCC has recently received grants from the Roof Repair Fund for drainage works with a value of c.£100,000 and a c.£100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Our Heritage' stream for repair work to a pinnacle, plus an additional £4,500 grant for stone repairs from another source.

The obvious difference between Beverley Minster and St Mary's finances is to be found in staffing costs, with the Minster's being far higher for a much more substantial staff that in turn generates greater capacity.

The Minster benefits from the annual financial contribution of the Beverley Old Fund toward fabric maintenance and repair costs but operates a substantial structural deficit, resulting in the expectation that reserves will be exhausted by 2017. The PCC feels it does not have enough financial capacity to cover the large scale and urgent work required on the building. It does, however, run a total budgetary surplus. This is partly because it cannot risk going into deficit by employing staff. It does, however, run a total budgetary surplus. This is partly because it cannot risk going into deficit by employing staff. The PCC considers that it would be cost ineffective and unwise to use up resources on piecemeal work.

St Mary's has shown some fundraising capabilities with the success of several grants but these are one-off awards. However, grant funding cannot be guaranteed.

Beverley Minster's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate building repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.³¹

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Beverley Minster's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Not specified in QI but estimated at c.£8m
Urgent QI cost	Not specified
Annual maintenance cost	£250,000
Parish share/voluntary contribution cost	£175,000
Insurance cost	£28,946
Utilities cost	Not specified
Major project cost (annual or five-yearly)	Over £250,000
Annual donations income	£105,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£24,528
Events/church hall income	£160,396
Other income i.e. land/interest	N/A
Services fees	N/A
Individual project income	£295,000

²⁹ The voluntary contribution of Beverley and St Mary's PCCs to the Diocese of York, when combined, equates to more than the contribution of some deaneries.

³⁰ St Mary's PCC, 'Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

³¹ Survey result

St Mary's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate building repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.³²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Mary's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

ST MARY'S

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£5 million
Urgent QI cost	£5 million
Annual maintenance cost	£30,372 – paid, further annual investment is almost certainly required
Parish share cost/ voluntary contribution cost	£65,000
Insurance cost	£19,500
Utilities cost	£1,000
Major project cost (2015)	£200,000

Annual donations income	£52,606
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£28,611
Events/church hall income	£18,720
Other income i.e. land/ interest	£22,470
Services fees	N/A
Individual project income	c.£290,000

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Beverley Minster's income does not meet expenditure. On the other hand, St Mary's income does meet expenditure.³³

³² Survey result

³³ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Beverley Minster receives £250,000 per annum from the Beverley Old Fund, which facilitates an ongoing programme of systematic maintenance and repair, carried out by specialist craftspeople (two lead workers and a stone mason) directly employed by the Old Fund. Of most immediate concern to the PCC is the condition of the roof and some of the stained glass windows. The estimated total cost of these repairs is £6.4 million, but other plans for improved lighting and accessibility will bring the cost up to almost £8 million. A working group of representatives of the PCC, the Old Fund and the Friends has been set up to drive the project forward. As well as these essential repairs, there are a number of other improvements in sustainability, interpretation and accessibility which could be realized should the appeal raise more than the £8 million needed.³⁴ Beverley Minster's QI also identifies urgent works the length and breadth of the Minster.³⁵

St Mary's PCC does not benefit from the support of the Beverley Old Fund, although it does have a more modest Warden's Fund. This means St Mary's has to rely principally on appeals and grant applications to fund works as and when they become urgent. After many years of carrying out piecemeal repairs St Mary's now requires extensive and substantial urgent repairs, particularly to stonework, across the building.³⁶ These have a value of over £5 million.

The 'Save St Mary's Restoration Appeal' has been set up and a freelance grants manager has been engaged to begin the process of tackling what is clearly a challenging undertaking. The project also includes adaptations to St Mary's, such as the installation of WCs and improvements to physical access. Within the last 18 months just under £200,000 of grant funding has enabled a complete overhaul of the drainage system and for urgent work to be undertaken on a high level pinnacle.

Both Beverley Minster and St Mary's must employ the services of a Quantity Surveyor, who establishes costs for works included in each church's QI.

"The churches need a new joint vision, and new facilities and uses, to make them truly fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. Change is in the best interests of the church congregations and all who use the buildings, facilitating visual, aural, physical and other means of access to the church."³⁷

It has been apparent for some time that a considerable amount of money needs to be spent on re-roofing the Minster, repairing Great East and Great West stained glass windows and replacing the chairs in the Minster.³⁸ These repairs are deemed to be essential. In addition, there are a number of other areas, such as re-lighting that are considered highly desirable. The essential repairs have been estimated at £6.7 million, with possibly a further £3-4 million on the aspirational items. At the same time, St. Mary's need to spend £5m on essential repairs. Rather than compete for the same funds, our two great churches decided to work together with the theme of two great churches, one town story.³⁹

In 2015 Beverley Minster and St Mary's embarked upon a joint project that aims to carry out extensive repairs and adaptations to both buildings and create a refreshed and expanded visitor offer in Beverley. This resulted in a shared joint vision under the banner 'Two Churches, One Town Story'. This project was catalysed by both PCCs not wishing to compete for HLF grants, with success for one almost inevitably resulting in the failure of the other. A joint Conservation Management Plan (CMP) compiled by the Church Buildings Council (CBC) in 2015 was among the first practical steps taken. It is a comprehensive document that has and will continue to influence the development of the project into the future.

³⁴ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

³⁵ Carden & Godfrey, 'The Minster Church of St John, Beverley, East Yorkshire: Quinquennial Survey, October 2015'

³⁶ Sherriff, D, 'The Parish Church of St Mary, Beverley: Report on Quinquennial Inspection 2013'

³⁷ Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

³⁸ Chairs were replaced with financial assistance from the Friends of Beverley Minster in 2015, who provided £45,000 of the £90,000 total cost

³⁹ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

The working method of the joint-working group is yet to be fully determined; however, discussions hitherto have done much to frame the principles of the project, which will include, but not be limited to:

- Equitable board management
- Shared resources where possible and appropriate
- Shared expertise
- Shared volunteer base
- Joint fulfilment of pastoral roles

The objectives of the project, thus far determined include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the good repair and long-term maintenance of both churches
- The appointment of specialists to work across both sites
- The appointment of a project manager
- A culture of employed staff delivering practical outcomes, freeing PCCs and clergy to focus on mission and ministry
- The formulation of a joint, widely beneficial ministry for Beverley and its visitors which will contribute to economic growth locally and combat deprivation

Steps have already been taken to consider how, in the first instance, Beverley Minster and St Mary's can share their financial and infrastructural resources for mutual benefit. The Friends of Beverley Minster have, for example, reserved c.£750,000 to contribute to the joint project.

The potential benefit this project could yield for Beverley Minster, St Mary's and the town of Beverley is exceptionally high. It can do much to dispel notions of rivalry between the two churches, particularly with the public advocacy of each church's incumbent and the drawing together of the missional and volunteer communities. Ecclesiastical hurdles of varying heights will inevitably have to be negotiated; however, the relative autonomy that parish church status confers upon both St Mary's and the Minster can be utilised to its fullest. This will ensure the project is not delayed more than is necessary and also allow time for careful thought, planning and action.

RECENT PROJECTS – BEVERLEY MINSTER

As well as ongoing maintenance and scheduled repair, largely facilitated through the Beverley Old Fund, Beverley Minster's PCC undertakes individual project work as and when the need arises. A glazing report compiled by York Glaziers in 2007 identified the need for significant repairs and conservation work to a number of Beverley Minster's stained glass windows. Repair to these has been undertaken in order of urgency over the last several years, with an average of one window being repaired and conserved per year. As well as works to Beverley Minster's stained glass windows, other project work has included repairs to the organ and fire alarm system.

RECENT PROJECTS – ST MARY'S

St Mary's PCC has carried out work on the church's drainage system, following flooding caused by a water blockage under the Memorial Garden. As a result of theft, part of St Mary's lead roof covering and downpipes are being replaced, aided by a grant from the Roof Repair Fund. St Mary's has also received a grant from the HLF to repair a dangerously unstable pinnacle. The window in the south transept has also been replaced following a collapse around three to four years ago. The precarious state of the window was highlighted in a window report in 2006 and St Mary's latest Quinquennial Inspection (2013). Additionally, St Mary's sound system has been replaced, paid for by the PCC.

CURRENT USE

Both churches play host to a large number of cultural and musical events. The Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival has concerts in both venues. Other Beverley Festivals using the churches include the Chamber Music Festival, Literature Festival, Folk Festival and Food and Drink Festival. The East Riding County Choir and Beverley Chamber Choir base themselves in each church, and a huge range of one off events, concerts and exhibitions take place, ranging from Beer Festivals to Parliamentary Hustings. Most of Beverley's schools hold concerts and events in the two churches, and the East Riding College and Bishop Burton College hold conferences, events and graduations.

St Mary's and the Minster are key foci of the region's civic life, hosting civic services, including the Mayor's service and the County Legal Service. On Remembrance Day a service at the Minster is followed by a march through the town and an act of remembrance at St Mary's. This is a seamless county event.⁴⁰ Arts and cultural activities are seen by both St Mary's and the Minster as a vehicle for spirituality, but each approaches the arts in ways that are particular to and reflective of their respective ministries and mission.

There is an overriding feeling that both St Mary's and the Minster embody a sense of multi-faceted significance, support and inclusively. The local community makes use of both buildings for weddings, funerals and baptisms, as is to be expected. There is a sense, however, in which people now 'book' a wedding venue, rather than automatically go to their parish church. This increased competition is felt to have impacted upon the number of weddings the Minster hosts, partly because, according to anecdotal evidence, Beverley Minster is thought by couples to be too grand for a wedding venue. This can be extrapolated a little and seen as consequence of the diminishing automatic cultural authority of the Church of England.

Both St Mary's and Beverley Minster must work hard to secure congregants (St Mary's congregation is, in fact, growing) and other visitors by constantly assessing and reassessing the uses of the buildings and the ways people access them. St Mary's, for example, is not easily accessible to wheelchair users and has no lavatory facilities. St Mary's PCC has an ambition to install lavatories as soon as possible, having raised c.£85,000 since April 2016 through grants and private giving, which represents more than 60% of the total cost of the project.⁴¹

The joint project will enable both churches to combine the history and significance of their ministries with joint programming and marketing of activities. This has the potential to create a new model for what the Church of England is and does in Beverley. It is an ambition that is not without its challenges, especially with regard to resources. Again, though, the potential benefit is huge and could result in St Mary's and the Minster being used to re-energise tourism in Beverley, which should, in turn, have a positive impact on the local economy.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Baptisms	61
Funerals	66
Weddings	26

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Baptisms	38
Funerals	43
Weddings	18

Beverley Minster has a range of management documents: maintenance plan, strategic document, conservation plan, and a statement of significance. It has an average number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.⁴²

St Mary's has a range of management documents: Accessibility audit and conservation plan. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.⁴³

⁴⁰ The first two paragraphs of this section of the case study are indebted to and quote heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

⁴¹ St Mary's church is hired out for a number of community activities, but the lavatories in the hall are located awkwardly in its centre and cannot be used without disturbing people.

⁴² Survey result

⁴³ Survey result

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY REVD BECKY LUMLEY

Lots of people visiting Beverley come to St Mary's thinking it's the Minster. When we politely inform them that, in fact, the Minster is at the other end of the town, they are surprised. Why? Well, it's usually because they can't believe St Mary's isn't the Minster: it's a large, beautiful building that looks important. If people don't know that Beverley has two Major Parish Churches, you can't blame them for thinking St Mary's is the Minster; the church they have heard of! Do accidental visitors stay for a look around? Sometimes, yes, they do, and they love St Mary's. Other times they just head off to the Minster. Some even visit St Mary's and leave still believing it to be the Minster, but that's usually when we haven't been able to share St Mary's story with them.



Nave ceiling at St Mary's © St Mary's PCC

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Civic church (town use):

Remembrance Day Parade Service.
Legal Service.
Chairman of Council's Service.
Mayor's Service.
East Riding Carers' Celebration Service.
Ex Service Associations Services.
Charitable and school carol services.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Average 60,000 visitors per year.
Planned guided tours.
Welcomers staff seven days per week, four hours per day.
Church open 9am to 5pm every day.
Academic and educational visits.
Full-time fully staffed shop.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Nine Lessons and Carols: 1,200 attend (2015).
Choral worship on Thursdays and Sundays.
Morning and Evening Prayer daily.
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (2,500 attendees in 24 hours).
Easter Day (370 attendance, 250 communicants).
All Age Worship monthly.
Informal worship monthly.
Regular Healing services.
School services and 'experience' events termly.

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Civic church (town use):

Longest Night Service.
Remembrance Day Service.
Battle of Britain Day.
Civic/Mayoral Service.
Hospice Service.
Butterfly Service.
Fathers' Day Service.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Average 25,000 visitors each year.
Church open 11am to 3pm, Monday to Saturday.
Volunteer church welcomers 11am to 3pm Monday to Saturday.
Planned guided tours throughout the year.
Informal book and postcard shop.
Primary school, high school and university visits.
Annual Open Day.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Scheduled worship on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.
Nine Lessons and Carols Service (508 attendees).
Celebration of Faith Service (398 attendees; the Archbishop of York).
Christingle Services (519 attendees).
Midnight Service (265 attendees).
Christmas Day Service (326 attendees).

WELCOMING VISITORS

Both churches are normally open during the day. At the Minster paid virgers and voluntary welcomers host an estimated 80,000 visitors per year. Welcome leaflets are available in a variety of languages, there is a smartphone app run from the Minster website, and a guide book is provided in English, German and French. There is a feeling that the offer to visitors could be much further enhanced by better interpretive material and specialist guides and tours.

St Mary's welcomes about 25,000 visitors each year but could achieve considerably more. The parish has gone to huge lengths to illustrate the history of the church, with information boards in various places explaining monuments etc. Many of the most interesting items in the PCC's care are, however, only shown on special occasions due to a lack of resources to display them properly. There is potential for this aspect to be improved, building on existing visitor numbers to create a positive impact on the local economy.⁴⁴

The current visitor offer at both churches demonstrates a recognition of the need to provide information about the history and life of the church. Expectations that they will deliver, particularly at Beverley Minster, a cathedral-scale visitor experience can put pressure on financial resources and volunteers. Pressure can manifest itself in the need to open the church buildings regularly, with welcomers on hand to provide information alongside sophisticated displays of interpretation to engage the senses. St Mary's is already working toward enhancing its interpretation and is currently engaged in a project to record and interpret the church's 600 roof bosses. Possibly due to the resources at its disposal, Beverley Minster has historically been more confident and strategic in its approach, mapping visitors from all over the world. For example, the Friends paid for and maintain the Minster's website whereas St Mary's had to rely on the incumbent to build their 'non-professional' website.

A joint publicity campaign, where visitors are informed about and directed toward the 'other' church, no matter which they visit first has been implemented, and there are plans to establish a tour of Beverley, between the two churches, as part of the joint project. Again, the potential for future growth through joint-working is huge and could benefit the town enormously. It can also be used as a mechanism to ensure parity between the infrastructure and good governance of both churches; grow confidence among the churches and wider communities, and address issues whenever and wherever they occur.

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⁴⁴ The opening two paragraphs of this section are indebted to and quote heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015



ANCIENT PRIORY AND PARISH CHURCH OF ST. GERMANUS (ST GERMAN'S PRIORY)

Quay Road, St Germans, Saltash, PL12 5LY

Diocese	Truro	Settlement Type	Rural
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1140544	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	639285	Average Weekly Attendance	45
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	2,700
Footprint (m ²)	630 (big)	Annual Visitors	8,000
Building Period	Norman	Website	http://www.stgermanspriory.info/



Exterior of St. Germanus Priory

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- The oldest ecclesiastical establishment in Cornwall.
- The PCC has recently initiated a new and innovative model of governance for the Priory.
- St Germans Priory lacks running water and facilities.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- St Germans Priory embodies the history of Christianity in Cornwall.
- The church has a multitude of significant fixtures and fittings.
- Setting is attractive but access is restricted because it abuts land owned by the neighbouring Port Eliot estate.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Implementing and managing a new system of governance to the satisfaction of all involved.
- Ensuring maintenance and repairs to the Priory are carried out, whilst also improving facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensuring the worshipping life of the Priory is enhanced by the change in governance structure.



Interior

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Germans Priory has endured for many hundreds of years. That it has survived is no small tribute to those who have cared for it with great dedication and determination down the centuries. In 2010 with mounting repair and maintenance issues and bills to pay, St Germans Priory's Parochial Church Council (PCC) was finally overwhelmed. It passed a resolution to close the Priory.

What bore all the hallmarks of the end was, however, a beginning. With the support of the Bishop of Cornwall and the Church Buildings Council, the PCC formulated a new model of governance in 2012 that would see it retain responsibility for mission and ministry and transfer the responsibility for managing and maintaining the Priory building to a Trust. After many complex and challenging discussions, a lease, unprecedented

in English canon law, was signed in the spring of 2016 and St Germans Priory turned the page of the next chapter in its long and important history.

The impact this new model of governance will have on the future of the Priory is, as yet, unclear; however, the circumstances that brought it into being have been maturing for some time and could not be left unchecked. The future for St Germans Priory could find itself to be among the most notable in the history of English parish churches.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING⁰³

“There has been a worshipping Christian community at St Germans since at least the ninth, and possibly as early as the fifth century AD, when Constantius of Lyon and the Venerable Bede tell us that St Germanus of Auxerre founded churches during his time in England”⁰⁴

St Germanus of Auxerre was a Gaulish Bishop, reportedly sent to Britain from France in the early fifth century after the Roman military withdrawal to combat Pelagianism.⁰⁵

A Minster may have existed at St Germans from the seventh or eighth century and this is thought to be the site of a church founded c.430 by St Germanus himself, although there is little compelling evidence for this assertion. The ‘Lanaled Pontifical’, a tenth-century manuscript, mentions a site called ‘Lannaled, a famed and universally known place, where the bones of Bishop Germanus are preserved’, which was almost certainly St Germans.

