



THE PARISH CHURCH OF
St PETER & St PAUL
BASSINGBOURN

Lives transformed through knowing Jesus

What's happening to the church?

The Parochial Church Council, PCC, (the leadership and trustees of the Parish Church) has been working on proposals to make improvements to the interior of the church. This leaflet summarises why the PCC is proposing improvements and what the plans are.



The PCC started to consider these issues 25 years ago, recognising that the facilities that were provided by the last major internal reordering some 150 years ago have steadily become less and less appropriate for present day use. A number of incremental changes have been made over recent decades but the building is now not fit for purpose, its internal beauty has been severely compromised and, at the same time, it is expensive to maintain and operate.

The present proposals, which have been a long time in gestation and have taken into account the views of many different stakeholders, rightly prioritise the needs of worship and mission, the primary purpose of the church. But the PCC also wishes to provide facilities that will be a resource for the whole community. In developing these proposals the PCC seeks:

- to make the building a welcoming and flexible place of worship.
- to create meeting spaces for children and young people, for teaching, fellowship and outreach.
- to provide suitable catering facilities, toilets and storage.
- to equip the building for use as a community resource.

In summary, the proposal is to remove the Victorian pews from the central area of the nave and level the floor, repaving in natural stone over an under-floor (wet) heating system. This will protect the fabric of the building which is currently threatened both by wasteful and damaging cycles of heating and cooling, and by moisture from the current concrete floor being forced into adjacent vertical structures causing damage, especially to the piers.

The best preserved mediaeval pews will be restored and moved to the perimeter of the space. Three lavatories (including one accessible WC) and a kitchen area will be provided, along with four new rooms, varying in size from small (for 6-8 people) to large (up to 60 people). These areas will be individually zoned from the overall background levels of heat provided all year round, thus providing comfort as needed on a cost effective basis. The largest of these spaces will be created at the west end of the nave under a newly created gallery and will be capable of flexible use (as a meeting room or for extra seating when required by our larger services). A vestry, crèche and suitable storage are also provided in the scheme.

For the first time ever, the church will be able to seat over 350 people in comfort and for the first time in over 6 generations the community will recover the ability to meet, in number, for events ranging from markets to concerts.

The current internal arrangements

The current arrangement in the northwest corner - the 'refreshments area'. Water is collected from a stand pipe located outside the north door. We plan to create catering facilities at the base of the tower.



The current 'vestry' is in the base of the tower behind a curtain. The area is currently used for storage and precarious access to the ringing chamber as well as being the place where ministers robe and prepare to lead worship. We plan to create a separate vestry, provide adequate storage and relocate access to the ringing chamber and bell tower.



The current arrangement at the east end of the nave - the pew platforms will be removed and the floor levelled, whilst under-floor heating will allow us to remove the unsightly (and noisy) wall mounted heaters.



The current arrangement at the west end of the nave - the pew platforms will be removed and the floor levelled, storage will be provided and a sound attenuated area (crèche) will properly cater for the youngest members of our church family.



The current seating in the nave (central part of the church) is in uncomfortable Victorian pews which were part of the re-ordering of the church undertaken between 1865-7. We plan to remove these pews and their platforms to make way for under-floor heating, a stone floor and flexible seating on wooden chairs.

The pews in the north and south aisles are of historical importance, being of mediaeval origin. They are in varying states of repair and we plan to restore and retain the best of them, repositioning around the perimeter of the building



Parts of the rood screen are of mediaeval origin and this, together with our striking chancel dating from 1340-50, **will not be altered in any way**. The chancel will continue to be used for occasional services and will remain a place for quiet, personal prayer.

The proposals - screenshots from the computerised model

Please note that these aim only to give an overall impression, not the detail of colours etc (eg the rood screen will not be changed but is difficult to represent here).



Above - View from the gallery with church laid out for large services



Above - West end of nave laid out for refreshments (doors can be closed for a separate meeting) with kitchen in the base of the tower and hatch through to refreshments area.



Informal meeting room on north side of gallery



Upper room in bell tower with access to ringing chamber



Meeting room on south side of balcony

Further information is on our website at www.bassingbournchurch.org.uk including how you can support to the project.