

STATEMENT OF NEED

St Peter & All Hallows, West Huntspill

In The Benefice of The Huntspills & Mark

DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

Rural Deanery of Abridge Archdeaconry of Wells

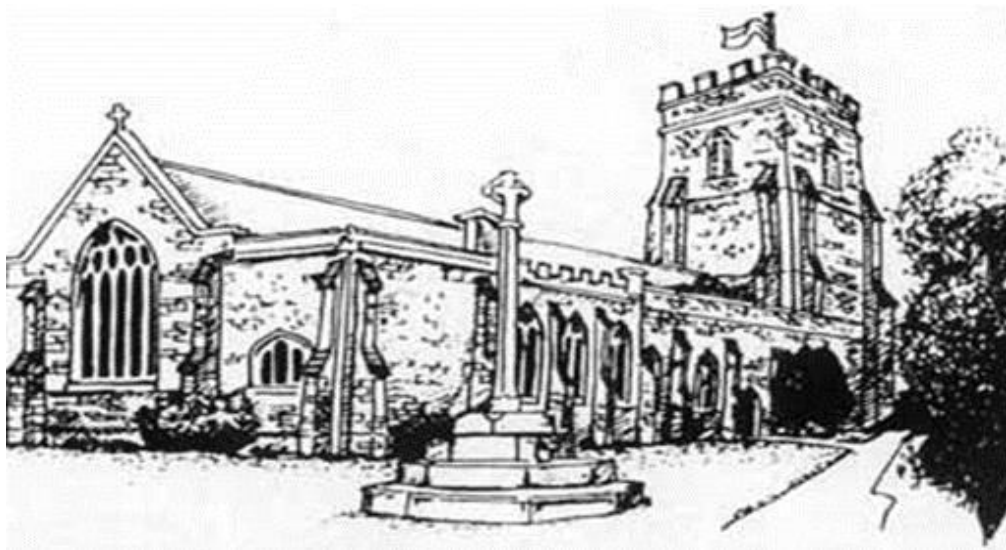
The church is listed **grade I** and in the district of Sedgemoor

Grid reference ST304454

Church of England Church Heritage Record 601056

Heritage at Risk Register – entry 1060138.

Pevsner South and West Somerset: page 202 -203



SAVING THE HERITAGE, SUSTAINING THE COMMUNITY

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

St Peter and All Hallows Church is the Parish Church of the rural village of West Huntspill and hamlet of Alstone. Since 2015 the Church has been open daily during daylight hours, this has proved very successful with many visitors to the historic Church.

In the Benefice of The Huntspills and Mark is: -

- St Peter & All Hallows Church, West Huntspill
- All Saints Church, East Huntspill
- The Holy Cross Church, Mark

All served by one Rector, Reverend Christine Judson, who joined the benefice on 24th February 2021. (following 2 years of vacancy)

The population of the Parish of West Huntspill on 2011 census was 2,133, we don't believe that has changed a great deal since then.

- 15% of the population under 18
- 53% 18 -64 years
- 32% age 65 years plus.

A large housing development on the northern side of the parish has just commenced, where an estimated 500 homes are to be built with a new Doctors Surgery and a new Primary School. This is likely to dramatically change the village and community over the next few years.

At present there is one Service every Sunday in West Huntspill on a monthly rota of Holy Communion, Friends & Family Communion, Morning Worship and a Children's Service. On the 5th Sunday of the month, we join with East Huntspill and Mark for a team Holy Communion Service in one of the three Churches. During the pandemic the Sunday 8am BCP Communion has been paused, along with Tuesday Morning Worship normally held in the Lady Chapel.

Average Sunday attendance is 21

- Under 18's - 0
- 18 years to 64 years -2
- 65 years + - 19



The monthly @3 service for children is at present held in the Balliol Hall (adjacent to the Church) as there are toilet facilities in Church. This has been paused during the pandemic due to the Balliol Hall being closed.

At present we have an area in the south west corner of the Church dedicated for children, this area is in need of updating.