St Germanus is likely to have been a Minster (Monasterium) before the Norman Conquest. The very large historic parish (once the largest in Cornwall) may be a reflection of the previous Minster status, and as the seat of the Bishop. The site of an Episcopal manor house is thought to have been at Cuddenbeak, an area developed for the railway when this came to St Germans. St Germans was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086).

The (perhaps) decayed Minster was refounded for Augustinian canons by Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus between 1161-1184, and this is the earliest accepted date for the fabric of the present St Germans Priory. Along with many churches in the Diocese of Exeter it was ‘consecrated’ in 1261 by Bishop Branescombe during a tour of his diocese near the beginning of his ministry, there is no evidence this ‘consecration’ initiated a building campaign.

St Germans Priory’s thirteenth-century windows and octagon of the north-west tower, for example, may date from before 1261, so it would be more appropriate to accept a lengthy campaign continuing from the 1160s into the thirteenth century and beyond. The south chapel was added in the middle of the fourteenth century, traditionally for the translation of an arm bone of St Germanus in 1358 from Auxerre by Sir Nicholas Tamworth. In the fifteenth century, probably during the office of Bishop Lacey (1420-1450) whose arms appear within the church, the nave and aisle were given Perpendicular windows and parapets and the upper stage of the south-west tower remodelled. The aisle was widened at this time, and the south-west porch added. The priory was dissolved in 1539 and stripped, the remains given or sold to John Champernowne, a Devon squire of the noted dynasty,

becoming what is now Port Eliot house. Remnants of the priory include a well-preserved vaulted Medieval undercroft within the present house and at least part of the ground plan of the north range of the priory. It would appear that the north wall of Port Eliot house preserves the line of the north range along the cloister. The scar of the south cloister walk pent roof can still be seen in the west face of the north tower.

Champernowne’s son Henry sold the estate to John Eliot, a gentleman of St Germans, in 1564. The church was offered to the village, a gift which they were initially not eager to accept because of its sheer size. The original long (55ft) monastic chancel collapsed or was taken down in 1592, perhaps due to lack of need now this was a parish church.

Edward Eliot was made Lord Eliot, 1st Earl of St Germans in 1784, the property is still owned and lived in by the dynasty. The parkland surrounding Port Eliot was landscaped by Humphrey Repton in the 1790s and the house and stables remodelled by Sir John Soane around 1802. The north transept and lobby (later vestry) of St Germans Priory was added for the Eliot family pew in 1803, by which time St Germans had become an estate village.

There was a major restoration of the church in 1888-1894 by the architect James Piers St Aubyn (in partnership with Henry J Wadling) who had an office in Devonport, and had designed nearby Hessenford St Anne in 1871. This work was paid for by the Earl. The floor was dropped some 18 inches, giving even access from outside to the nave but providing a sheer drop from the south porch. Later work (1902-1904) undertaken by St Aubyn (it must have been by his partner Wadling as St Aubyn died in 1895) appears to have been partly funded by Albert Burton, when the walls were scraped and this revealed the remnants of the Norman clerestory and other details.

There was a serious fire in 1966 which gutted the organ chamber and charred the roof, destroying St Germans Priory’s organ. A new one was installed and the roof ceiled and plastered. There have been several campaigns of repair and restoration since, including recent roof repairs, part-funded by Historic England and repairs to the lychgate.

St Germans Priory is now entering a new phase of its ancient life with a new management structure that is currently unique in the Church of England.

⁰³ The ‘History of the building’ section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁴ Martin Edwards in: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁵ Pelagianism is associated with the monk Pelagius and centres on the idea that human beings can earn salvation

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **c.420:** St Germans Priory in England. Romano-British church possibly at this location.
- **800s:** Church mentioned as a Minster (Lanaled).
- **c.930:** Conan Bishop of Cornwall has his seat here, from Athelstan.
- **1066-1088:** Norman Conquest; St Germans in the hands of Robert, Count of Mortain, half-brother of the Conqueror at the time of the Domesday survey.
- **1161-1184:** Priory re-founded for Augustinian canons by Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus of Exeter.
- **Thirteenth century:** North tower rebuilt as octagon(?).
- **c.1350-1370:** The chancel is probably rebuilt and lengthened, the south aisle widened with east chapel built to house relics of St Germanus brought from Auxerre by Sir Nicholas Tamworth in 1358. St Germans becomes a place of pilgrimage.
- **1536-1540:** Reformation, Dissolution of the priory, which is given to John Champemowne. Monastic buildings stripped and converted.
- **1592:** Demolition of chancel.
- **Late eighteenth-century:** Reordering and refurnishing of interior with box pews. Landscaping of park by Repton and renovation of Port Eliot by sir John Soane.
- **1802-1804:** North aisle demolished and new Eliot family pew added. Churchyard north of church cleared of burials and landscaped as lawn.
- **1887-1894:** Alterations and restoration by JP St Aubyn. Box pews removed.
- **1902-1904:** Further works including lychgate.
- **1966:** Fire in the organ chamber; then rebuild of organ
- **2000:** Organ and vestry renovated
- **2011:** Repairs of lychgate
- **2012:** Formation of the Priory Trust as a charity and the transfer of legal responsibility



West entrance of St Germans Priory

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS⁰⁶

The interior of St Germans Priory is dark without being foreboding. Its high-quality fixtures and fittings help to convey a sense of its history and grandeur. Contemporary clutter, brought about by a lack of storage space, distracts slightly from the fine interior aesthetics.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Stained glass

The chancel's exceptionally fine east window has stained glass designed by Edward Burne-Jones and manufactured by Morris & Co. The figures in the principal lights were originally designed for Albion Congregational church, Ashton-under-Lyne in 1895 and then re-used at St Germans the following year.

The south chapel's two-tier, six-light window was manufactured by Morris & Co. in 1902, after the deaths of William Morris (d.1896) and Burne-Jones (d.1898). Each light presents a single figure, executed to designs made by Burne-Jones as early as 1869 and as late as 1896. Other Victorian stained glass at St Germans Priory includes examples by Fouracre & Watson and Burlison & Grylls.

Monuments

- A fine Rysbrack monument in the north-west tower base (originally in the south aisle), to Edward Eliot, 1772.
- Marble sarcophagus to Susan Countess of St Germans, 1830.
- Slate tablet with acrostic inscription in Latin to Ionhannes Minister, 1631.
- Marble tablet to Walter Moyle, 1701.
- Pair of marble monuments with broken pediments and pilasters, to John Glanville, 1735 and Elizabeth Glanville, 1748.
- Marble ledger stone to Ann Eliot, 1723.
- Monument by Westmacott, to John, first Earl St Germans, 1823.
- Slate ledger stones to Richard Boger, 1733 and Sarah Nanjulian, 1778. Royal Arms dated 1660 in south aisle.
- Eliot arms in nave.
- Memorial plaque to Sir John Eliot (d.1632); sometimes known as the 'Father of the House [of Parliament].

Bells

Four bells of 1775 by J Pennington; three by Mears & Stainbank of 1913; one by John Warner of 1984.

Clocks and Dials

Fine clock mechanism in the south tower; large eighteenth-century sundial against the base of the north transept, missing its gnomon.

Organ

Original organ built 1896 by Hele & Co, but seriously damaged by fire in 1966. Rebuilt by George Osmond afterwards.

Statuary

An important wooden sculpture of St Anthony of Padua (c.1500); brought from Port Eliot.

Reredos

Oak panelling in the chancel, enclosing a stone frieze depicting the Last Supper. Given 1935 by the Countess of St Germans as a war memorial.

Misericord

A single Medieval misericord. Putatively depicting a local character named Dando, punished for hunting on a Sunday.

Font

A badly damaged font of c.1200 with square bowl, Saltire crosses(?) to the faces; plain columns around central drum, set on a Victorian base

Altar / Communion tables

Altar tables of oak: seventeenth-century in chancel; nineteenth-century Gothic table in Lady Chapel



East window, designed by Edward Burne-Jones and manufactured by Morris & Co. Licence: Nilfanion - Own work - CC BY-SA 3.0 [<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>]

⁰⁶ The 'Fixtures and fittings' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE⁰⁷

“St Germans Priory isn’t just important locally, it’s important to the whole of Cornwall; it’s a symbol of Celtic heritage”⁰⁸

St Germans Priory is Grade I listed and situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Germans is a substantial village set within rolling countryside on the south coast of eastern Cornwall, ten miles within the Cornish border with Devon west of the Tamar. This is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The River Tiddy (a tributary of the Tamar) broadens into an estuary to the east of the village, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The village is bisected by a narrow winding road, dividing it into an historic settlement around the church and snaking down to the Quay, and a later settlement around the railway station. The old village consists of mostly stone-built cottages, a large number of which are listed, including very fine sixteenth-century almshouses (Grade II* listed). St Germans stands at the eastern edge of the historic village, built into the bottom of a steep bank. There is a row of attractive stone houses situated above the church, on the other side of the road. A Grade II listed lychgate, designed by the architect James Piers St Aubyn and built in 1902, provides passage down a winding path to the church of St Germans below.

Port Eliot is a Neo-Classical, Grade I Listed house directly to the north of the church, remodelled by Soane with Gothick detailing which mirrors details of the church, emphasising the historical connection between these two buildings. It still incorporates parts of the Medieval priory of St Germans, including the probable line of the north range opposite the church, with the cloister garden between, now a lawn. Port Eliot is set within a large landscaped park designed by Humphrey Repton. The park is listed Grade I on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The curtilage of Port Eliot’s land means that access is available to the west and south sides of the church only. The north side was a burial ground until the early nineteenth century, when the memorials were removed to create the lawn between the church and house.

Together with the Port Eliot estate and as part of the AONB and SSSI the church in its surroundings is of exceptional ecological significance.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The present St Germans Priory is more than 800 years old in parts, and preserves more original Norman masonry in its powerful and iconic west front than any other Cornish church. The Norman west towers and west porch with doorway and the other components of the western part of the church, are of exceptional architectural interest. The south chapel, a very high quality architectural space which has been compared to contemporary parts of Exeter cathedral, was apparently built in the late 1350s or 1360s to house relics of St Germanus translated from Auxerre brought back by Sir Nicholas Tamworth. It is of exceptional significance as an outstanding example of the Perpendicular style of the mid-fourteenth-century in Cornwall, and of the highest quality, despite later alterations and restorations.

The font is of considerable significance as an example of late twelfth-century carving. The Medieval woodwork within the church, particularly the misericord and sections of the rood screen, is of some art historical significance. The Medieval and seventeenth-century monuments are of exceptional art historical interest. The Rysbrack monument, one of his earliest commissions in England, is of considerable art historical interest. Generally, the eighteenth to twentieth-century wall monuments and ledger slabs are of some art historical interest for the development of funerary art and lettering during this period. The Victorian and later furnishings and fittings are of local significance, with the exception of the Morris & Co. stained windows, which are of considerable artistic interest; although, the east window is suffering from ‘ghosting’ in the face of the figure of St Stephen, which undermines its significance, if only slightly.

⁰⁷ The ‘Significance’ section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁸ Quote from a PCC representative

⁰⁹ Survey results

HISTORIC INTEREST

St Germans Priory is one of the oldest historic parish churches of Cornwall, the site of Christian worship since at least the ninth century and almost certainly earlier. The first named historical figure who can be associated with the place is St Germanus, known mainly through secondary sources such as Bede and the Hagiography written by Constantius of Lyon.

The first recorded Bishops of Cornwall in the early 900s had their seat at St Germans. Bishop Conan is often described as the most notable of these, perhaps appointed as the leading Bishop of Cornwall by King Athelstan around 926 as part of his efforts to create a united England. Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus was responsible for refounding the decayed Minster in the late twelfth century as an Augustinian priory for regular canons (as opposed to secular canons serving the Minster). Sir Nicholas Tamworth made a pilgrimage to Auxerre in the fourteenth century and brought an arm bone back to St Germans, leading to the building of the south chapel as a shrine.

John Soane and Humphrey Repton were two of the leading landscape designers and architects of their time, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The prominent local Victorian architect Piers St Aubyn oversaw the restoration of the church.

The form of St Germans Priory is of exceptional interest for aiding the understanding of the evolution of a Medieval church in terms of its liturgy. The basic plan form, particularly the south chapel built for the veneration of the relics of St Germanus, is also of exceptional interest.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The archaeology and history of this place is complex and not fully understood. There are a number of scattered findspots of flints along the coast and estuary, and Bronze Age barrows are known in the area, though none in the immediate vicinity of St Germans. There has been much landscaping around the church and house but stray finds from all these periods are possible. There is little evidence for Iron Age occupation in the immediate vicinity, some Romano-British material has been found.

The known buried remains of the earliest church phases which lie within the churchyard and settlement are of exceptional interest. The site also holds high potential for the archaeology and history of the Early Medieval period. The churchyard preserves a relatively undisturbed area of below-ground stratigraphy of exceptional interest, due to the possible surviving underground evidence relating to the Saxon church and priory. Although nothing remains of the fabric above ground of the Anglo-Saxon church(es), the probable existence of foundations and underground remains of these on the site, particularly within the church, contributes to its archaeological potential. Excavations in the late nineteenth century at the eastern end of the present church may have found part of a Saxon building in

the form of a rectangular foundation protruding from the current east wall of the chancel (previously the Late Medieval nave), but this is unclear.

The site is of considerable archaeological interest as a burial ground used for at least 900 years, regarding its potential for the study of human remains and burial practice over this long period. The location of burials is unclear, but seems to include areas to the north and west of the church.

A service tunnel with gratings, running east-west near Port Eliot house probably did considerable damage to archaeological remains when it was dug, if any remained following the exhumation of the graves in the area in the early nineteenth century. There is suggestion locally that as well as the service tunnel, a tunnel once existed connecting Port Eliot to the church.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The role of St Germans Priory in the community has changed several times since the construction of the original church, but it has always been closely involved with it. This was from the beginning a high profile foundation, closely bound up with the history of the historic parish and borough of St Germans. The church building belongs very much to the people of St Germans and the surrounding area, not just to the regular worshipping community. Many generations of villagers are buried there, and the monuments inside the church are an eloquent reminder of hundreds of years of community life.

The interest of St Germans Priory reaches beyond its locality into the heart of Cornwall. The perception of it as the county's original cathedral is still strong, and it is also seen, by some, as the embodiment of Celtic heritage. In this sense it is an icon of Cornwall. But it is also an active parish church, providing a place for quiet reflection and cultural enrichment as much as congregational worship. St Germans Priory' is integrated, after historic periods of disquiet, into what is tantamount to a feudal village system, with the Port Eliot estate bordering the church on one side and the historic village on the other. St Germans Priory's new model of governance, with the PCC running missional and ecclesiastical affairs while a Trust assumes full legal responsibility for the church building, could test the local, as well as canonical status quo.

When asked to select one things that makes their building special, St Germans Priory chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.¹⁰

¹⁰ Survey results

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“The Parochial Church Council (PCC) was struggling to keep up with repair work required to maintain the building, let alone make it a warm and welcoming resource for the local community and visitors alike. There was a significant danger that the building would eventually deteriorate to the point that it became a monument unfit for use and seriously impact the local community”¹¹

Attitudes to St Germans Priory have changed significantly over the past several years. For the PCC, c.2010 to 2016 has been at once the lowest and most optimistic of times. There was a strong feeling that the fabric of the building had been deteriorating for over 100 years and the affection in which the local community held the building was not nourishment enough to sustain it without practical application. Fatigued by unrelenting pressure to maintain an ancient, nationally significant parish church and rendered almost destitute by its unforgiving attempts to do so, the PCC passed a resolution to seek formal closure of St Germans Priory.¹² When the notion of St Germans Priory's impending closure became local knowledge, a petition was launched in opposition, gathering a not insignificant number of signatures. Yet, without accompanying offers of substantive assistance, the PCC alone would continue to shoulder what had become less a church and more an “unmanageable burden of degrading stone”.¹³

The Bishop of Truro pledged his support to the PCC in order to stave off redundancy. The Church Buildings Council (CBC), in a demonstration of the national recognition and will to preserve what is both an embodiment of Christian and architectural heritage, offered substantive support from their Regeneration Team through the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Following the retirement of St Germans Priory's then-incumbent, the PCC was to be assisted by a new priest, who arrived in 2012 with substantial experience of working with troubled and troubling parishes. The newly-arrived incumbent was initially taken aback at what he found in St Germans and set about re-considering the future of St Germans Priory as a parish church in close collaboration with the PCC.¹⁴ From this a new vision for St Germans Priory grew; one that was radical, even unprecedented in the

history of the Church of England; a vision that would see the relinquishment of the PCC's control to enable a future for the contemporary church that was consonant with the significance of its history and heritage.

There was acknowledgment that a substantive action plan could only grow from the PCC's desperation to relieve itself of the isolating burden of the building if it were supported by a determined desire to extend the ministry of the church, which was found to be unwavering. Work began in earnest to win the trust and input of the village through proactive dialogue, consultation and the launch of the new vision, which would see the PCC continue responsibility for the worshipping and missional life of the church, whilst a Priory Trust would assume full legal responsibility for the management and maintenance of the church building. The result was a new perception of St Germans Priory as a both community asset, managed by and on behalf of the community, and a renewed church, utilised

by the PCC as a tool for mission. (See 'Organisation and Responsibilities' for further details.)

For the other churches in St Germans Priory's group, often referred to as daughter or sister churches—Hasenford, St Anne; Downderry, St Nicolas; and Tideford St Luke—there was near-palpable relief that the PCC was now free to focus on mission and ministry and be fully engaged in the work of the all group churches. Previously, this had suffered with members' attention being pulled inexorably and interminably toward St Germans Priory's repair issues. This shift in emphasis has also afforded the PCC with time enough to reconsider the missional and community roles of each of the other churches in complement to the future role of St Germans Priory. The PCC now considers itself to manage 'one church in four locations.'



