

The Parish Church of **St Peter & St Paul** Bassingbourn

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What's happening to the church?



You may have heard that 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. If you haven't attended one of the recent open events hosted by the church you may be wondering why the church 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, 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.

- The PCC wishes the building to be a welcoming and flexible place of worship
- The PCC wishes to create meeting spaces for children and young people, for teaching, fellowship and outreach.
- The PCC wishes to provide suitable catering facilities, toilets and storage.
- The PCC wishes to have the building equipped and ready for use as a community resource.

We are keen to share the plans as widely as possible and hope to have the support of many villagers in what we are aiming to achieve. Some, we hope, may want to support the project financially but it has never been our intention to ask the Parish Council for any financial contribution.

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The current proposal is to remove the pews from the central area of the nave and level the floor, repaving in stone over an under-floor (wet) heating system which will protect the fabric of the building (currently threatened by wasteful and damaging cycles of heating and cooling) and be environmentally friendly. The mediaeval pews will be restored and retained. Lavatories and a kitchen area will be provided, along with 4 new rooms, varying in size from small (for 6-8 people) to large (up to 60 people). These areas will be individually segregated from the overall background levels of heat provided all year round, thus providing comfort as needed on a cost effective basis.

For the first time ever, the church will be able to seat over 300 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.

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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 proofed 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 them.



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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** in our plans for improvements to the building. The chancel will continue to be used for occasional services and 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 (eg the colour of the stone floor may change). The chancel, screen and stained glass are not shown but will be all be retained, unaltered.



View from the gallery with church laid out for large services



Back of church laid out for separate meeting or refreshments



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 the 'Strategic Case for Change' and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.