The average attendance to the Children's Service: -

- Under 18's - 3
- 18years to 64 years - 5
- 65years+ - 9

Children's area at present

The Tuesday Morning Worship average attendance is 8 adults - 50% of these are from Huntspill Projects, a day centre in the village for adults with learning disabilities. Since 2002, following a Millennium Lottery Grant to set the project up, Adults from Huntspill Projects come to St Peter & All Hallows Church every Tuesday to help with Churchyard

maintenance. This involves two Church members supervising every week. A few of the adults from Huntspill Projects come to, and thoroughly enjoy the Tuesday Worship. At the end of year, a Carol Service is held when all the adults from Huntspill Projects attend and take part, this is a wonderful occasion.

Special and Festival Services are very well supported by the village 2019 numbers: -

- Easter Sunday 43 adults 6 children
- Harvest Festival 37 adults 2 children
- Remembrance 63 adults 2 children
- Christingle 52 adults 9 children
- Carol Service 99 adults 11 children

These numbers are actually down on 2018, we assume that being in vacancy has caused this.

There are 28 people of the Church Electoral roll at St Peter & All Hallows Church.

A fortnightly prayer group meets with West Huntspill Methodist Church and The Benefice has a monthly Bible Study group that meets in each Parish alternately.

In 2018, following a village questionnaire and a Church open day, the need for a community meeting place was identified; the village shop and post office have closed, there is no café facilities in the village. The Church started a weekly pop up café which has proved very popular & successful, initially being manned by all Church members but now a lot of “non-Church” members are involved helping out and making cakes. However, to build upon this, toilet and fit for purpose kitchen facilities are required in the Church. A craft group now meets in the Lady Chapel of the Church whilst the pop-up café is taking place, so that they can dip into the café. Some older residents meet at the pop-up café and discuss the history of the village and swap old photographs, which is lovely to see.

The village Primary School for children reception age to year 6 (11 years) has 106 pupils, though some of these do live in the nearby town of Highbridge. Although not a Church School, until vacancy the Rector visited fortnightly for assemblies and at present a Lay Worship Assistant works with the School. The School do not visit the Church at present, as it is over 1 mile away along the busy A38 trunk road from Bristol to Taunton, meaning walking there is dangerous. The Headteacher would like the children to spend time in the Church on projects (being brought there by parents first thing and collected in the afternoon) but this is not possible at present with no toilet facilities.

The Church Congregation work hard every year to ensure that the Parish Share is always paid on time; we are in category E. Fundraising is carried out every year (Summer Fete, Christmas Fayre, Annual Quiz, Car Show, Cream Tea, etc) to supplement regular giving and Church collections to make sure that we stay solvent. Any major projects/repairs have to be fundraised for specifically or grants obtained to carry out the work. The Church received a legacy a few years ago, of which £24,000 remains specifically to be spent on glass. These funds will be used in due course for the designated purpose.

To date £14,000 has been raised by Church members to repair the Tower and Roof, however most of this has been spent on architect/surveyors' fees and the round 1 National Heritage Lottery grant application. The NHLF round 1 application was successful with a grant of £97,100 towards developing the project, the development work costing £134,477. During the

development stage we will be applying for grants to match the round 2 application to NHLF of £493,600.

REPORTS & SURVEYS TO DATE

- Jan 2015 Quinquennial Report identified major roof repairs required - Annie Evans, Architect.
- Oct 2017 Roof and Tower survey identified major tower & roof repairs required - Marcus Chantrey, Architect.
- March 2018 Structural Survey by Mann Williams, Structural Engineer confirmed the findings of Marcus Chantrey
- March 2018 Order of Cost Estimate by Walker Associates, Quantity Surveyor
- Jan 2020 Quinquennial Report by Marcus Chantrey, Architect

The main items on 2020 Quinquennial apart from the roof and tower repairs were:

- Repairs to stained glass windows (£1,000 to £2,000) these funds being raised by The Friends of St Peter & All Hallows.
- Repairs to down pipes (low cost repairs will be carried out from existing funds)

Part of the Saving the Heritage, Sustaining the Community project will be to provide a maintenance plan for the Church, to ensure that once the project is complete the Church remains well maintained.