¹¹ www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

¹² PCC representative

¹³ PCC representative

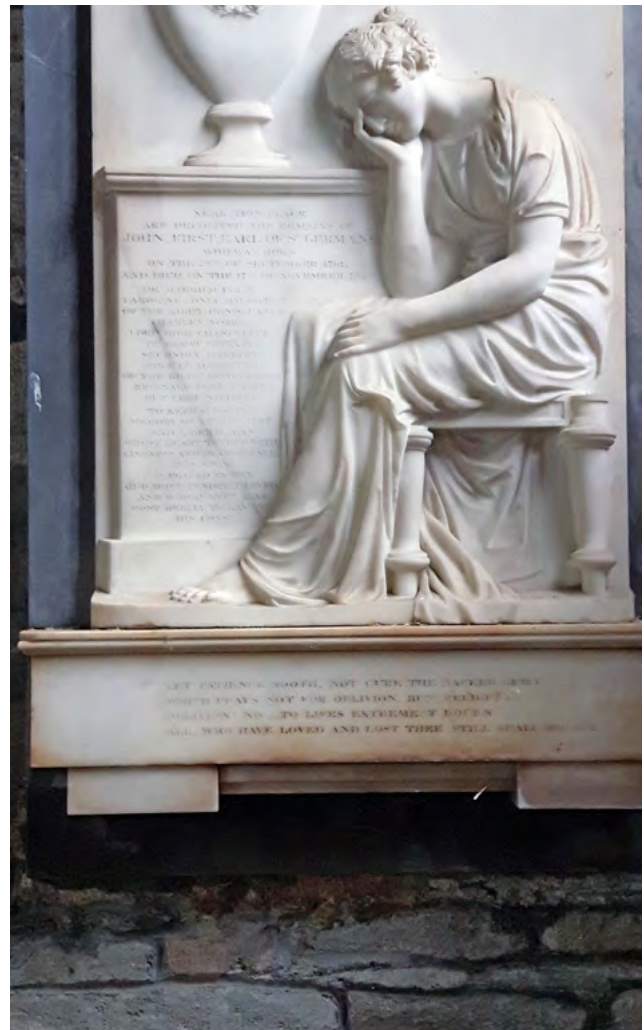
¹⁴ PCC representative

Anxieties, of course, remain. The most affecting being the fear that the new vision, formerly constituted in the spring of 2016, will not be successful. It is too early to make judgements about the likelihood of success or its unwelcome opposite; however, the local community are becoming clearer about what the change in governance means and what they must do to make it work. There is an unequivocal understanding that the building as it is today, with a multitude of repair issues and a lack of basic facilities, is a barrier to change. (See 'Making changes and Doing Repairs' for further details.) There is also a feeling that St Germans Priory is being watched to see how effective the new model of governance is although to date, no other churches are known to have adopted the same model. Pressure to act quickly from exterior organisations has been resisted in favour of a careful approach to substantial change and anxieties about demonstrating that something is happening to avoid local disillusion with perceived inactivity has been mitigated through a number of smaller projects.

Sensitive to people's perceptions of St Germans Priory and its ancient history, a change of titling has already been effected. The church is known as the Ancient Priory and Parish Church of St. Germanus; St Germans Priory or The Priory, for short. This titling is considered to be more inclusive, less foreboding, and communicate that the church offers more than Sunday services.

In a practical context, the size of St Germans Priory makes routine maintenance challenging to the point of overwhelming. This is not aided by the inherited use of space. The Rysbrack monument, for example, whose move to its current location totally impeded access to the north-west tower. Access can now only be obtained via a circumvented route through roof voids.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St Germans Priory considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be both a help and a hindrance.¹⁵



Eighteenth-century monument within the church

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

'You're giving our church away!' That was the fear locally, in some quarters, anyway, when we came up with the idea to split the responsibility for St Germans Priory between the PCC and the community. Of course, it isn't a split; not really. The PCC and the Priory Trust are working together for the good of St Germans Priory, the village and the wider community. In essence, it's a village project – people from the village can help the Trust and the PCC; they can come to services and concerts and contribute to the upkeep of the building. I'm glad to say that everyone is behind the idea now. People can see that the PCC is going to do what it is good at – mission and ministry – and the Trust is going to use all the expertise and experience at its disposal to make sure St Germans Priory doesn't just have a future, ticking along, but that it has a really exciting future, perhaps doing more for more people than we can imagine, even now.

St Germans Priory will always be, first and foremost, a place of worship – it says that in the first clause of the agreement the PCC has with the Priory Trust – but now it's going to be so much more than that. We always tried to do our best to reach as many people as possible, but we just couldn't cope with all the maintenance, the repairs, the bills; that's why we decided we had to close the church. But the closure never happened, and we can see now that is because we were brave and said 'enough is enough'. Now we feel both relief and a real optimism about the future. We would never have managed to get here without all the support we received from the bishop, the CBC, the community. It's been inspiring to see so many people invest in the future of St Germans Priory.



St Antony of Padua

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“Now that the Trust has been formed, the Church building will be called ‘St Germans Priory’. The Trust that will take on the responsibility for making the Priory ‘fit for purpose’, providing heating, lighting and all the facilities you would expect in a modern community building.”¹⁶

The formation of the Priory Trust as a charity in 2012 and the transferral of legal responsibility for the Priory building to the Trust from the PCC has been a lengthy and complex process that has no direct precedent in English canonical law. The PCC and Trust, who worked closely together throughout the process, received substantial support from the Archbishops’ Council, CBC and a range of barristers and legal experts. Difficult decisions about responsibilities and working methods had to be made, but the PCC was prepared for this given it had already made the most difficult decision of all: to close the church. It was sure in its own, collective mind that the new-found optimism about the future and progress toward a new model of governance had only come about because of its will to close St Germans Priory in the first place. The fact that St Germans Priory was now going to remain open gave the PCC confidence in its own ability to compromise and effect positive change. Challenging decisions no longer burdened members with fear.¹⁷

The Priory Trust assumed full responsibility, by lease, for the management, maintenance and development of St Germans Priory building in the spring of 2016. There is, however, one caveat: the PCC has reserved, but not exclusive, right to direct the use of the chancel, which also has 100% liability for its upkeep vested in the Church Commissioners.

The Trust’s board comprises skilled and experienced people from the village and region. It is chaired by the former lay chair of the PCC. Other officer posts include:

- Events organiser – a part-time, paid position funded by civil parish council;
- History officer;
- Development officer;
- Finance officer;
- Publicity officer; and a
- Legal officer

St Germans Priory’s incumbent does not have a role on the Trust’s board due to a determination to keep the Trust secular and so widen its inclusivity to people of other faiths and none. This arrangement also ensures that the incumbent is freed from the management of the building and able to focus on pastoral leadership. St Germans Priory’s churchwarden does, however, occupy the role of designated liaison officer between the PCC and the Trust. The Archdeacon of Cornwall chairs a liaison group, whose protocol for resolving disputes, problems and crises is modelled on that employed by Truro Cathedral, which ensures channels of communication are kept open and any disagreements are arbitrated fairly. The Trust is constituted in such a way as to protect any individual trustee from legal action. Should it ever be deemed that the continuance of the Trust is not in the best interests of St Germans Priory it may only be dissolved through applications to the Charity Commission and Church Commissioners.

The PCC and the Trust will share some and support one another in other events held at St Germans Priory and both will share the responsibility for building the visitor profile of the Priory. Both the Trust and the PCC will continue to receive the valued assistance of a number of volunteers, who clean the Priory, open its doors to visitors every day, carry out gardening duties and act as pastoral visitors.

Number of members on PCC	PCC: 12 Trustees: Unclear at the time of writing
Number of clergy	1 full-time priest 2 part-time SSM 3 lay ministers
Number of paid staff (PCC/Trust)	0/1
Number of volunteers	30
Number of sub-committees (PCC/Trust)	0/0

¹⁶ www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

¹⁷ PCC representative

FINANCES

“The Trust will take on the responsibility of paying for the maintenance and repair of the church, plus meeting the cost of utilities and insurance. It is such a relief to the PCC”¹⁸

St Germans Priory’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Parish Share. They anticipate Parish Share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Parish Share is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁹

The PCC’s accounts for all four churches in the group, show that in 2015 it had an income of £49,196, expenditure of £56,670 and bank deposits of £43,546 (December 2015), compared with £51,020 in January 2015. Income was largely predicated upon planned giving and other donations (£27,212); fundraising activities (£9,001); and church activities, including occasional offices (£4,230). Investments yielded a relatively negligible £253. Grants to the PCC from external sources totalled £6,500. The PCC’s principal sources of expenditure included parish share / Mission and Ministry Fund (MMF) (£23,000); running costs (£11,908); and repairs (£2,980). The PCC was, as of 1 January 2015, £4,666 in deficit in its payments to the Diocese of Cornwall’s MMF, of which £2,333 was written off by the Diocese.

The PCC operates a restricted bell fund, which held £1,969 in 2015 and a restricted flower fund, which held £667. The PCC’s restricted fund for repairs to St Germans Priory stood at £15,577. This has now been transferred to the discretionary control of the PCC and will be used to make grants to the Priory Trust for use, principally, as match funding for capital works projects. The PCC also loaned the Trust £7,732 (incorporated into the total expenditure for 2015) and will make a ‘transitioning’ payment of £1,000 to the Trust for the first three years of the new model of governance. The Trust has not inherited any debts from the PCC.

Since the spring of 2016 the Priory Trust has assumed responsibility for all costs associated with the fabric of the building, utilities and insurance, which currently covers 85% of re-building costs of St Germans Priory. The PCC will continue to be responsible for all costs associated with worship, such as the purchase of candles, hymn books etc. Income generated by leasing St Germans Priory for concerts, for example, will now be administered by and for the benefit of the Trust.

A fundraising strategy in the form of a stewardship scheme has resulted in a noticeable increase in regular giving to the PCC recently. The PCC acted as signatory to a successful application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, compiled by the Trust on its behalf, receiving £37,600 in 2015. The Trust also secured a modest grant to repair the south porch roof. The PCC has not been in receipt of any other substantial grants since an award by Historic England c.25 years ago to repair fire damage.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Germans Priory’s income does not meet expenditure.²⁰

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St German’s financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Not specified
Urgent QI cost	Not specified
Annual maintenance cost	£2,182
Parish share cost	£29,135
Building insurance cost	£7,268
Utilities cost	£11,908
Major project cost	c.£55,000
Annual donations income	£27,212
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£252
Events/church hall income	£9,001
Other income i.e. land/interest	£4,320
Services fees	n/a
Major project income	£37,600

²⁰ Survey results

¹⁸ Quote from PCC representative

¹⁹ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Other than the urgent repairs to the tower roofs, which were addressed through the award of a Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund grant in 2015, St Germans Priory's latest Quinquennial Inspection (QI), carried out in 2014, enumerates a multitude of essential repairs required in the next ten years. The most salient of these include:²¹

- Innumerable works that should be described as 'routine maintenance', such as the removal of vegetation from stonework and the clearance of drains
- Investigations, such as to an outbreak of rot in the north transept, over the organ
- Wholesale replacement of rainwater goods
- Repairs to parapets
- Repairs to the south porch – underway
- Repointing
- Conservation works

Unfortunately, no estimated costs are provided as part of the QI report.

Full responsibility for carrying out maintenance and repairs is now vested in the Priory Trust, along with responsibility for ensuring all health and safety regulations and policies are enforced. Faculty permission for carrying out repairs can either be made by the Trust or by the Trust via the PCC. The PCC will always be consulted by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), prior to any petition being made.

The Priory Trust has little financial capital and so will be reliant upon successful applications for grant aid in order to meet its obligations to St German Priory. The Trust also has ambitions to improve the infrastructure and interpretation at the Priory, declaring on its website that:

*[it] will take on the responsibility for making the Priory 'fit for purpose', providing heating, lighting and all the facilities you would expect in a modern community building. To do so it will be raising several £Million for a capital works programme.*²²

It will therefore likely apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a substantial sum to facilitate its work in the future; including, the installation of meeting rooms to act as, among other things, a mini conference venue; and possibly a café to complement the local Long Gallery public house / bistro. It was, however, deemed to be necessary to provide rudimentary facilities at St Germans Priory, which currently has

no running water or WC, as soon as possible. To this end the Trust has embarked upon a project to install a composting WC in the Priory, as well as consider what can be done to address significant deficiencies in the heating and lighting systems.

The CMP produced by the CBC for St Germans Priory was the catalyst that led to the formation of the Trust, the essential repair works being carried out and the vision for a sustainable future for St Germans Priory being adopted. It continues to play a central role in the operations of both the PCC and the Priory Trust.²³ There are, as yet, no other management documents used by the PCC or Trust.

Given that the new governance structure at St Germans Priory is in its infancy it is too early to make a judgement as to whether it will result in a sustainable future for the Priory. The PCC had a will to change what was not working. The support it and the Trust have from organisations and individuals from outside and within the Church of England, plus the determination of all parties to secure a future for St Germans Priory augurs well for the condition of the building and the community it serves.

St Germans Priory has a limited range of management documents: conservation plan, and a statement of needs. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁴



St Germans Priory's surface drainage / gully

²¹ Le Page Architects, 'St Germans Priory, Cornwall: Quinquennial Inspection Report', 2014

²² www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

²³ PCC representative

²⁴ Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

In an exercise that was incredibly useful to test the working method of the Priory Trust in conjunction with the PCC, the Trust prepared an application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in 2015 in order to carry out works to St Germans Priory's north and south tower roofs, rainwater goods and stonework. The details of these works were as follows:²⁵

To South Tower:

- Uplift existing lead sheeting and insert timber rolls to high point of roof.
- Reinstate lead sheeting including lead covering to rolls.
- Re-weld any identified defective lead patching.
- Clean out parapet gutter and sumps.
- Remove existing and renewal of painted timber door and frame to tower roof.
- Remove rusty steel fixings to flagpole and replace with stainless steel.

To North Tower:

- Re-boss leadwork to all rolls, drips etc.
- Clean out parapet gutter and sumps.
- Erection of designed securely fenced scaffold tower structure to SE corner of church including within grounds of Port Eliot Estate.
- Removal of existing masonry, leadwork etc to facilitate removal and re-bedding of kneeler stone at the south-east corner.
- Renew leadwork to soakers and flashings associated with kneeler stone works.
- Erection of designed securely fenced scaffold tower structure to parapet at west end of north elevation within grounds of Port Eliot Estate.
- Erection of meshed scaffold protections around perimeter of parapet merlons etc.
- Removal and renewal of isolated coping stones to merlons of north parapet including s/steel pinning.
- Conservation masonry repairs, renewal of masonry and re-pointing to crenellations of parapet to north elevation.
- Isolated slate repairs and renewal of isolated ridge tiles.
- De-vegetate and subsequent isolated spot pointing to south elevation and to south porch and south-east corner of the church.

The Trust's application, which was signed by the PCC as the legal body at the time, secured £37,600 toward a project with a total cost of c.£55,000. The commissioning and management of the work was then handled by the Trust on behalf of the PCC.

The learning experience this provided has informed a working method for the Trust and PCC, and gave trustees an invaluable experience of fundraising for and managing a major capital works project under the supportive auspices of the PCC. The project's successful outcome has given both the PCC and Trust confidence in the future.



Replaced downpipes on the north-west tower © Le Page Architects

²⁵ Hammond, B, 'Conservation Roofing Works and associated Masonry Repairs and Rainwater Goods Replacement at St Germans Priory, St Germans, Saltash' (CDM document)

CURRENT USE

St Germans Priory is an active church, with services held on three Sundays each month but no weekday services. Its model of churchmanship enables the incumbent to explore different ways of facilitating worship, including Messy Church. The number of congregants has notably increased recently. The neighbouring Port Eliot house is a secular wedding venue and conversations are currently underway between St Germans Priory's incumbent and the Port Eliot estate about ways in which the sacred and secular venues can combine their efforts.

St Germans Priory is also a key venue in the nationally-recognised and high-profile Port Eliot festival, which takes place every summer in St Germans. The Priory is the premier music venue for the festival, which attracts between 10,000 and 15,000 people for arts and other cultural performers. Other than participating in the Port Eliot Festival, St Germans Priory hosts occasional music events, promoted by long-time collaborators, art exhibitions and an annual Christmas market. Following the establishment of the Priory Trust, which has responsibility for all the Priory's activities other than worship, an ambition to develop the Priory as a major arts venue in the region is emerging, resulting in a greater contribution to tourism in Cornwall. That is not to say that tourists do not see St Germans Priory as a visitor destination. The Priory often welcomes coach trips from across the UK and Europe, particularly in the summer months when Port Eliot house is open to visitors.

There is no sense that, despite the feudal nature of St Germans society, the Priory is an estate church to Port Eliot. Relations between the estate and the incumbent and PCC are positive and respectful and there is no substantive reason to see this amiable cooperation will cease.²⁶ St Germans Priory is not, however, able to make use of the land in which it is situated for outdoor activities as all land to the north of the church is the property of the estate. Permission has been granted by the estate to cross its land to gain access to the boiler house, which is otherwise inaccessible. Visitors are not able to view the north elevation of the church.

Baptisms	6
Funerals	5
Weddings	6

Civic church (town use):

May Tree Festival

Tourist church (visitor use):

Coach trips

Casual visitors

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Sunday services – three Sundays in the month

Death café

Open conversation sessions

²⁶ PCC representative

WELCOMING VISITORS

St Germans Priory is open every day but unattended. All valuables are therefore locked away during opening hours. There is an acknowledgment that promotion of the Priory should be improved and the Priory Trust will be responsible for managing this. On-site interpretation has already been developed from rudimentary beginnings with the introduction of information boards. This is only the first step in a comprehensive overhaul of interpretation at the Priory, which will include updating a guidebook and the possible introduction of innovative virtual reality-style interventions. Again, the Priory Trust will undertake the management of this.

The Priory Trust is also reviewing Health and Safety policies for the Priory as well as assessing access to the building. Easy access to the Priory's north-west tower is currently blocked by the very significant Rysbrack monument. This cannot be moved without considerable thought and careful planning. If it were to be possible to re-locate it there could be future scope for offering visitors access to this tower. Wheelchair users must use the west door to gain entrance to the Priory, which is not the usual access; this being the south porch. There is scope, however, for making the far grander west entrance the principal entrance to the Priory in future. The path leading down a fairly steep, for people with mobility issues, pathway from the road to the Priory has already been identified as requiring re-surfacing work. There is also the matter of visitors not being able to walk around the whole of St Germans Priory due to its northern elevation occupying Port Eliot land. This has been acknowledged as a matter of fact that must be clearly communicated to visitors in order to avoid either disappointment or accidental trespassing.

The St Germans Priory group of parishes has its own website that hosts information about church matters and the Priory Trust has its own in order to communicate news and other information about its work. A Facebook page is currently managed by St Germans Priory's curate.

It is too early to say how visitors will be welcomed to St Germans Priory in the future, and what facilities will await them when they arrive. What is clear, however, is that the PCC and Trust both recognise the ministry of welcome to be central to the mission and management of the Priory. There is a firm ambition to deliver a high-quality visitor experience at the Priory, whether those visitors are pilgrims from near or far, or tourists wishing to learn and experience something of St Germans history and heritage. A matter for immediate attention should arguably be the 'clutter' in the Priory, particularly around the Rysbrack monument in the north-west tower.

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Le Page Architects, 'St Germans Priory, Cornwall: Quinquennial Inspection Report', 2014

St Germans Priory Trust's website: www.stgermanspriory.info

National Heritage List for England list description www.historicengland.org.uk



Information board



THE MINSTER AND PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT PETER-AT-LEEDS (LEEDS MINSTER)

Kirkgate, Leeds, LS2 7DJ

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	City Centre
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1375046	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	646379	Average Weekly Attendance	75
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	Not Recorded
Footprint (m ²)	1686	Annual Visitors	7,500
Building Period	Victorian	Website	http://www.leedsminster.org/



Exterior

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

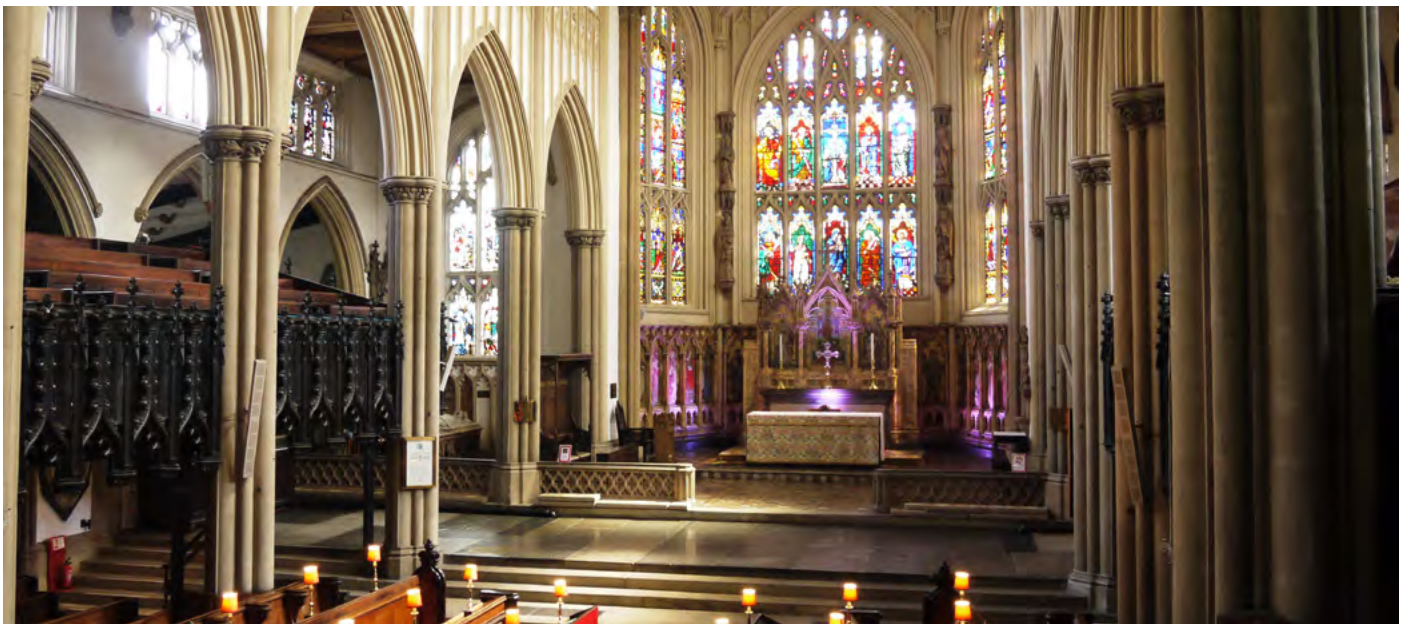
- The first Major Parish Church to be built following St Pauls Cathedral in 1707.
- A unique church of the 1840s representing the radical Church of England revival prior to the Camden Society.
- Impressive interior of imitation materials such as faux-plaster ceilings and imitation wood carvings.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Leeds' largest church and the civic church of the city, larger in size than some cathedrals in the Diocese.
- Unique internal layout with ornate, galleries and ground floor pews.
- Distinct geographical location, cut off from the city centre of Leeds.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- To re-engage with the City of Leeds and become relevant to its people.
- To decide the future of the historic building following a transitional period.
- To re-invigorate the congregation.
- To create an effective system of governance.
- Financial resources.



Interior

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Leeds Minster is the civic church of the City of Leeds and is a unique place of worship with a fascinating history. The last 20 years have seen a social and physical disconnect with the City of Leeds, with reserves dwindling to virtually nothing and with no agreed solutions to increase income. The title of 'Minster' was conferred in 2012 as an attempt to address the entrenched decline. However, this was perceived to have not been managed effectively and is a source of confusion to many people.

The arrival of the recently appointed incumbent has brought the Minster into a transitional period, which has seen many of the previous practices reviewed in anticipation of a bold and vibrant future that matches the vision of the city. Tough decisions have been made to disband the sub-committees and the boys' choir, and to close the café. The current incumbent is working to audit the existing arrangements and to provide options for a more sustainable future use.

The Minster still has a long way to go but the future is looking positive and immediate opportunities relate to securing funding from the Diocese for a director of operations and on the production of a Conservation Management Plan to help understand what makes the Leeds Minster special. The civic status of the church will continue to be promoted as one of its most important roles in order to maintain and increase the mission and ministry of the church throughout the transitional period. The Minster has paid off over £300,000 in parish share arrears and a regeneration project is underway to create commercial and residential income from two buildings the Minster owns. Rebuilding confidence locally and reengaging with visitors will be vital to a sustainable future.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“Leeds Minster ‘occupies an important place in the history of Anglican architecture’ (Wrathmell) and its architect RD Chantrell was described by the Bishop of Ripon as ‘one of the first architects in all the north of England’ (Webster)... Its importance lies in the way in which it conveyed ‘the liturgical dilemma of the Church of England at the very beginning of Victoria’s reign’ (Webster).”⁰³

The Parish Church of St Peter-at-Leeds (Leeds Minster) replaced an earlier Medieval church on the same site, which has been a site of Christian worship since before the Norman Conquest. Evidence for this is within the writings of Bede and is evidenced by the tenth-century cross re-discovered on the site in the nineteenth century. The site was also a major crossing point of the River Aire from at least the seventh century. A church at Leeds was referred to in the Domesday Book in 1086 and is thought to have been re-built by the Normans in the twelfth century.

The vision of the Vicar of Leeds, Dr WF Hook, in the 1840s was for a church that would be for everyone, not just the wealthy few. Plans originally began with alterations to the old church but soon evolved into a full rebuilding due to the perilous condition of the building. Hook employed the local architect RD Chantrell to rebuild the church on the former foundations between 1837 and 1841. It was to be Chantrell’s most important project and one that represents the revival of Anglicanism in Leeds and nationally.

Built in a fourteenth-century Gothic style, the church tower was placed over the north entrance and the nave filled with galleries reused from the old church. The east end introduced the ideas of a new Oxford-inspired Anglicanism. The ideas expressed by Chantrell and Hook were soon overtaken by the radical ideas of the Camden Society, leaving Leeds Parish Church as a rare example of the progression of ideas within the Church of England.

The choir at Leeds Minster was re-founded by Dr Hook in 1841, which went on to become one of the foremost choirs in the country. Internationally acclaimed musicians include the first organist in 1842, Dr Samuel Wesley, Sir Edward Bairstow in 1906 and most recently Dr Simon Lindley. The choir had been established originally in 1815 and was probably the first English parish church to have a surpliced choir since the Reformation.

The east end was altered in 1876 with the addition of magnificent mosaics of the Apostles by Salviati of Venice, and again 12 years later in 1888 when the baptistry was added at the West End of the Church and the reredos was installed behind the altar by GE Street.

In 1974 the City of Leeds Room was created as a refectory to provide refreshments after Sunday and evening services. It expanded its role to a full café for visitors until it was closed in 2015.

The Parish Church of St Peter-at-Leeds was designated Leeds Minster by the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, in September 2012 at the 171st anniversary date of the consecration of the present church building.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **1837-1841:** The Medieval church was replaced by the new fourteenth-century Gothic Revival building
- **1841:** The choir was re-established
- **1876:** The east end was altered and the mosaics installed
- **1888:** The font and reredos was installed
- **1974:** The City of Leeds Room was constructed as a café
- **2012:** The parish church became a minster

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

The interior of Leeds Minster is significant as a physical embodiment of the evolution of Church of England liturgy. The reuse of the galleries and pulpit from the old church combined with early architectural principles of the new Oxford-inspired Anglicanism is unique.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Tenth-Century Cross

A high-quality example of an Anglo-Scandinavian Cross dating to the tenth century.

The Galleries

Leeds Minster has five galleries, which put seating capacity at over 1,200. They are thought to have come from the old church and are not symmetrical. The galleries include a west gallery, south-west gallery, north-west gallery, north-east gallery and south-east gallery, which continue along the nave and chancel. The galleries have decorated canopies throughout and especially within the chancel. Much of the decoration is plaster painted to imitate stone and wood.

The Sanctuary

The east end of the church was altered in the late nineteenth century to install mosaics in 1878 and the reredos in 1888. The marble arcade with fine mosaic work is by Salviati of Venice and features 12 life-size figures of the apostles. The marble and alabaster reredos is by GE Street and represents Christ in Glory flanked by saints. The central marble and alabaster reredos is by GE Street and represents Christ in Glory flanked by saints. It was made by Thomas Earp and Rust, following cartoons by Clayton and Bell.

The Font

The font dates from 1883 and was designed by William Butterfield. It replaced an earlier font. The font is of different coloured marble and stands on three steps of red, black and white.

Dr Hook Effigy

Dr Hook was the Vicar of Leeds in the 1840s. His effigy is a marble and alabaster memorial designed by GG Scott and GE Street. During his tenure he built some 21 churches and 27 schools in Leeds. He is credited more for his liturgical changes than architectural and many of his buildings have been lost.

The Organ

The present organ was built by Henry Price of Bristol and first installed in the old church in 1714. This instrument was moved to the new church in 1841 and rebuilt by Greenwood Brothers. Repairs and additions were made in 1859 and the German builders Schulze added several further ranks. Abbott and Smith of Leeds reconstructed and enlarged the instrument c.1899. The instrument was rebuilt in 1965 by Wood Wordsworth and restored by Andrew Carter of Wakefield in 1995/1996. The organ has five manuals and 91 stops.

The Bells

The bells, the first peal of thirteen to be cast in England, and the first peal to travel by rail, were made by Mears and Son, London in 1841, replacing an earlier peal of ten. In 1932 John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough re-cast the bells and replaced the bell frame.



Box pews within the upper gallery



Mosaics at the east end



Dr Hook tomb

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

'...hauntingly beautiful.'

'...unusual layout and is beautifully appointed.'

'Go for evensong. A unique experience.'

*'The minster is rather austere to look at from the outside, and it is pretty dark inside too as the wood used is nearly black. However, the stained glass windows and mosaic panels are lovely, as is the carving and the organ.'*⁰⁴

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Leeds Minster is located to the east of Leeds city centre at the lower end of the historic street Kirkgate. The church is situated on the north bank of the River Aire and cut off from the rest of the city to the north by a busy road and the railway viaduct. The city centre loop to the east is also a major physical barrier.

Despite these barriers, the church is only five to ten minute walk from the city centre and has the potential to capture wide visitor audiences. The church is also visually prominent within the city. The church dominates views from the elevated railway line for trains from York and Newcastle and long-distance views along Kirkgate are significant.

The geographical parish of Leeds Minster is in the bottom 600 in the country on the Indices of Deprivation and has socio-economic problems. Leeds Minster has the potential to capitalise on its Victorian architecture, which is being used across Leeds to stimulate development and provide a link to the prosperous industrial past of the city.



Separation from the city centre by the elevated railway line

04 TripAdvisor 2016

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

When asked to select one things that makes their building special, Leeds Minster chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.⁰⁵

Leeds Minster is highly significant for its artistic and architectural interest. The architecture of Leeds Minster embodies Dr Hook's concept of a 'standing sermon', with a highly visible pulpit (from the old church) and no chancel screen. The high altar reflects the principles of the Oxford Movement and the position and prominence of the pulpit affirms the strong preaching emphasis of the Reformed tradition.

The internal character of the Minster is dominated by the heavy, black galleries, which create low, cramped spaces beneath them. This is in contrast with the soaring verticality of the chancel space. When it was built, the Minster was described in the local press as 'one of the finest, if not the finest [churches] in the kingdom'.

HISTORIC INTEREST

Leeds Minster has historic interest for its Gothic Revival architecture and the radical liturgical ordering, representing an early example of the new Anglicanism of the 1840s. These ideas would soon be overtaken by the radical ideas of the Camden Society, leaving the Minster as a rare example of the progression of ideas within the Church of England. The church has been considered a significant milestone of church architecture but more research is required into the uniqueness of the building nationally.

Associations with Dr Hook and the architect Chantrell are significant. Leeds Minster was Chantrell's most important project among many, resulting in a church of national importance. Locally it represented the revival of Anglicanism in Leeds, but also conveyed the liturgical dilemma of the Church of England at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign.



Chorister graffiti on the stalls in the quire

05 Survey results

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Leeds Minster is thought to be located on an ancient site of Christian worship and as such has high archaeological interest. There is evidence of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon worship but also connections to Northumbria, based on the writings of the Venerable Bede. A tenth-century church cross was found beneath the church when it was rebuilt in the 1840s, which can now be seen inside the Minster. It is possible that the foundations of the older Medieval church were incorporated into the nineteenth-century building and internal fabric and fittings was reused, for example the timber and plaster galleries.

The churchyard surrounding the Minster is historic and likely to hold much archaeological interest. A lack of investigations increases this potential for us to learn more about past human activity on the site. The churchyard is in the care of Leeds City Council.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Dr Hook constructed Leeds Minster in the 1840s as a place of worship for everyone. Since then, the building has been central to the Church of England worshipping life of Leeds, firstly as the spiritual heart of the rapidly growing industrial town and now as the civic church of a bold, visionary city.

Community interest has been reduced in the twenty-first century due to a geographical disconnect between the church and city that has been growing over the last two decades. There is much scope to improve relations and put the Minster back at the heart of the city.



Interpretation at Leeds Minster

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“The church building is a glory; it is an amazing space – but it is also impractical for worship and community use. Its historic internal layout does not allow it to serve the bold, vibrant vision of the City of Leeds”⁰⁶

Leeds Minster takes on the role of the civic church for the City of Leeds and is tantamount to Leeds' Church of England cathedral. The city is the third largest in the country and has a bold vision to become the 'best city in the UK' by 2030. While the scale and significance of Leeds Minster is befitting this ambition and helps to achieve its civic role through events and large services, there is a perception within the city that the traditional Victorian architecture of the building does not conform with its forward-thinking values. The incumbent is concerned that unless there is a radical change in perceptions, Leeds Minster will have no place in the future of the city.

The church is 1686m² in footprint but is situated towards the edge of the city centre. A railway viaduct, busy main road and the River Aire surround the site, disconnecting the church from its geographical parish and the wider city. The Minster is effectively cut-off from the benefits visitors to Leeds might bring and the majority of support comes from the economically deprived, and relatively isolated parish, although redevelopment is now beginning to move outwards from the city centre. Anti-social behaviour and heritage crime that is often associated with an inner-city parish are problems for Leeds Minster. During recent building works, ledger stones that had been temporarily taken-up were stolen and the unsupervised spaces of the upper galleries are at risk of anti-social behaviour such as rough sleeping and substance abuse.

The historic, architectural and artistic interest of the building is seen by the PCC as one of its biggest barriers to development. The radical early Victorian liturgical plan of the building required the nave and aisles to be filled with seating, all facing different directions, but at some distance from the sanctuary. The seating is currently unusable for modern liturgy and precludes many other uses. The upper galleries on the other hand are useful as they provide additional seating and may allow the spaces beneath them to be zoned in the future.

The nature of the historic materials used in the original construction also has an impact on maintenance of the building now. The church was hastily built over a four-year period at low cost, making use of cheaper materials such as plaster painted to replicate stonework, and sawdust/plaster moulded to represent carved woodwork. These materials bring with them a unique set of problems when it comes to their conservation.

While there is an assumption within the city that Leeds Minster will always act in its civic capacity beyond its geographical parish, carrying out the functions often provided by a cathedral, there are few resources available to support this role.

The honorific Minster status was conferred upon the church in 2012 in an attempt to address culturally entrenched decline, largely without consultation with the wider city as to what that might mean or who it might benefit. No plan was put in place to make use of the new title and even the signage within the city continued to say 'Leeds Parish Church'. This has led to much confusion within the city as to what the church is, and how it serves the community.

The Minster also holds responsibilities for other buildings within the city, such as Holy Trinity Leeds, from which the modern shopping development, Trinity Leeds, takes its name. The incumbent also has additional responsibilities – from being ex-officio trustee or Chair of ten charities, to Chair of Leeds Faiths Forum and member of the Bishop's area staff team.