2. WHAT DO WE NEED?

STAGE 1

TOWER RESTORATION

This is of primary importance as masonry is falling from the Tower; the area around the bottom of the Tower is fenced off at present. This area is adjacent to a footpath, which is a constant Health & Safety concern. The Tower can't be used for tours, viewing of the Somerset Levels, River Parrot Estuary or the Heronry in the old Rectory Grounds. The BBC's Spring Watch featured this Heronry in 2015 and used the Church Tower to film the herons nesting.

TOILET FACILITIES

In all the consultations, toilets in Church have been identified as high priority, as it is extremely difficult to hold any event/club/meeting in Church without the provision of toilets. Even during baptism services, a lack of facilities causes problems and has on occasions led to very upset children and parents. The lack of toilets limits the time duration of visits.

KITCHEN/SERVERY FACILITIES

The pop-café started in 2018 has highlighted the need for proper kitchen facilities. At present there is a sink, power point and cupboard in the back of Church; this is no longer fit for purpose. Kitchen facilities are required for the weekly pop-up café to grow into a daily facility and to provide good quality refreshments after Services, at events and concerts.



Pictures of the present kitchen

SPACE

The need for a community/meeting area in the Church has been identified; the pop-up café has highlighted this. We have a few tables and chairs at the back of Church for the pop-up café, but numbers have now grown so that people end up sitting in the pews with their coffee and cake with their backs to everyone else! If the pews at the west end of Church were removed and replaced by good quality chairs, that could be moved and stacked as required, it would make the whole area more accessible and friendly.



People at the weekly pop-up café

The children's area needs updating, to be more welcoming. (picture on page 2). With the removal of pews and better lighting at the west end of Church, the south west corner of the Nave could become far more child friendly and also developed into a craft area for all ages. With storage cupboards for the children and craft resources.

STORAGE

St Peters & All Hallows Church is in desperate need of purpose-built storage cupboards and proper storage space. Unlike the majority of Churches, West Huntspill does not have a Church Hall available for storage, the adjacent Balliol Hall is an independent Committee run Hall.

Storage is required for children's resources, ideally near the children's corner. Church equipment used for Church Services throughout the year and Church resources used for social & fundraising events. Chairs and tables used for the pop-up café and other social/fundraising events. Cleaners equipment and flower arrangers' resources, at present this is stored with kitchen equipment – which is not ideal.

STAGE 2 - ROOF REPAIRS

Making the Church roof watertight. Over the last few years, when drips have appeared, a great deal of roof patching has taken place. The time is coming to completely repair the roof and have a watertight building "fit for purpose", as the patching is costing money but not solving the problems. Originally the roof repairs were the priority, however, masonry falling from the Tower is now the priority, as it is pointless carrying out major roof repairs only for masonry from the Tower to fall on the repaired roof and damage it again.

The internal fabric of the building is deteriorating with the leaks from the roof.

3. THE PROPOSAL

TOWER RESTORATION

The project will address the crumbling blue lias stone on the surface of the Tower, which is falling from the Tower. At present the base of the tower is fenced off to prevent falling masonry injuring passers-by. The metal work on the Tower is rusty, which the blue lias stone is crumbling away from.

- The blue lias stonework on the Tower will be consolidated and repaired
- The parapet will be repaired/rebuilt
- The buttresses will be repaired and returned to propping the Church up, rather than pulling it, as at present.
- Decaying ironwork will be removed or treated

TOILET FACILITIES

Two toilets plus an accessible toilet to be installed in the base of the Tower together with drainage and sewage. Discussions on the number of required toilets have been held. The PCC strongly believe that two toilets plus an accessible toilet are required. When large concerts/events are held in Church, at half time everyone will wish to use the facilities and if there is only one toilet plus an accessible toilet there will be long queues. When the Primary School children visit there will be over 100 children, so 2 toilets plus the accessible toilet will be required.