The financial burden of maintaining a building of this scale and significance is illustrated in the need to fully insure the Minster up to the full amount for rebuilding, which is £43 million.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Leeds Minster considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places the Minster with an overwhelming majority (82%) of other Major Parish Churches.⁰⁷

⁰⁶ Canon Sam Corley, 2016

⁰⁷ Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“Establishing effective governance, compliance and administration processes across the parish, as well as developing a clear and realistic strategic plan for the next ten years must be a priority.”⁰⁸

The PCC of Leeds Minster has responsibility for the care of the church. Until the arrival of the new incumbent in late 2015 (who was recruited specifically to deal with the major issues facing Leeds Minster), the church had continued under a traditional PCC system of governance. The Minster had two parish wardens and eight churchwardens (historically one for each of the wards of the city).

For some time, within the wider Diocese there had been recognition that governance at the Minster was not effective and that a lack of accountability was detrimental to the continuing operations of the Minster. Historic circumstances, dating back to the 1990s had led to a culture whereby mismanagement was often accepted as the norm and a continuation of traditions cumulated, reaching an unsustainable position by 2015.

A solution to deal with a church of this scale and significance was not easily reached, partly due to a lack of adequate resources or capacity to support the Minster. Although the Diocese employs a support officer for the parishes, helping the Minster is likely to be a full-time job.

Issues with the previous governance of the Minster included a lack of safeguarding policy, inadequate and out of date contracts and no terms of reference. Historically, little thought had been given to the specialist skills and professional expertise required of a PCC member. Even a lack of administrative support and accountability has meant basic tasks, such as the correct detail being entered into a Faculty application, were not completed. Volunteers were able to welcome visitors to the church, but did not have the specialist management, business, fundraising, marketing and development skills needed to develop a long-term sustainable use that would make the church relevant in the twenty-first century.

Additionally, those tasked with maintaining and caring for the historic structure did not have the skills needed to fulfil the role for a building of this scale and significance. Many volunteers in the past were well-intentioned but had carried out inappropriate repairs, such as gaffe taping-down loose sanctuary mosaics and using modern cleaning chemicals on Medieval brasses.

Leeds Minster has now entered a more positive transitional phase, which has seen the incumbent disband the majority of the sub-committees in late 2015, including the Minster Council, pending a reorganisation of governance. The café was also shut down, due to a lack of customers and a poor hygiene rating, and the boys' choir was disbanded due to a lack of choristers. Both the choir and the café will be reviewed and revived in the future and a more effective system of governance put in place, which will allow experienced individuals from the wider community to be co-opted.

The next 12 months will be a period of assessment, allowing the incumbent to audit the situation, take stock and produce options for a more sustainable future. The short-term goal of the incumbent is to approach the Diocese for funding to employ a full-time director of operations for the Minster.

Number of members on PCC	12
Number of clergy	5 (1.5 of whom are paid)
Number of paid staff	1.6
Number of volunteers	25
Number of sub-committees	1

FINANCES

“Concerns about the finances of the parish persist. A review of the financial records demonstrates that for over two decades the parish has been relying on reserves in order to support the annual, regular costs of mission and ministry. This was always an unsustainable decision and now that reserves have reached a critically low level, the questions and decisions that have been ignored or delayed have to be faced with both realism and urgency... The bedrock of our parish finances remains the regular giving of members of our congregation. This is invaluable and much appreciated.”⁰⁹

Leeds Minster’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been payroll. They anticipate adaptations and additions will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Payroll is the third highest item of expenditure for most Major Parish Churches.¹⁰

For the past two decades, Leeds Minster has run at a deficit each year and relying on its reserves to cover the shortfall. This has led to the current situation where the church now has only £1,750 left in unrestricted reserves and is close to bankruptcy. The new incumbent recognises that this was unsustainable and steps are now being taken to help generate income in the long-term.

In 2014 a Development Plan was produced in partnership with a university stating that £150,000 could be raised a year through the parish offering city businesses spirituality, mindfulness and chaplaincy services. This was not adopted and is now considered to be unrealistic. The main income for the Minster for 2016 onwards will come from commercial and residential lets totalling of £40,000, following redevelopment of the parish hall buildings.

Until 2015, the church had an accumulated parish share deficit of over a quarter of a million. A grant for £310,000 from the Friends of the Music of Leeds Minster was secured to pay off this debt, leaving the deficit at £94,300. The Minster is unable to meet their obligations in full in 2016, with the expectation that they will only be able to pay £6,000 this year. Parish share within the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales is compulsory but changes are being made to how it is calculated. The new method, based on the number of clergy, the ability to pay and regular attendance, will work in Leeds Minster’s favour. No parish would also be asked for more than 80% of its unrestricted income.¹¹

Leeds Minster recognises parish share as being a significant responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly. Parish share is seen as being of equal importance to the responsibility to repair and care for the historic building. The incumbent noted that the financial support system in place for cathedrals (which often perform similar functions and are of a similar scale and significance to Major Parish Churches), are simply not available to Leeds Minster.

Leeds Minster employs a full-time verger, a part-time master of music and a sub-organist, and an education officer, totalling 1.6 full-time posts. An application to the Diocese for a capital grant would allow the Minster to provide additional administrative support and employ a director of operations.

The civic status of Leeds Minster also has an impact on finances as there is an expectation for the church to provide a venue for the city, often for free or at cost only. This is accepted with good grace by the Minster as it helps build-up new relationships. The church charges £400 to charities for Christmas carol services, which covers the verger’s time, but not the incumbent’s. The Minster does not currently have a system in place for hiring out the building as a venue, partly due to the current transitional arrangements, and partly due to the inflexible layout of the interior.

⁰⁹ Leeds Minster Annual Report, 2015

¹⁰ Survey results

¹¹ <http://www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org/content/safeguarding-fairtrade-parish-share-and-branding-debated-synod>

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Leeds Minster's income does not meet expenditure.¹²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Leeds Minster financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	Not recorded
Urgent QI cost	Not recorded
Annual maintenance cost	£11,400 spent on repairs and maintenance
Parish share cost	£310,000 arrears paid off (deficit of £94,300)
Building insurance cost	£15,700 (insured for full rebuilding to £43 million)
Utilities cost	£40,000
Major project cost	No recent projects

Annual donations income	£80,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£62,000
Events/church hall income	£16,500
Other income i.e. land/interest	£13,500 car parking; £15,700 café; £7,000 telecoms mast
Services fees	£12,500
Major project income	None

¹² Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“A significant challenge for the Minster Church of St Peter-at-Leeds is how it can connect and engage with the dynamic and vibrant City it seeks to serve. Too often its weaknesses and fragility means it has been irrelevant to, or at odds with, a City that is confident about its future and eager to become Capital of Culture by 2023 and ‘Best City’ by 2030.”¹³

Leeds Minster is currently in a transitional phase, which has seen the dismantling of the existing PCC sub-committee structure in order to put in place a more effective method of governance. The Minster has reached the end of its financial reserves and no major capital projects, building repairs or development projects within the Minster have been attempted, although a project to create commercial and residential space in two adjacent buildings is underway.

£11,500 was spent on repairs and maintenance at Leeds Minster in 2015. The most recent Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was carried out in 2015 and identified the need for urgent and comprehensive internal and external repairs to its tower, including the bell and clock chambers and rainwater disposal system. Repairs are also required to the south-east aisle roof, Lady Chapel roof and rainwater goods. The total cost of all outstanding repairs is estimated at c.£250,000.

Maintenance at Leeds Minster is reactionary and there is no overall plan in place. Volunteers and the verger are relied on although they lack the required specialist conservation skills. The Minster does not turn to their architect for ad hoc conservation advice.

In order to address the repair defects, an application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund was made by Leeds Minster in February 2016 but was ultimately unsuccessful. The Minster has not approached the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to date as the grant programmes are considered to be too resource heavy for the current capacity of the church. The lack of project management resources has been a determining factor in this decision.

Despite the challenges, there is now a sense of relief within the parish that the issues have been identified and are now being tackled. Following a comprehensive audit of the state of the Minster, a selection of options will be provided in order to stimulate discussion on a sustainable future. At the furthest extreme, one option may be to close the building and move elsewhere, in the interim or as a permanent solution.

The aim is for Leeds Minster to become a principle church of the Leeds Episcopal Area within the Diocese. This would be achieved by re-engaging with the city, deciding on the future of the physical building and by re-invigorating the congregation. The short-term goal is to come up with a realistic and supported option to move forward. The key to sustainability at Leeds Minster will be the ability to bring new uses to the building, which are currently restricted by the internal arrangements. The removal of ground floor pews is considered by the incumbent to be crucial to make worship effective and to accommodate any new uses.

The area around the Minster is being redeveloped with major retailers establishing outlets in the parish. This is an opportunity for the church to re-establish connections with the city and will be further enhanced by the redevelopment of the two church-owned buildings for commercial and residential use.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) that is currently being produced for Leeds Minster by the Church Buildings Council (CBC) is considered central to this process. Understanding the significance of the church will allow a consensus to be reached on its capacity for change. This would allow the Minster to look at their priorities and what would be best for the city. Resolution of key questions, such as whether the building is unique in England, is required in order to reframe the debate and to stimulate discussion at all levels. The long-term goal is likely to be a large HLF project for comprehensive re-ordering.

Leeds Minster has no management documents in place. This is unusual when compared with other Major Parish Churches.¹⁴

13 Leeds Minster Annual Report, 2015

14 Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

Leeds Minster has begun a key development in the last 12 months, redeveloping two buildings owned by the parish behind the Minster to create 12 flats, and ground floor commercial office space. One flat will become refurbished accommodation for the Head Verger. The two buildings were previously used as a parish hall and clergy housing but had become increasingly dilapidated and underused.

Negotiations over the works had been in progress for around ten years prior to the works starting in 2016. The flats will be sold on 150 year leases, making a small ground rent for the PCC. The commercial space will generate £40,000 to £45,000 a year.



Commercial development of buildings belonging to the PCC.

CURRENT USE

“Although in many ways a local parish church, Leeds Minster has a much more comprehensive role in service the wider city of Leeds. This role is to a large degree manifested through the hosting of civic and other large-scale services and events, and through the open door policy by which visitors and tourists are encouraged to find Leeds Minster to be a place of friendly welcome and an oasis of peace in a busy city centre.”¹⁵

During the transitional phase for the Minster in 2016, the uses of the building will be audited and recommendations made. Leeds Minster currently considers itself to be the civic church for the City of Leeds and strives to have a presence in a community wider than its geographical reach. The reorganisation of the new Diocese (Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales) is considered to be an opportunity for the Minster to become a principle church of the Diocese and to look beyond its immediate parish to its wider role within the third largest city in the country.

The sacred choral music tradition is important at Leeds Minster but until recently choristers have been recruited from a single school, which has led to a decline in interest. The choristers have been disbanded and focus has been put onto strengthening the adult choir until a new relationship with a wider network of schools can be established. The majority of services at Leeds Minster are sung rather than said.

Baptisms	22
Funerals	9
Weddings	11

Civic church (town use):

- Charity events and services
- Remembrance day and other memorial or commemorative services

Tourist church (visitor use):

- Occasional tours
- Organ concerts
- Choral concerts

Parish church (traditional parish use):

- Holy Communion
- Choral Eucharist
- Choral Evensong
- Compline
- Flower festival
- Harvest festival

¹⁵ Statement of Significance 2014

WELCOMING VISITORS

“It is an important part of our work that the church is open each day and that there are members and representatives of our church around during opening times in order to meet and welcome visitors.”¹⁶

Leeds Minster does not command the high tourist figures seen at some Major Parish Churches, particularly those located within existing tourist cities or those with monastic origins. The geographical disconnect with the city centre of Leeds also has an impact on passing footfall and visitor numbers.

Leeds Minster currently has a limited offering to visitors, with no guidebook and only sporadic tours. Individual items within the church are highlighted for visitors with A4 interpretation sheets scattered around the building. There is no consistency in the information provided and many are now out-dated. There is an ambition to provide more interpretation, particularly to illustrate the connection between the church and the city.

The entrance to the church is on the south side, next to the busy main road, underneath the tower. This is considered to be foreboding, particularly due to the heavy doors, which the incumbent would like to replace with a more welcoming glazed entrance.

The Minster had a dedicated café space but this was recently closed down as it was underused and was given a low hygiene rating. Three social enterprises have tried and failed to make the café successful, which is thought to be due to the lack of footfall. Volunteers have recently reopened the café on a limited scale serving hot drinks.

Physical access into the church is reasonable but more could be done.



Tenth-century cross, gallery, organ and stackable stage

16 Statement of Need, 2014

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View of the nave from the west gallery

SPARKBROOK, ST AGATHA

Stratford Road, Sparkbrook B11 1AD

Diocese	Birmingham	Settlement Type	Inner City
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1210221	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	602111	Average Weekly Attendance	47.5
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	4,486
Footprint (m ²)	1116 (very big)	Annual Visitors	1,000
Building Period	Victorian	Website	http://www.saintagathas.org.uk/



Birmingham, St Agatha - exterior: © Copyright John Salmon and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4016502>

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- St Agatha's is arguably the architect WH Bidlake's finest achievement in ecclesiastical design.
- The church has an established culture of Anglo-Catholic worship that is reflected in its fixture and fittings.
- St Agatha's has experienced a number of destructive incidents which have necessitated substantial re-building of elements of the church.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- The tower is c.36m tall and dominates the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham.
- St Agatha's tower clock holds great importance for the local community.
- The quality of St Agatha's stone dressings and external sculptural work is very high.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- St Agatha's is located in a predominantly Muslim area and relies on gathered congregations from outside the parish.
- Financial pressures are high leading to inertia and anxiety.
- There is a fear that substantial repair needs will lead to a building that is unsustainable.



Birmingham, St Agatha – Interior: © Copyright John Salmon and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4016527>

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Agatha's, consecrated in 1901 and arguably the architect WH Bidlake's masterpiece, is situated in the heavily urbanised Sparkbrook ward of Birmingham. Its tall tower is dominant in the townscape and a symbol for the continued presence of the Church of England in an area that has seen substantial social, economic and religious changes from the latter part of the twentieth century up to the present day.

Interestingly, St Agatha's church tower fulfils an important function for Sparkbrook's predominantly Muslim population by bearing the clock by which many residents know when to pray.

St Agatha's has, in the relatively recent past, found itself to be rather isolated from the Diocese of Birmingham and its local community. Since a period of reflection brought about by an interregnum, which preceded the appointment of a new incumbent who both reflects and leads the Parochial Church Council's (PCC's) mission, the PCC has begun a journey back to greater engagement, the benefits of which are now beginning to emerge.

Notwithstanding the major, grant-funded repairs to the church tower in 2004, the PCC has yet to develop an effective strategy for managing the church building. However, it does possess the dedication necessary to develop such a strategy should it be able to build vital capacity and resources, perhaps by broadening the use of St Agatha's by making it available to other Christian denominations.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“The finest parish church in Birmingham”⁰³

Following the sale and demolition of Christ Church, New Street, in the heart of Birmingham city centre in 1899 to make way for commercial development, a replacement church was erected in the then-affluent outer suburb of Sparkbrook.

St Agatha's was built between 1899 and 1901 using funds from the sale of Christ Church and is arguably the finest achievement of WH Bidlake (1861-1938). The local, well-regarded builder John Bowen (1844-1926) was responsible for its construction. Bidlake, who won a competition to design St Agatha's that was judged by Sir Arthur Blomfield, was a leading proponent of the Arts and Crafts style in Birmingham and held the post of Director of the School of Architecture at Birmingham School of Art from 1919 until 1924.

St Agatha's is representative of a more Gothic-influenced style Bidlake employed in the design of a number of churches in the city, which included Small Heath, St Oswald (1893) and Sparkbrook, Emmanuel church (1900), which was a chapel of ease to St Agatha's until it was assigned its own parish in 1928. St Agatha's particular aesthetic can be described as a Perpendicular style freely reinterpreted in an Arts and Crafts idiom.

St Agatha's, whose liturgical orientation is in reverse to its geographic orientation (possibly the result of a desire to keep the east end at a distance from what has always been a busy arterial road), comprises a sanctuary, which occupies the whole of the chancel; a nave of six bays with brick piers and timber tunnel-vault roof; a clerestory; and north and south aisles. It was constructed using red and blue brick with stone dressings for the exterior and unusually proportioned

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- St Agatha's was built between 1899 and 1901
- The east end was destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1940
- The nave roof was completely destroyed by fire in 1959, but was rebuilt to Bidlake's original design

Staffordshire buff bricks of a yellow-grey hue for the interior. Bidlake employed Hollington stone for its arches and mouldings and Bath stone for the dressings. St Agatha's dominant feature is the one which also dominates its immediate environment: its 120ft (36.6m) high tower. It was built higher than originally intended thanks to the acquisition of additional funds.

St Agatha's history is a story of destruction and rebuilding. Its east end, including the east window, was destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1940, resulting in a restoration that is evident through the use of bricks of a slightly different tone. The entire nave roof was lost in a fire in 1959 and reconstructed to Bidlake's original design by Laurence Williams of Wood Kendrick & Williams (completed 1961).

St Agatha's fell victim to the destructive power of nature on 28 July 2005 when it was damaged by the Birmingham Tornado. It did not, however, experience the severe damage meted out to the adjoining Ladypool Primary School, which lost its distinctive Martin & Chamberlain tower.

Major restoration work took place from 2002–2005, which included the stabilisation of the tower. Following this, St Agatha's was officially reopened in January 2005 by HRH Prince Edward and the Countess of Wessex.



The liturgical east end, showing the differently coloured bricks used in the rebuilding following bomb damage during WWII

03 Quote attributed to John Betjeman

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

St Agatha's vast interior is bright and airy. Its single stained glass window draws the eye to the east end. Statuary can be found throughout.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

The Tower Clock

The tower clock is by Gillett & Johnston (1900) and designed to strike the hours. It was fitted with an electric winding mechanism in 1984. It strikes on the church's only bell, which was cast by Rudhall of Gloucester in 1813 for Christ Church, New Street. The tower bears gilded clock faces on its north and south sides.

The Organ

The organ was installed by Nicholson's of Malvern in 1960 and incorporates parts of the original organ which survived the Luftwaffe bombing of 1940 and the fire of 1959 and parts from a Harrison Organ from Oundle School.

The East Window

The large east window was designed and executed by LC Evetts in 1961. It replaced the east window destroyed by the bombing of 1940 and depicts scenes from the Book of Revelation.

Statuary

This includes:

- A statue of Our Lady of Walsingham (installed 1978), carved in the eponymous Norfolk village.
- A statue of St. Agatha (1930 and dedicated in 1931). It was restored in 1961 and 1977.
- A statue of St Joseph is a restored, antique, hand carved image from Bavaria (dedicated in 1991).
- A Statue of the Virgin and child (1922)
- A large crucifix is located in the north aisle and a third, which survived the 1940 bombing, is mounted in the Sanctuary.

The Font

The marble font, set on a Doric column and dating to 1865, and its surrounding wooden panelling, which dresses the Baptistery at the west end of St Agatha's, was brought from Christ Church, New Street.

The Foundation Stone

The foundation stone of Christ Church, dated 1805, is set in the south wall of the Baptistery.

The Pulpit

The only substantial surviving ecclesiastical furnishing from Bidlake's original conception.

Exterior sculpture

- Above the south door, a tympanum in sculptural relief presents St. Agatha, bound and consumed by flames in the presence of her persecutor, Quintilianus. Another tympanum above the north door show St Agatha receiving comfort from an appearance by St Peter. Each Tympanum is boarded by seraphim in relief.
- Above the west window, within a canopied niche, angels of justice and pity can be seen flanking the figure of Christ in Majesty.
- A large crucifix is from the now-demolished parish church of St Jude, Hill Street is located on the exterior of the building, above the tower's west entrance. It was relocated from St Jude's to its present position in 1971.



Tympanum showing St Agatha before Quintilianus

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“In an age of smartphones, it’s heartening that the local population seems to rely on and value St Agatha’s tower clock. It’s as if the clock keeps ‘community time’.”⁰⁴

St Agatha’s is one of relatively few Grade I listed buildings in Birmingham⁰⁵

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Agatha’s is located on the busy Stratford Road in the south-east, inner-city area of Sparkbrook, Birmingham. It dominates its urban setting and is easily the tallest and most recognisable building in the area. The loss of the adjacent Ladypool School’s Martin and Chamberlain tower and spire (1885) as a consequence of the destruction visited upon it by the Birmingham Tornado of 2005, has had a significant impact upon the setting of St Agatha’s.

Although never in competition with St Agatha’s huge, turreted tower, Ladypool School’s tower and spire provided a visual juxtaposition of differing approaches to the neo-Gothic aesthetic. The loss of the Ladypool tower currently leaves St Agatha’s Gothic to dominate its environs without question or complement.

Preliminary plans for a new mosque, to be located c.300m from the church and complete with a tower almost as tall as St Agatha’s, have been put forward by the local Muslim community. The consultation process instigated by the proposal will no doubt facilitate further discussion and judgement regarding the townscape value of St Agatha’s tower.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

As Birmingham architect WH Bidlake’s putative masterpiece and one of a limited number of Grade I listed buildings in the city, St Agatha’s has high local and national importance.

Bidlake’s overall design owes a debt to the developmental work of GG Scott and GF Bodley, as well as JD Sedding but displays a free interpretation of the Gothic aesthetic that is Bidlake’s own. Sir Arthur Blomfield selected Bidlake to build St Agatha’s from a competitive field that also included Temple Moore, John Douglas and Mervyn Macartney,⁰⁶ demonstrating the confidence of Bidlake’s conception.

The tower, for example, demands the eye’s attention, not only for its scale, but also for the quality of its design – arguably rather theatrical – and execution. Of particular note are its octagonal corner turrets, their upper stages composed of polychromatic brickwork surmounted by pinnacles with decorative, wrought iron finials.

The quality of St Agatha’s monochrome exterior sculpture is very high. Its narratives and/or symbolism are succinct with the deployment of three principal figures on each tympanum and a canopied Christ above the west entrance, flanked by angels. It is a direct, unencumbered aesthetic; all were executed to the designs of WH Bidlake. There are signs of discolouring caused by pollution, which detracts a little from the quality of their execution.

The largely polychromatic interior sculpture is not, if taken as a body, of a comparative quality to the exterior. It is significant, however, as an example of what could be described as ‘repository art’, which reflects and communicates the long-established Anglo-Catholic theology and liturgy at the heart of St Agatha’s worshipping life.

The East Window is a fine example of its type, imbued with additional significance as it is the only stained glass window in the church.

The organ benefits from St Agatha’s reportedly excellent acoustics. It is thought by the PCC to be such an asset that discussions about its care often supersede similar discussions about the maintenance of the church building.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The Sparke family lived in the geographic area during the Middle Ages, as did a stream or brook; it is, however, unclear as to which gave its name to the other. In the nineteenth century the brook was channelled and used, in part, for one of a multitude of canals that would make Birmingham an economic powerhouse, leading to a population explosion.

The remnants of the small stream still flow through the city alongside The Ackers site off Golden Hillock Road. Much of Sparkbrook, which was a relatively affluent suburb in the nineteenth century, suffered considerable bomb damage during WWII, necessitating a programme of rapid re-building in the 1950s.

Remnants of Christ Church, such as the font, foundation stone and bell, are a reminder of the church that was demolished in 1899 so that St Agatha’s may be built. That St Agatha’s was built in the suburbs of the city, some distance from the city centre location of the church whose ministry it assumed, gives an indication of the changing population distribution of Birmingham in the closing years of the nineteenth century, especially when it is noted that Christ Church was demolished to make way for shops and offices.

⁰⁴ Quote from a PCC representative

⁰⁵ Survey results

⁰⁶ Pevsner, N (ed. Forster, A) ‘Pevsner Architectural Guides : City Guides : Birmingham’ Yale, 2005

Social changes are also reflected in the architecture, decoration, theology and liturgy of St Agatha's: it was originally designed for a predominantly Evangelical congregation with the shift to the High Anglicanism of today coming about as Sparkbrook became more working class. Fr Rosenthal (incumbent 1918-1938), was arguably among the greatest influences on St Agatha's inter-war Anglo-Catholicism.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

An archaeological assessment carried out in November 2015 by the Diocese of Birmingham recorded that the site had 'no known archaeological potential'.⁰⁷

COMMUNITY INTEREST

*Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath are adjacent suburbs, about two miles from the centre of Birmingham. Their fortunes have changed over the decades with demographic shifts and changes of use of buildings. The 2011 Census recorded a population of 4,100, of whom 70% described themselves as Muslim, 26% as Christian, having no religion or having no declared Faith, and the balance as having some other World Faith. The Muslim population is predominantly of Pakistani origin; most are second-generation or third-generation British citizens. There is severe social deprivation, though the "balti belt" restaurants provide some employment. Social mobility is largely limited to the younger residents. The housing is mostly late Victorian terraces, and many contain extended family networks. Some 50% of the population is under the age of 20, but there are few facilities for youth, and many of the women are restricted to their households. A parish audit in 2001 drew attention to the lack of provision for youth, and prompted the creation of the Boxing Club at St Agatha's and the Children's Centre at St Barnabas.*⁰⁸

The experience of living in Sparkbrook can be characterised as one of unemployment, failing businesses and consequent deprivation. The predominantly Muslim local population seems to value St Agatha's tower and clock highly but there is a temptation to regard St Agatha's a Christian vestige in an area that has changed radically – economically, ethnically, socially and religiously – since the church was built. St Agatha's appeal to Catholics within the Church of England communion draws a gathered congregation of worshippers from outside the Sparkbrook area, however, resulting in its community extending beyond the parish boundary.

St Agatha's church hall is leased by the Birmingham City Club for Young People, which provides a boxing facility and is an important centre for multi-culturalism in Sparkbrook.



St Agatha's tower with the clock that is so important to the local community

⁰⁷ <http://cofebirmingham.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/SPARKBROOK.pdf>

⁰⁸ www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf, p.3

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

"We tend not to talk about the church building very much at PCC meetings; we probably talk about building the congregation more often."⁰⁹

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) values the church building very highly, predominantly for liturgical reasons. The PCC and its incumbent's preferred liturgy incorporates processions during the patronal festival, which can attract up to 200 worshippers, and the feast days of Corpus Christi and Christ the King, which would not be possible if St Agatha's were not as large. The PCC considers the cathedral-scale of the building to appeal to those worshippers who favour anonymity within a welcoming environment.

The scale of St Agatha's makes high level maintenance tasks very difficult to carry out, so they often get put off. Surveying the gutters, for example, can only be done at distance, from the tower; cleaning them out is impossible without scaffolding. The bricks used in St Agatha's construction are of unusual proportions (long and thin). The PCC does not know if they are still manufactured. If they are not, any future repairs to St Agatha's brickwork could be compromised, which is a source of worry to the PCC.

The local, predominantly Muslim community values the church because the clock lets them know when it is time to pray. Occasionally, some younger, usually male Muslims will enter the church and be curious about some of the fixtures and fittings. Because the local schools teach mostly Muslim pupils, St Agatha's is not used extensively as a learning resource but is accepted as a convenient host venue for local children's arts projects. School-aged children's reactions to the building tend to be overwhelmingly positive.¹⁰

St Agatha is situated within a deprived community and the neighborhood experiences acts of extreme violence, such as drive-by shootings, which the PCC is anxious to develop a response to as part of its mission. The tympanum depicting St Agatha with St Peter has recently been damaged in what appears to be an act of vandalism using an air rifle and three years ago lead was stolen from the vestry roof. This was witnessed by staff at the neighbouring supermarket, who called the police.

The perpetrators were not apprehended immediately but were caught the following day when they returned to St Agatha's and their activities were reported to the police, this time by boxers training in St Agatha's church hall. The PCC has taken the decision not to install security cameras as it is buoyed by the apparent support it has received from the local community with regard to the lead theft.

Perceptions of the possible threat of extremism within Birmingham, and Sparkbrook in particular, is something that the PCC has not been able to ignore. The PCC aims to write a 'response to terrorism' policy in the near future.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St Agatha's considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a Help. This places St Agatha's with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹¹

09 Quote from PCC representative

10 PCC representative

11 Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The interregnum made us stronger; we were able to reassess what kind of pastoral leadership we wanted, which helped us to grow in confidence.”¹²

The PCC is legally responsible for St Agatha’s and another church, St Barnabas, which is located in a residential quarter of Birmingham, on the Ladypool Road. The former separate parishes of St Agatha’s and St Barnabas’ became a United Parish, retaining the two parish churches, in 1990. The PCC delegates most aspects of parish business to each church’s respective Group,¹³ which oversees day-to-day operations. Each Group comprises a churchwarden, a treasurer, volunteer members, and has its own finances, from which it makes its own Common Fund (Parish Share) contributions. The church is under the patronage of the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda.¹⁴ The PCC receives pastoral care from the Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

A period of interregnum, which ended with the arrival of St Agatha’s new incumbent in March 2016, is felt to have made the PCC stronger. It presented the PCC with the opportunity to reassess what sort of pastoral leadership it and St Agatha’s Group needed. One result of this period of reflection was a closer working relationship with the administrative Diocese of Birmingham, which has led the PCC and Group to feel less isolated. Partly because of the confidence and culture of self-reliance fostered during the period of interregnum, St Agatha’s PCC and Group have a desire to be less reliant on the goodwill of volunteers; although, a great deal of work is done to encourage people to support the church.

The PCC and Group would like, at the very least, to employ members of staff to open the church to visitors every day and employ a verger. There is not, however, the financial capacity to pay anyone other than a part-time director of music/organist. The former volunteer building co-ordinator converted to Roman Catholicism several years ago and has not been replaced, which has resulted in St Agatha’s incumbent, treasurer and churchwarden organising and administering any works to the church building, with occasional support from the church architect, who is a descendent of WH Bidlake, St Agatha’s architect.

Maintenance is carried out, when the need is identified, by a group of around six people that take collective responsibility for the care of the church without assigning individual responsibilities. St Agatha’s does not have a Fabric committee or Friends group to support work on the church building. There is, however, a desire to form a Friends group in the future with express objective of encouraging inclusivity within the local and wider communities. A social committee organises events and activities on behalf of the PCC and a youth and education group looks after the interest of young worshippers.

Capacity is a salient issue at St Agatha’s. Time must, however, be given to the new incumbent and rejuvenated PCC and Group to develop a vision for the church that is anchored by the mission and pastoral work that is already done dedicatedly and with notable success. A strategy to address skills gaps is emerging, which has the potential to yield positive results, particularly with regard to the fair distribution of responsibilities and the implementation of a regular maintenance schedule, which could be extracted from recommendations in the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) report.

Number of members on PCC	16
Number of clergy	0 (incumbent is house for duty)
Number of paid staff	1 (organist)
Number of volunteers	20
Number of sub-committees	1 (social committee)

¹² Quote from a PCC representative

¹³ ‘Group’ is the term used in: www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf

¹⁴ For more information about Forward in Faith and The Society, please see: www.forwardinfaith.com/aboutus.php

FINANCES

“We are quite concerned about our investments, which we rely on just to get by, in the economic environment after Brexit. Not knowing what will happen is causing a lot of anxiety. Our congregation is small so donations can’t be relied upon to increase, and the local community won’t support the building financially.”¹⁵

St Agatha’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Parish Share. They anticipate adaptations and additions to the building will be the biggest expenditure in the future.¹⁶

St Agatha’s Group’s income is limited to a small number of sources:¹⁷ voluntary donations (£25,470, of which £6,412 was reclaimed tax, £9,342 was through an envelope scheme and £683 was donated through plate giving, and the remainder was offered through other donations). Activities for generating funds (£6,334, of which £6,078 was generated by leasing the church hall and £256 was through other fundraising); investments (£1,810); and income resulting from charitable activities (£338). The total income over the whole of 2015 was £33,945, which compares with a total expenditure of £35,116. St Agatha’s Group has £57,829 in reserves, which is down from £59,042 in 2014.

All expenses are paid out of the Group’s account, with no funds restricted for particular purposes. Regular items of expenditure are managed as prudently as possible. The Group’s Common Fund contribution (parish share), which it is committed to paying in full year-on-year, has been reduced from c.£12,000 in 2015 to c.£8,000 in 2016 because St Agatha’s incumbent was engaged on a ‘house for duty’ basis. All utilities except oil, for example, are arranged by a broker to ensure the Group is in receipt of the best deal available.

The Diocese of Birmingham meets the cost of commissioning the QI but the lack of a dedicated fabric fund, coupled with the absence of a coherent maintenance plan, means expenditure on the building is inevitably reactive. Occasional grants, some of which have been substantial, have aided urgent fabric repairs in the past, such as a c.£1 million grant from the HLF in 2004 to fund urgent repairs on the church tower. An insurance claim covered the cost of replacing lead stolen from the vestry roof in 2013.

Income from the church hall has been secured through the implementation of a long-term lease, which the Diocese of Birmingham helped to arrange and is linked to a price index. The lease was necessitated by a funding application to Sport England and made by the boxing club that rents the hall, which will see the building extended and facilities improved to widen use, particularly by female members. St Agatha’s Group has hired the church to other Christian denominations in the past, generating £1,945 in 2014; however, no rental income was generated in 2015.

St Agatha’s Group is without a fundraising strategy but would like to attract legacies (it has not received many legacies over the past c.12 years); however, it is unsure of how to go about this. The Group feels it cannot increase congregational giving as people consistently donate to the church very generously.

Again, St Agatha’s inaction is not a result of disaffection or indolence, but a lack of capacity. The Group lacks the skills necessary to devise and implement a fundraising strategy and so relies on the generosity of its congregation and the single substantial asset it has, namely the church hall, to generate income, largely because this approach does not take up the attention of Group members whose time is already scarce. St Barnabas’ Group members, however, have a proven track record of raising grant aid and St Agatha’s Group could find that a joint fundraising plan, devised and implemented at PCC level, could yield positive results for both churches. The PCC is committed to completing as much work recommended by the QI as can be afforded.

¹⁵ Quote from PCC representative

¹⁶ Survey result

¹⁷ All figures are for January 2015 to December 2015 unless otherwise stated.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Agatha's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁸

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Agatha's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£39,300
Urgent QI cost	£14,600
Annual maintenance cost	£338 (amount paid in 2015)
Parish share cost	£8,000
Building insurance cost	£6,121
Utilities cost	£4,011
Major project cost	An estimated £300,000 for largely desirable works to St Agatha's electrics; re-pointing and the installation of fully accessible facilities

Annual donations income	£25,470
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£0
Events/church hall income	£6,334
Other income i.e. land/interest	£2,141
Services fees	£0
Individual project income	£0



Virgin and child (1922); an example of St Agatha's 'repository art'

¹⁸ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“In general, the church is weathered and has numerous areas where intervention is required. Unfortunately, no ladder access was possible onto the aisle and transept flat roofs and it is suspected that there may be items of concern which would be discovered here. Other roofs have isolated slipped slates, etc. Rainwater goods need to be overhauled and redecorated. External masonry has eroded pointing and some decayed stone dressings, and window surrounds are poor. Internally the church is well cared for, but water ingress is damaging some finishes. Fire precautions need to be urgently reviewed.”¹⁹

St Agatha's most recent QI, carried out in 2014, was the church's first in 14 years. This was principally because St Agatha's PCC and Group was largely disengaged from the Diocese of Birmingham and also became disconnected from statutory processes. This has changed dramatically over the period of interregnum and with the arrival of the current incumbent.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) has recently been very supportive of the PCC and Group, especially with regard to negotiating planning permission for the extension of St Agatha's church hall, thus helping to secure a long-term income from this resource. Similarly, Historic England were also helpful in this regard. These supportive relationships have been of great comfort to the PCC and Group following a number of years of relative isolation.