Various options for the location of toilets have been considered by the congregation, the wider village community, and the Church Architect: -

- Option 1 – Separate outside building in the Churchyard. This would have involved constructing a separate building in the rural Churchyard, connecting water (which is already in Church) installing sewage and drainage. In bad weather people would get wet going outside to the toilets and this would be particularly difficult for disabled people. Heating would have been required in this building as any building will get damp due to the proximity of rhynes that surround the Churchyard and the high tidal water table.
- Option 2 – Portable toilets in the Churchyard. It was thought that these would look unsightly in a rural Churchyard next to a Historic Grade 1 listed Building. Regular emptying would be required, meaning a tanker would have to come through the narrow lanes of the village.
- Option 3 – An extension to the Church to house the toilets. This idea was identified as more costly and would involve knocking through a very thick medieval stone wall, which was considered to being unrealistic.
- Option 4 – A pod in the Church Nave containing the toilets. It was felt that this would have detrimental effect on the beauty of the historic building.
- Option 5 – Toilets in the base of the Tower. This was considered to be the most feasible and sensible option; there is already a water supply in the base of the Tower. As restoration work is required on the Tower, putting toilets in the base of the Tower at the same time will mean all the disruption is in same area of the Church.

FLOWER ARRANGERS/CLEANERS SINK

When toilets are installed in the base of the Tower, we feel that this is a good opportunity to put in a separate sink to be used by the cleaner and flower arrangers. This will be more hygienic than using the same sink as for refreshments. Also, storage cupboards specifically for cleaning materials and flower arranger's equipment rather than keeping this equipment in the kitchen. We believe that it is not safe/unwise to store cleaning materials in a kitchen that is accessible to anyone.



KITCHEN/SERVERY FACILITIES

The tired, “not fit for purpose” kitchen in the base of the Tower to be replaced with a kitchen/servery area in the north west corner of the Church. This is the most appropriate area, as it is not used at present, is close to the existing water supply and reasonably close to the base of the Tower where the toilets are to be located, so that drainage of wastewater can be arranged in conjunction with the wastewater from the toilet sinks.

The west end of Church is where we serve refreshments after Services, events, concerts and where the pop-up café operates.

North West corner of Church, area for proposed new kitchen/servery. The painting of St Peter healing the cripple will be relocated in a suitable and more prominent place in Church.

SPACE

In order to make the west end of Church a community area, the following is proposed: -

- Remove the pews to the west of the central cross aisle and replace with good quality chairs that can be moved or stacked as required. The pews where possible to be repurposed, with the carved pew backs to form the fronts of the mobile serving unit in the café, thus providing continuity with the new and existing Church furniture. (See Floor plans 1 & 3)



- Move the font to the centre of the Church, where it will be more accessible for baptisms and be more a feature in the Church. (See floor plans 1 & 17)
- Bring the oak screen at the base of the Tower forward to give room for the toilets to be installed, for a storage cupboard and area to store tables and chairs to be available behind the screen in the base of the Tower.
- A new oak unit is proposed centrally to create welcome desk for information leaflets, collections, and card payments. Ideally, we would like this unit to be for hymn book storage and to be moveable. If possible, we would like this unit made from the pews that we propose removing from the Church. This unit will help to maintain the cross aisle.

West Window, with the oak screen and font

STORAGE CUPBOARDS

Storage cupboard at the west end of the south aisle – a large storage cupboard to keep all the children’s resources in. The facility to be able to pack away the children’s area at various times when the whole of the Church is required for an event.

Storage cupboard at the west end of the north aisle – the plan is to match this with the storage cupboard at the west end of the south aisle but for this to house the kitchen facilities.

Storage area in the base of the Tower – the south side of the base of the Tower to be used to store chairs and tables. We require 140 chairs, 100 for the west end of the Church plus an additional 40 that could either be used outside or for very large services/events/concerts put out at the front of the Nave. These chairs will be stored on dollies and wheeled in and out of the base of the Tower. We require 24 tables (small square tables that can be put together to make larger tables). These will be stored on table trolleys that can be wheeled in and out of the base of the Tower.

Storage cupboard in the south west corner of the base of the Tower – for Church equipment used for Church Services throughout the year and Church resources used for social & fundraising events.

SEWAGE: - Due to the very high tidal water table of the Churchyard the only feasible sewage system is to connect into the main sewer, which is at the main Church gate.

STAGE 2 – ROOF REPAIRS

The lead to be replaced on the north & south aisles of the Nave roof plus required repairs to the woodwork to make the Church roof watertight.