There still persists among members of the PCC and Group, however, an anxiety about being unable to address repair issues through a lack of capacity and resources. Gutter clearance, for example, has been recognised as being of the utmost importance, but because the design of the building puts this beyond the physical and financial capabilities of Group members, it is not carried out. Furthermore, the QI report has not been referred to following the Group's receipt of it because of its overwhelming content. Incapacitation as a result of anxiety has extended to the urgent review of fire precautions not being carried out.

Other than the major work to the church tower in 2004, the vestry roof was replaced following a lead theft in 2013, funded by an insurance claim, followed by a complete internal redecoration funded by the Group. The Group is, however, adamant that it cannot afford to carry out any more work without substantial grant aid, including work to the church's electrical system, which is now showing signs of age. There is, however, a firm desire to install fully accessible kitchen and WC facilities, for which St Agatha's architect is currently preparing preliminary drawings.

The local community is respectful of St Agatha's work and have not lodged any formal objections to proposed works.

Neither the PCC nor St Agatha's Group have a formal mission statement, business plan or conservation plan. There is a sense that both the PCC and Group are focussed on the worship of the church and the management of the church building is considered to be an overwhelming, costly and confusing undertaking.

Whilst the installation of facilities will undeniably enhance the mission potential of St Agatha's, a hierarchy of priorities, if considered objectively, would almost certainly place greater importance on establishing a routine of regular maintenance and other obligations, such as fire safety. Greater support is evidently required in order to militate against threats to the future sustainability of the PCC and the buildings in its care.

St Agatha's has a no management documents other than a QI. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁰

¹⁹ Rodney Melville and Partners, 'Church of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook, Quinquennial Inspection Report January 2014, Version v.1 26.01.14', p.1

²⁰ Survey result

RECENT PROJECT

The last major repair project to be carried out at St Agatha's was the urgent works to the church tower, which took place in 2004 at a cost of c.£1 million. The whole tower was scaffolded; structural repairs were carried out; the entire tower was repointed; the roof was water-proofed and pigeon-deterrent apparatus was introduced. Because of the increased vulnerability to the tower as a result of the scaffolding the insurance premium increased considerably.

The project achieved what it set out to achieve inasmuch as the structure of the tower was secured, local people had a sense of pride in the achievement and it attracted the attention of royalty – Prince Edward re-opened the church upon the project's completion.

The project's legacy was not, however, carefully thought through. Little thought was given to how the tower would be maintained and little was done to share professional expertise and experience, so when the tower roof began leaking several years ago, nobody on the PCC knew why. It transpired that pigeons had breached the tower's defences and filled the gutters with guano. Because the gutters could not easily be inspected, this went unnoticed until the consequent water ingress was unmissable. The pigeons were disposed of and a valuable lesson was learnt.²¹

21 PCC representative

CURRENT USE

As well as observing a number of Christian feast days, St Agatha's provides one Sunday service and a service on Tuesdays. St Agatha's offers contemporary (post-Conciliar) catholic worship, with high standards of reverence in the liturgy, but an informal and friendly welcome to all comers. The clergy are supported by a dedicated and inclusive team of servers with strong leadership. There is emphasis on Sunday High Mass, but a devoted following for weekday Low Masses.²²

St Agatha's took part in a c.£500,000 community arts project entitled 'My Route'²³ in 2014 to 2015. This project reportedly created quite a buzz around Sparkbrook, appearing in the local press and on television. St Agatha's even featured on the cover of the accompanying publication. Due to capacity issues, however, and the time commitment and effort the project asked of St Agatha's Group, the potential for creating a legacy of the project at St Agatha's was unable to be realised beyond having a copy of the project's publication on display.

St Agatha's participates in the annual Heritage Open Days, held every September, where organ recitals exhibitions and tours of the church are offered, often by local Muslim residents. Usually, around 50 people come to the church over the duration of the event. St Agatha's principal focus is, however, on mission-driven activities. These include supporting charitable work in Zimbabwe and running a soup kitchen in partnership with Birmingham's 4* Regency Hotel. The Group feels, however, that the continuance of the soup kitchen is predicated upon the acquisition of new kitchen facilities.

Because Sparkbrook has traditionally been a place of settlement for people coming to the UK, the PCC and Group have identified scope for the future use of St Agatha's by Orthodox Christians as well as other denominations, which could prove to be a boon not only for income, but also help to secure the future sustainability of the church through the growth of the worshipping community.

Baptisms	2
Funerals	3
Weddings	1

²² www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf, p.6

²³ <http://myroute.org.uk/about-my-route/>

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

A few months ago the tower clock stopped and I hadn't realised. It was brought to my attention by a note that had been stuffed through the church gates. It read something like 'I missed my Friday prayers last week and it's your fault.' I was a little taken aback but thought I'd better get the clock going again. After I'd fixed it I texted the mobile number that had been included on the note, just to let the person who'd written it know I'd done something about the issue, and received a very nice message of thanks in return. It's quite strange, actually, these days, when everyone has a smartphone and they carry time around in their pockets, how important the church clock is to people. When I wind the clock forward or back, people stand and watch; I've even been asked to pose for a selfie with a group of local lads, holding up the clock key!²⁴

None.

Anglo Catholic History Society and architectural societies often visit the church.

The annual Heritage Open Days are hosted by St Agatha's.

Two services take place on Sundays; one on Tuesdays, plus on major festivals and feast days.

²⁴ Quote from a PCC representative

WELCOMING VISITORS

St Agatha's is open by appointment outside scheduled worship. A website offers information about the history of the church and its current mission and worshipping life. An online visitors' book had to be removed from St Agatha's website after a number of abusive comments were left.

The PCC and Group have an ambition to install a fully accessible WC as the current facility is not suitable for wheelchair users. The church building is accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility issues via a ramp. There is no published interpretation available to visitors other than a photocopied information sheet.

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St Agatha's roof, which was rebuilt to Bidlake's original design following a fire in 1959

THE MINSTER CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS (GREAT YARMOUTH MINSTER)

Church Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1NE

Diocese	Norwich	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	II*	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1096813	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Poor)
Church Heritage Record No.	626045	Average Weekly Attendance	120
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	27,130
Footprint (m ²)	2752 (very big)	Annual Visitors	6,000
Building Period	Medieval (rebuilt twentieth century)	Website	http://www.gtyarmouthminster.org/



View of the south elevation of Great Yarmouth Minster

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Great Yarmouth Minster was originally a guild church and priory founded in the twelfth century.
- The church was virtually destroyed by fire in WWII but restored to its Medieval interior by Dykes Bower in the mid-twentieth century.
- A key part of Yarmouth's strong Medieval heritage as a thriving trading town.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- One of the top three largest parish churches in the country with wide north and south aisles, bigger than the central nave.
- One of two parish churches in the diocese with a hybrid role including elements of both church and cathedral.
- Serves a large coastal area with high levels of social and economic deprivation.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- To continue to fulfil its role as a civic church.
- Financial resources.
- To develop activities, such as musical ministry, that will create a sustainable future.



View of the interior looking east

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Great Yarmouth Minster plays an important pastoral and cultural role in an area of high social and economic deprivation. In many ways it acts like a cathedral for the region. The Diocese is supportive, reducing its parish share and providing it with a strong team ministry in order to provide users with civic, parish and visitor facilities and functions. As part of its civic function, the Minster hosts many events, arts festivals and musical activities.

The Minster is supported by the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, part of an enthusiastic and competent network (although with some skills gaps) which works with the church. However, income does not meet expenditure and reserves are dwindling, for which no solution has been agreed. While no formal plan is in place, the Minster's initial aims for the future are to engage

with heritage tourists, to improve offering through musical and educational purposes and to upgrade the building's heating and facilities.

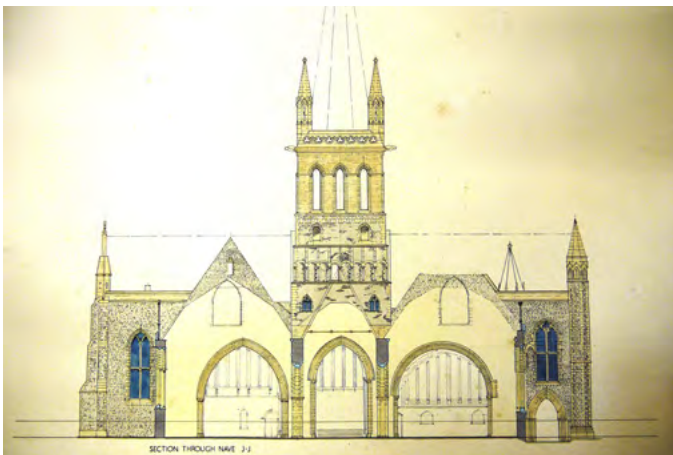
The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is hopeful for the future but questions whether it has the capacity and resources and drive to pull the Minster out of its reserves. Plans for the future reordering of the building have been on hold in the short-term due to the imminent retirement of the current incumbent. Future regeneration will require a reliable income, increased capacity and a coherent plan, not only for repairs, but for future reordering, facilities, activities and use. Much depends on the extent to which the new incumbent will provide the necessary leadership and energy.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“The general effect [of the interior] is spacious and impressive, but puzzling. The interior is evidently Gothic, of c.1190 to the late thirteenth century, but except for parts of the west end and the reredos, hardly a stone is from before 1957... the inevitable comparison has been made with the tremendous work at Coventry Cathedral. A building of about the same size, but the comparison ends there.”⁰³

The church at Great Yarmouth was founded in 1101 as a priory church. It formed part of a programme of works undertaken by Bishop Herbert de Losinga as penance for purchasing ecclesiastical offices for himself and his family (the sin of simony). Recent repairs have revealed Norman stonework in the tower of the church. However, the building was substantially altered in the following centuries. In 1330-1338 the west front was built with grand towers and pinnacles. Work progressed slowly due to the plague. The unusually wide aisles date from a rebuilding in the thirteenth century and appear to have been originally intended to house chapels of the different guilds operating in the prosperous Medieval town of Great Yarmouth. There were between 19 and 23 of these chapels in the Medieval period. The south porch was added in the fourteenth century.

The priory was dissolved at the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Most of its buildings were demolished, but the church became the parish church of the town. In 1649, the church was divided into three, according to the liturgical and theological divisions of the time. Brick walls, two feet thick, were inserted in the arches north of the nave, on the east side of the transepts and the east side of the tower. The episcopal church continued to use the south aisle (Anglican). The chancel was adapted as a church house and used by the Independents (Puritan), and the north aisle was used by the Presbyterians of the town.



Section through the nave from the original 1950s drawings for rebuilding following the war

⁰³ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

The church remained divided until its restoration in the mid-nineteenth century. The north aisle was restored in 1847 by JH Hakewill. The east end was rebuilt in 1813 by PH Wyatt. JP Seddon undertook a major restoration of the church in 1859-1864 which included taking down the internal brick walls, extending the east end and repairing the tower.

The inside of the church was destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1942, leaving only the tower and walls standing. After the War, it was decided to rebuild the church as it had been. The restoration was undertaken by Stephen Dykes Bower from 1957 and the church was re-consecrated in 1961. Dykes Bower was allowed £315,000 for the work, a quarter of the amount allocated to Coventry Cathedral after the Second World War. The architectural historian Pevsner wrote that 'given the paucity of the funding, what Dykes Bower produced is a competent, if not particularly imaginative reworking of the existing building with much more open space than before.'⁰⁴ He described the large, open spaces as 'clean and functional if not spectacular' and complained that the problem with the concept is the fact that so large a space needs to be filled with plenty of furnishings, which they did not have.⁰⁵

The church was designated a Minster in 2011 by the diocese for 'possessing great historical and architectural significance as well as a contemporary mission and ministry stretching beyond parish boundaries.'⁰⁶

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **1101:** Priory founded by Herbert de Losinga.
- **Thirteenth century:** Rebuilding including widening of north and south aisles.
- **Fourteenth century:** South porch.
- **1859-1864:** Restoration by JP Seddon.
- **1957-1961:** Rebuilding by Dykes Bower.

⁰⁴ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

⁰⁵ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

⁰⁶ Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, October, 2011.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

The interior of Great Yarmouth Minster is characterised by the wide open spaces created in the 1950s. The Minster feels both ancient and modern at the same time. Fixtures and fittings can be modern replacements (the organ) and ancient items reused from other locations (the font). All are high-quality.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Organ

William Hill organ, built 1876, brought to the church after the destruction of the interior including the organ. The ornate Dykes-Bower casing holds a Grade II certificate from the British Institute of Organ Studies.

Pews and Pulpit

The church is filled with simple light-stained nave pews, which are moveable and were obtained from St George's Church, Yarmouth. The panelled pulpit is 1714 and also came from St George's Church.



View of the font, west entrance and font cover

Font and Cover

Norman octagonal font with a 12-sided bowl with waterleaf decoration from St Peter, Highway, Wiltshire, brought here following the reconstruction. The font is of considerable interest as an example of late twelfth-century carving.

Stained Glass

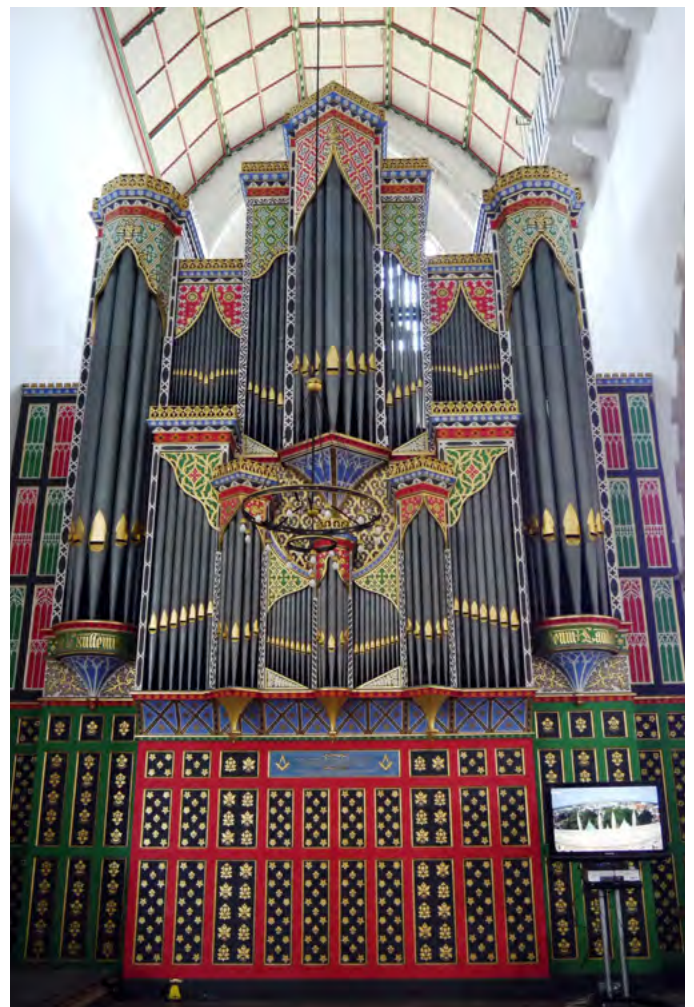
Fragments of fourteenth-century glass in the rector's vestry. Stained glass by Brian Thomson was installed in the 1960s.

Monuments

Several salvaged ledger stones, some dating to the seventeenth century, in the north aisle. A few rescued mural monuments are on the walls of the south aisle and the south transept.

Bells

The church tower has a ring of 12 bells, plus one re-cast after the bombing and manufactured by Whitechapel Foundry in 1960. As well as the church's bell ringing team they are regularly rung by visiting bands of ringers.



Organ in the north transept

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“There can be no doubt that Great Yarmouth Minster is one of the Major Parish Churches of England. The challenge of maintaining such a large historic building as a place of worship and community resource is enormous. Although much has already been achieved, work is still needed to make the building fit for purpose in the twenty-first century, particularly to the interior.”⁰⁷

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Great Yarmouth Minster chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁸

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Great Yarmouth is an historic town and civil parish located on a thin spit of land between the North Sea to the east and the River Yare to the west. The town was a prosperous Medieval port and retains one of the best preserved town walls in England, as well as several listed buildings and sites of historic interest. The fishing and tourism industries on which the town has traditionally relied have declined. Much of the historic centre was destroyed by bombs in the Second World War, as it was the last settlement passed over by homeward bound enemy aircraft dropping any remaining payload before crossing the sea. The town has high levels of social and economic deprivation which the Minster works hard to address.

The church and churchyard are located at the head of the market square in a Conservation Area at the centre of Great Yarmouth. It is a significant local landmark and visual feature in the town, visible for some distance on the approach to Great Yarmouth. The church is set back from the A47 dual carriageway leading into the town centre from the west, here known as Fullers Hill, which then becomes Priory Plain adjacent to the church. This insensitive 1960s dual carriageway insertion into the town has the effect of cutting the church off from the town, making access difficult. The church “disappears” from view as one enters the town and the entrance to the churchyard from the road is not marked or clear at all. Nonetheless, the glimpses visitors get of the vast roofs as they walk around the town are an important part of its character, and the Minster contributes significantly to the attractiveness and heritage interest of the town, as well as being a tourist attraction in its own right. It is an important part of the local tourist industry and economy of Great Yarmouth and Norfolk and the wider region.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The Norman parts of the tower are of exceptional architectural interest. Further Norman work has been revealed following the restoration of the tower (2012). The upper stages of the tower represent the Perpendicular style of the mid-fifteenth century in Norfolk.

The plan form of the church, with its unusually wide aisles, is a result of the church's history as a priory and the location of a number of guild chapels. The retention of this plan is a point of significant architectural interest. The church is also of interest for the approach taken in its twentieth-century reconstruction by Dykes Bower and may be contrasted with Coventry Cathedral. There, a Medieval church of a similar size and local presence, was destroyed by enemy action and replaced with an unmistakably modern building. At Great Yarmouth, however, the Medieval interior was carefully reconstructed.