4. WHY WE NEED THE WORK AND WHY WE NEED IT NOW

REPAIRS TO THE TOWER

The Church is on Heritage at Risk Register – entry 1060138, due to the repairs urgently required on the Tower and Roof. At present the base of the tower is fenced off to prevent falling masonry injuring passers-by. This area is adjacent to a public footpath which is a constant Health & Safety concern. The Tower cannot be used for tours, viewing of the Somerset Levels to Glastonbury Tor, the River Parrot Estuary, the coastline at Burnham On Sea or the Heronry in the old Rectory Grounds. The blue lias stone is crumbling; the longer it is exposed to the weather without repairs the worse the situation will become.

To preserve the architectural heritage of the Tower and the Church for future generations to enjoy.

TOILET AND KITCHEN FACILITIES

Major work being required on the Church has given Church members the opportunity to think creatively about the future of the Church and its uses. Church members realise that there is a need for significant change. This has resulted in meetings with the PCC and members on the Electoral Roll to evaluate current Church "usage" and its relevance to the community. These meetings have been followed by a questionnaire to the whole village, asking for their opinions and views on the Church building, its current uses and what they would like to see the building used for in future years. A successful Church open day was held in March 2018, for people to come and discuss their views with Reverend Tonya Nixon (Priest in Charge at the time), Churchwardens and PCC members. People who live in the village attended, listened to the story being told and gave their opinions. There was overwhelming support for the project throughout the event.

During this process advice has been taken from Andrew Rainsford, Parish Resources & Development Advisor (at the time) for The Diocese of Bath & Wells and The Ven Ann Gell, Archdeacon of Wells. Members of the PCC have visited various Churches (Westonzoyland, Blagdon & St Mary Redcliff in Bristol to name a few) to see how they have developed, to ask what has worked, how and why. Since then, members have come together to see how these projects can be adapted to suit the needs of the village of West Huntspill.

Whilst Tower restoration is being carried out, the community would like to take the opportunity of placing toilets into Church, replacing the very tired looking kitchen under the Tower and open up the space at the west end of Church, making it a more usable area for both Church activities and the wider community.

In the consultations, toilets in Church have been identified as high priority, as it is extremely difficult to hold any event/club/meeting in Church without the provision of toilets. Even during baptism Services, a lack of facilities causes problems and has on occasions led to very upset children and parents. The lack of toilets prevents visits by the village Primary School

children and limits the time duration of the visits by Huntspill Projects (people with learning disabilities). The PCC, in conjunction with the wider community feel that it would be very beneficial to carry out this work at the same time as the Tower restoration.

The recently started weekly pop-up café, which has proved incredibly successful, has shown the need to replace the “not fit for purpose” kitchen and have good facilities in order to serve good quality refreshments after services, at events and to build upon the weekly pop-up café to be open daily.

Being able to serve good quality refreshments at the end of Services, having a place where people sit, linger and chat over a coffee will enhance the mission of the Church.

We anticipate that the more people that visit the pop-up café or come to meetings of groups in the Church or visit displays in the Church the more likely they are to be drawn to the life of the Church and that this mission is the best way to grow the Church community.

SPACE

Pews

In order to open up the west end of the Church building and use it as a community area for the pop-up café to operate in, serve refreshments after services & at events, for groups to have an area to meet in, we propose removing the four rows of pews to the west of the centre cross - aisle and replace with good quality chairs that can be easily moved/stacked as required. Chairs in this area will provide flexibility. The pop-up café will have room to grow, and people will not be squashed or have to sit in pews drinking coffee with their backs to everyone. (see floor plan 3) The removal of these pews will mean that this area will have multiple uses i.e., for displays or by groups for meetings. (see floor plans 4 & 11) This is especially relevant now when social distancing is so important and very inefficient with pews. (see floor plan 2)

When there are Special Services/Festivals in Church, large weddings, or funerals the chairs will be available for use. (see floor plan 1)



4 rows of Pews that we propose to remove and replace with good quality chairs.

Reverend Christine Judson became Priest in charge of

The Benefice of The Huntspill and Mark on 24th February 2021. Reverend Christine Judson made the following comment on the removal of the pews from the west end of the Church: -

“Far from the removal of some of the pews being detrimental to worship within the church, there is a sense in which this would provide greater flexibility to the worship space. Cafe worship is an obvious aspect to consider, along with space for movement and dance, or for labyrinth installations, and the opportunity to be creative in the use of alternative seating arrangements at times would also be beneficial.”

Updated March 2021



Font

The Font has only been in this position since 1989 when it was moved forward from the base of the Tower to accommodate the oak screen being inserted in the Tower arch.

We propose relocating the font to the centre of the Church. We believe that this will enhance baptisms, which take place during a family service. At present everyone has to move to the west end of Church during the Service for the baptism, whereas if the font was in the centre of the Church it would be a natural part of the Service.

Font in the midst of the weekly pop-up café. Not always being treated with respect, especially as people rest their coffee mugs on it.

Community Space

The more people that visit the Church, the greater the income will be with donations. The weekly pop-up café is free, but most people leave a donation. Since the Church has been open daily, donations left by visitors has grown.

The new housing development, that has just commenced on the north side of the Parish, will increase the population of the village tremendously and we hope to be able to encourage the new people to join the life of the Parish Church. We feel that having a more community friendly building will help this process.

STORAGE CUPBOARDS

Storage cupboard at the west end of the south aisle - a large storage cupboard to keep all the children's resources in. The facility to be able to pack away the children's area at various times when the whole of the Church is required for an event. The children's area at the

moment is looking very tired and dated, we would like to take this opportunity to bring it into the 21st century, good close by storage is essential.

Storage cupboard at the west end of the north aisle – the plan is to match this with the storage cupboard at the west end of the south aisle but for this to house the kitchen facilities.

Storage area in the base of the Tower – for tables and chairs. We have identified the base of the Tower as the only practical space to store chairs and tables. These chairs and tables were generally be used in the west end of Church, which is near the base of the Tower. The plan is to use chair and table dollies that can be wheeled into this area, as the majority of the PCC/congregation are older people, we do not want them lifting/carrying tables and chairs great distances.

Other areas in the Church have been looked at for the possible storage of the chairs and tables. The only other suggestion has been the organ well (between the organ and the vestry). This area has been considered but discounted for the following reasons.

- Chairs and tables would have to be lifted up/down the chancel step (which is a deep step)
- Chairs & tables would have to be lifted down/up the step into the organ well.
- The area is a thoroughfare with the Priest's door, entry to the vestry, entry to the organ and access to the Chancel. So not ideal for putting tables and chairs in the middle of.
- The area is used before/after every Service as a preparation area by Servers/Readers and also by sidesmen/Treasurer to count the collection after Services.
- This area is a long way from where the tables and chairs are usually going to be required.
- Most of the PCC/congregation are elderly, it is not practical or safe for them to be lifting chairs/tables up and down steps.

Storage Cupboard for Church Resources in the base of the Tower (south west corner)

This is required for resources used for special services, festivals, or fundraising activities. St Peters & All Hallows Church cannot store these items in the Balliol Hall as this is Committee run Hall (not a Church Hall). Plus, the Hall is used to its capacity with no storage space for any of its groups. At present this space is just open and used as a “dumping” ground for everything. A large cupboard would tidy the area and ensure that resources are stored safely.

Using the vestry as storage for these resources has been considered but discounted for the following reasons: -

- The vestry already stores a great deal of resources.
- This has increased during vacancy as the Rectory has been rented out and everything that was stored in the office in the Rectory has been moved into Church. All confidential items, including a filing cabinet are now in the Vestry, making it very crowded.
- It should also be noted that St Peter & All Hallows Church is the “mother Church” of All Saints Church at East Huntspill. All Saints Church is very small with no lockable Vestry, thus when any work is carried out at All Saints Church all valuables are stored in West Huntspill Church Vestry. This happened during Revd Tonya Nixon's time when major roof repairs were carried out at All Saints, with the Church being shut for almost a year.

- The Vestry is alarmed with only key members of the PCC having access; thus, it is not feasible to store anything in the Vestry that may be needed by people who do not have access. (items used for social or fundraising)

WOODEN SCREEN

In order for there to be sufficient space for the toilets, flower arrangers/cleaners sink, storage cupboard for Church resources and space to store tables and chairs on their dollies the screen needs to be moved forward.