The church contains a number of ledger slabs and monuments from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries which are of some art historical interest for the development of funerary art and lettering during this period. The stained glass by Brian Thomas dates to the early 1960s and is of considerable artistic interest. The south transept window, is considered by some, to be the best modern stained glass in East Anglia.



Great Yarmouth Minster (east end) within its setting of churchyard and priory buildings

⁰⁷ The Parish and Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, Conservation Management Plan, PCC and CBC, April 2014

⁰⁸ Survey result

HISTORIC INTEREST

As an early Priory and parish church, the church and site is significant evidence for the development of Christianity in Norfolk and England. The architecture and arrangement of any church are dictated primarily by the liturgical rites which take place within and around it. The form of the church building is therefore of exceptional significance for our understanding of the evolution of a Medieval church in terms of its liturgy, the lost chapels being of particular interest in this respect, but also the wide aisles.

Associations with the architect Stephen Dykes Bower (1903-1994) are of interest. Dykes Bower was a British ecclesiastical architect who worked on other buildings such as Westminster Abbey, St Edmunds Bury Cathedral and Lancing College chapel. He is known for rejecting modernism and continuing to champion Gothic Revival architecture and Victorian traditions.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Despite the many changes including window and fabric replacements, much original and cumulative fabric remains within the church and contributes to its archaeological interest.

The site has considerable potential for the archaeology and history of the Medieval period. There is also potential for the existence of Anglo-Saxon, Roman or prehistoric remains.

The site is of archaeological interest as a burial ground used for at least 900 years, so the potential for the study of human remains and burial practice over this long period. It was also used as a burial ground for the Hospital for the Sick and Wounded of the Army and Navy (1793-1815), who died there during the Napoleonic Wars and the local Royal Naval Hospital (1811-1958).

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The church is a symbol of civic identity and pride in the history and cultural continuity of the area, being together with the other churches one of the largest and oldest buildings still used by the community (and for the original purposes). The decision of the community to rebuild the church as an interpreted facsimile in the 1950s was a significant decision at the time and illustrates the importance of continuity and the presence of an ancient building in the town.

Within the church the monuments (and the records of them) are historically significant in themselves for the understanding and research of local and social history, recording the clergy, dignitaries, families and beneficiaries of the church and town. The War Memorials are also of local significance and interest.

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

"Visitors often comment on [the] atmosphere of peace and the beauty of the building. We want to maintain this legacy for future generations, while increasing access to it for everyone to enjoy and use."⁰⁹

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Great Yarmouth Minster considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Great Yarmouth Minster with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁰

Even among Major Parish Churches, St Nicholas', or Great Yarmouth Minster, is unusually large. Its size is a key part of the building's impact, lends it a high profile within the town and is remarked upon by most visitors. The area it serves, by reason of its coastal geography is remote from other parts of the Diocese and has an 'islander feel'¹¹. All of this contributes to the cathedral-like role played by the Minster, both as the civic church and as the principal church in the Deanery. This is a role that the Minster feels keenly. It has in the past hosted carol services instead of Norwich Cathedral and attracts external partners, such as musicians, who might otherwise go to the cathedral.

The large and impressive space within the building, although dismissed by Pevsner as too open, allows for considerable flexibility in its use. Not only can it be used for major civic services but it has accommodated an indoor Christmas market, arts festivals and exhibitions without obstructing the liturgical space at its centre. The church has well-admired acoustic qualities and the clergy capitalise on the different sounds, qualities and silence of different areas.

The Minster has two daughter churches, St Mary's and St Paul's. It is also responsible for two closed churches, St Luke's, Cobham (recently disposed of for residential conversion) and St John's (currently unsustainable and, it is hoped, to be converted into a heritage skills centre). St Nicholas was designated a Minster in 2011. It is one of two Minsters in the diocese, the other being at King's Lynn. Giving a building the title of Minster is a strategy used to deal with a struggling church presence, in an area with high economic and social deprivation. This offers the church a greater presence, leadership and resources concentrated in a single 'hub'. The title 'minster' is believed by the PCC to have more cache than simply 'parish church' and helps draw people to the building.¹²

Whilst the size of the building is an asset in many ways, it also presents challenges. Even maintenance and repairs costs are many times what they would be for a smaller building. Its insurance premium (£1,100 a month) is calculated by their insurers as if it were a cathedral. The Minster is too large to benefit from the diocese's gutter clearance contract (which offers a flat rate of £250 for most churches) and must employ its own contractors. It has over a thousand lightbulbs and heating costs are similarly scaled up. Whilst the heating is often turned off to economise and external users are charged a supplement for its use, it is necessary in winter to maintain visitor and worshipping numbers. Besides these financial difficulties, there is a constant challenge to use the space in the building positively, rather than being overwhelmed by it, particularly at some of the daily or weekly services when there is only a small congregation.



Vandalism to the rear of the Minster and intrusive anti-vandalism measures over windows at ground level

09 PCC representative
10 Survey result
11 PCC representative
12 PCC representative

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The PCC is grateful for the contribution made to its work by volunteers who are involved in ministry, maintenance of the buildings...It is impossible to quantify a monetary value but if we paid for the voluntary time it would probably add £30,000 or more to our budget.”¹³

The Minster is the responsibility of the PCC and the incumbent rector. The current PCC has 26 members, and the Minster also has a team of three stipendiary clergy, two Ordained Local Ministries' (OLMs), one retired OLM and three lay readers. The clergy work across the three churches of the Minster, St Mary's and St Paul's. The PCC operates two sub-committees, one on finance and one on fabric. There is also a Minster Preservation Trust, an independent organisation which raises funds for the repair and maintenance of the building. Although the Trust works closely with the fabric committee and the PCC, the maintenance of the building remains exclusively the PCC's responsibility.

The paid staff at Great Yarmouth Minster are the steward, parish administrator, finance operator, three vergers, three caretakers and an organist. This amounts to two full-time employees.

Approximately 100 volunteers serve the Minster in a variety of capacities. There is certainly scope to develop volunteer skills in both tourism and maintenance, although it is a challenge to do this whilst retaining goodwill and assurance that existing skills are valued. The Minster engages with vulnerable adults by offering volunteering opportunities with competent supervision. Although this is time consuming and does not benefit the Minster directly, it is a valuable mission activity.

The Minster has recently implemented a maintenance plan following the completion of work on the tower. It has a Quinquennial Inspection (QI) in place and a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP was drafted as part of a proposal to divide the internal space of the church into distinct areas. The scheme was not adopted and, although it should have been a useful resource in its own right, the CMP has not been updated since and remains in draft form (2014). Change has been resisted by some stakeholders and consensus on the future is needed.¹⁴

By longstanding arrangement, the churchyard is maintained by the Borough Council. This was agreed historically, in return for church land taken up by the widening of Northgate Street.

Great Yarmouth Minster has no business plan, feasibility study or overall plan for the future development of the church. In the short-term, building alterations to revive the fortunes of the Minster have been put on hold due to the imminent retirement of the current incumbent (although substantial mission initiatives and an organ refit are currently underway). As reserves dwindle to unsustainable levels, hopes are now riding on the new incumbent to have the skills, resources and drive to act as a catalyst for wider change in both fortunes and mindsets.

Number of members on PCC	26
Number of clergy	6 3 stipendiary; 2 OLM; 1 retired priest; 3 lay-readers – across three churches
Number of paid staff	10 steward; parish admin; finance officer; 3 caretakers; 3 vergers; organist/director of music; equivalent to two full-time positions
Number of volunteers	100
Number of sub-committees	2 finance and fabric committee



Display within the church showcasing the work of the Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust

¹³ The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014

¹⁴ PCC representative

FINANCES

“... the PCC is very aware that since the year end it has been necessary to spend substantial sums on urgent repairs at the Minster. The PCC will be looking at ways other than holding fund raising events to increase the income of the PCC.”¹⁵

Great Yarmouth Minster’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate parish share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs and Parish Share are regularly the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁶

The PCC spends more each year than it receives. In 2014, the Minster ran at a deficit of £29,000, much of which was due to repairs carried out to historic fabric at the Minster mission hall and urgent repairs to the Minster. This situation has been repeated in 2015 and is very worrying for the PCC.¹⁷

Hosting events is the main source of income. The Minster does not feel that it can charge the same level of venue hire as a cathedral, and typically charges £100 per evening. This amount has been determined by the economic conditions of the area and is based on basic market research. Average income in Great Yarmouth is £13,000 p.a., and the PCC has found that most people are unlikely to pay more than £7.50 for a ticket and are very reluctant to book in advance. This makes it difficult to organise events effectively. The Minster makes an additional charge to users for heating in the winter. However, the Minster also hosts major civic events which it views as part of its civic function and mission. It does not charge for these (although it shares the collection), even though they require additional heating and resources.

The PCC runs a café inside the church, offering drinks and snacks. This is popular but kept deliberately low scale so as not to challenge nearby food businesses, even though this impacts on its viability. The café is easily accommodated in the space of the building and is used by visitors and tourists, and also as a convenient, non-bookable space for local groups. The Minster also has a bookable space, the Minster mission hall (the former church hall of St James’s), which is available for groups and community events. The revenue generated goes into the parish funds and supports the Minster’s own projects at the mission, such as the Pathway Café and Support Centre. The focus is strongly on mission rather than business and income generation is not a priority for these facilities.

To support the Minster, people tend to give time rather than money and there are many volunteers. One particularly successful event is the Christmas Fair, which raised £600 in donations, alongside £1,500 for the hire of the church. The Minster occasionally receives small legacies. It is clear that the cathedral-like scale and perceived role of the Minster is not linked to cathedral-like resources.

The main outgoings of Great Yarmouth Minster are parish share, insurance and maintenance. Parish share is voluntary in the Diocese of Norwich and does not accumulate if a church goes into arrears. Due to the financial situation of the Minster, the Diocese does not expect the PCC to pay the full amount of £104,000 and asks instead for £54,000. However, the Minster is only likely to be able to pay £42,000 in 2016.

The Minster is classified by its insurers as a cathedral and pays £1,100 a month (£132,000 annually) for a full rebuild to the value of £37 million. Reserves and external funding are used for major repairs and maintenance. For example, money from the sale of St Luke’s was used for the repair of the Minster pumps (the church is technically below sea level).

The church economises where it can, for instance by doing its own publicity and switching to LED lighting. However, the underlying poverty in Great Yarmouth is considered a severe handicap to increasing income generation at the Minster. The population of Great Yarmouth has not recovered since wartime bombing, and many of the current population are immigrant families in low paid industries. They are often Roman Catholic rather than Church of England, although this has begun to change in recent years. The church is reluctant to be too commercial in its approach as it feels that its activities should be focussed on its mission of serving the communities in need around them. The Minster recognises that this is not sustainable in the long term but has yet to produce a coherent plan to tackle this. One change recently has been to increase its charges for use of the carpark and is working closely with the town on developing the tourist potential of Yarmouth’s Medieval heritage.

¹⁵ The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014

¹⁶ Survey result

¹⁷ PCC representative

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Great Yarmouth Minster's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁸

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Great Yarmouth Minster's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£1,349,000
Urgent QI cost	£31,000
Annual maintenance cost	£48,500
Parish share cost	£104,000 total, reduced to £54,000. £42,000 to be contributed 2016
Insurance Cost	£132,000
Utilities cost	Unknown
Major project cost	£43,000

Annual donations income	£58,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£6,300 rental income
Events/church hall income	£36,700 weddings and funerals
Other income - land/ interest	£7,700 interest
Individual project income	None

¹⁸ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

The Minster has recently (2014) completed a restoration project of the tower, in the course of which surviving Norman stonework was discovered. The project was very successful and well supported by the architect. It was partly funded by an Historic England/Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Repair Grant for Places of Worship (RGPOW). Although a major project, it ran smoothly and was completed within budget. A maintenance plan was drawn up as a result of the repairs, with a total annual budget of £48,500 required for cyclical and occasional tasks. A total of £91,400 was spent on repairs to buildings in 2014, although maintenance tasks are not separated out from repairs in the annual report. The QI provided the Minster with a 10-year plan for repairs, with a total of £1.8 million. It is unlikely that this can be followed at this stage due to financial constraints.

A project is currently under way to repair the porch roof and upper storey. The Listed Places of Worship Roofs Repair Fund has given £34,000 towards the total of £43,000. There was an opportunity to make further improvements to the porch with a new lobby and glass

doors to improve heat retention, but this is not being taken, partly because the funding only covers the roof but largely because no final decision has been made about the location and design of the new entrance.

The Minster is actively developing links with local schools with the aim of establishing an education and music programme. The choir vestry space is already used as overflow teaching space. The Minster is keen to build up a relationship, enhancing its civic reputation and promote particularly music in schools. This will have benefits for the Minster's choir and provision of sung services. The project is in its early stages but offers potential.

There is a large amount of potential archaeology in the church grounds, including links with the Medieval priory. There is an ambition to explore this, which has potential links with Yarmouth's Medieval heritage, but there is currently no opportunity to do so.

Great Yarmouth Minster has several management documents: accessibility audit, maintenance plan, strategic document, conservation plan, and a Statement of Significance. It has a high number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.¹⁹



View of the south porch roof, which is soon to be repaired

¹⁹ Survey result

RECENT PROJECT

The main repair contract to the tower saw the involvement of stonemasons, structural engineers, quantity surveyors, architects and national statutory advisors such as Historic England. The project comprised rebuilding and stone renewals for the tower's four pinnacles, renewal of the tower east, south and west parapets and repair of the north parapet, selective stone renewal and pointing to the belfry, and removal of buried ironwork. The clock face was repainted and gilded, and a falcon box was constructed and placed on the tower roof. The flagpole ironwork on the tower roof was overhauled while redundant floodlights, radio aerials and gas beacon were removed.²⁰

Works that have been undertaken at Great Yarmouth Minster since the last QI in 2010 include:

- Investigations into the drainage system.
- Repairs to rainwater goods.
- Investigations into the tower.
- Repairs to the organ.
- South chapel south door stonework repaired.
- Lamps and security lights installed.



Damaged stonework in need of repair

²⁰ Quinquennial Inspection of the Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, The Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP, March 2015

CURRENT USE

The Minster is used for civic celebrations such as the mayor's service, national and local commemorations such as the Queen's birthday, town parades and carol services. It is also frequently used as a venue for graduations and school leavers' assemblies. There are a number of local traditional events such as the blessing of the fishing nets and the annual Christmas tree festival. The Minster views its civic role as a key part of its function and mission. It is probably the largest venue in the town at approximately 4,500 seats (St George's theatre in the town has only 300).

The Minster operates a busy programme of events but lacks the resources to coordinate them beyond keeping a shared diary. One of the difficulties is the variety of people who use the building for services or for concerts and other events, for civic functions and as a venue for externally organised events.

The Minster is also a key part of Great Yarmouth's heritage and tourism industry and is keen to develop its role through school visits and educational displays and events. Tours of the building and walks of the town can be booked by arrangement. The Minster's educational role is very important, and the vestries are currently used by the local school for music and languages lessons due to a shortage of classroom space.

In addition, the Minster retains the functions of a traditional parish church. There is an adult choir, which the Minster is keen to develop, and it is seeking an outreach officer to work with schools and set up a children's choir as well. The Minster hosts around 100 baptisms, 25-30 weddings, 20 funerals and 25 memorial services each year. Its buildings are also used by a number of church and secular groups such as a toddlers group, the Mothers' Union, handbell ringers and Great Yarmouth Youth Brass. It operates a food and shelter project at the Minster mission.

Baptisms	100
Funerals	20 25 memorials
Weddings	25-30



Café in the south transept

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

One of the long-term goals of the Minster is to improve the heating of the church, with either separate schemes for the east and west ends (allowing independent use of each) or underfloor heating throughout.

These ideas are connected to our earlier proposals to divide the church internally and the restoration of the organ, which currently draws air from outside. The modernity of the internal fabric (most of which is post war reconstruction) makes some alteration less controversial and Historic England and the HLF have been supportive in initial discussions with us.

Unfortunately, since our original discussions with national organisations, the project has lost momentum. Without a clear steer on direction it has been difficult for us to understand what we need and very little progress has been made since 2014. In the meantime, repairs grow and our responses to these are reactive due to constraints on funding and a lack of a holistic overview of the wider picture.

Civic church (town use):

Civic services - national commemorations i.e. Waterloo, Somme, Remembrance.

Commemoration of the 1953 flooding and memorials to local figures i.e. James Paget.

Queen's birthday.

Graduations.

School Leaver services.

School concerts.

Yarmouth College graduations.

Parades i.e. Mayor's services.

Fishing nets service – blessing inside the church and share the herrings.

HMS Dauntless (Royal Navy destroyer) services.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Tours (booked in advance).

Walks from the town.

National music groups.

Heritage – heritage open days, seaside town display, art exhibitions.

Cathedral library book display.

John Dashwood paintings retrospective.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Regular worship.

Carol services.

Butterfly group (toddlers).

Hand bell ringers.

Bell ringers.

Mothers union.

GY future brass.

Schools – displays and educational events.

Agencies – homelessness services, and local support.

Meetings for local groups i.e. bereavement.

Welfare groups i.e. urban fund organisation uses clergy vestry.

School educational use – music and languages lessons.

WELCOMING VISITORS

“The Minster is now open seven days a week with many people visiting it throughout the year especially when various exhibitions are on. We estimate that up to 6,000 visitors a year come to the Minster.”²¹

The church is kept open seven days a week. Access is level, although it requires the larger main door to be opened, which is more difficult in winter. Visitor numbers are not recorded but are estimated at 6,000. The Minster recognises a need to improve access and parking for coach parties. There is a café, volunteers welcome, information boards and laminated sheets for visitors. Leaflets are available on the liturgical use of the of the building while the website is basic but up to date. There is a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, although there is limited time to maximise its use.

The Minster Preservation Trust and the town hold cultural and heritage activities in Great Yarmouth, which also publicise the minster and its history. There is a weekly pew sheet and a monthly magazine to disseminate information. Most publicity is paper-based, as internet connectivity in Great Yarmouth is limited and not all residents have a home computer.

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SUSTAINING MAJOR PARISH CHURCHES
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