At present the oak screen, which was put in in 1989, sits behind the arch, we propose to bring it forward in front of the arch. When the DAC met at St Peter & All Hallows Church on 13th February 2019 moving the screen forward was discussed as well as removing the screen. The following was noted: -

“The current screen is not of particular significance, but it would be good to re-use the oak within the project.”

However, the PCC concluded that they would prefer to keep the screen, moving it forward giving sufficient space behind it for toilets, additional sink and storage and matching the new cupboards at the west end of the north and south aisles to the existing screen.

As the screen is only at low level (not to affect the view of the west window) we do not consider moving it forward in front of the arch changes the overall view of the west end of the Church.

The PCC would like to keep all of the plumbing (sinks/toilets) on the north side of the Tower, as water and drainage is already there. If any of the toilets/sinks are located on the south side this would involve either digging up the ceramic tile floor of the Tower. Putting plumbing on the south side would increase the environmental impact of the project and also increase the cost of the project.

5. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEED

REPAIRS TO THE TOWER

It is believed that during the 1700's and 1800's, either the whole Church, or at least the Tower, was whitewashed or white with roughcast. The following descriptions have been discovered: -

- In Edmund Rack's description of Huntspill Church in the 1780's: - "The church is a substantial and handsome edifice, consisting of a nave, chancel, north and south aisles, belfry, porch and vestry room, all except the chancel covered with lead. At the west end is a square tower, whitewashed and embattled, 82 ft high and containing a clock and five bells".
- In 1852 Sir Stephen Glynne visited and wrote: - "the whole of the exterior was white with roughcast".

The evidence suggest that the whitewash was a temporary measure. Towers/Churches that are whitewashed or rendered tend to be built of poor-quality stone or rubble and then

rendered whitewashed as the plan was always to cover up the poor-quality stone/rubble. However, this is not the case at West Huntspill where the Church is built of good quality lias stone. This is evidenced in the very large/heavy dressed stones at the top of the Tower, if the plan had always been to cover up the stonework with render/whitewash they would not have gone to all the hard work & trouble of lifting these very heavy dressed stones to the top of the Tower. If stonework is designed to be covered then the windows tend to sit proud of the stone so that when the render is applied the windows are in the correct place. This is also not the case at West Huntspill Church. The conclusion is therefore that the Tower/Church was not designed to be rendered/whitewash even if this happened for a while in 1700 & 1800's.

The PCC have considered the render option for the Tower: -

The PCC have visited and taken advice from the neighbouring Parish of Pawlett that have a rendered and limewashed Church. There is the constant maintenance fee of re limewashing the Church every few years, which involves scaffolding. West Huntspill Church is larger than Pawlett and the Tower is much taller so the continuous costs at West Huntspill would be greater.

The PCC also consider that it would be a great shame to cover up the wonderful lias stonework of the Tower, especially as the evidence above suggests that although the Tower may have been rendered/limewashed in the 1700 & 1800's it was never built with this intention.

The PCC therefore concluded that they would prefer to repair the lias stone of the Tower and restore it to its former glory.

REORDERING THE WEST END OF CHURCH

Something which deeply resonated was a story told at St. Mary Redcliff, where the Church and community had become frayed at the edges. This echoes true for St. Peter & All Hallows, where once it was geographically the heart of the village, but, after a major storm causing the sea to breach the sea wall, the village relocated itself to the east so much that the Church is now on the edge. Without a doubt, major fraying of the edges between Village and Church has slowly grown over the years. The Church, in recent time, has acknowledged this and has begun to look for ways to reconnect. One obvious way is having the church open on a daily basis. The Tower and Roof project has given this much needed energy, Church and Village are gradually repairing the frayed edges.

Support has been shown from the local community; recently a wedding couple asked for no gifts but instead donations to the Church. At large festival services many conversations are had regarding the Church and developing its future role in the community. Informal conversations with local people in The Crossways Inn have enabled non-Church to share their thoughts with Church members. Overwhelmingly they see the Church as 'theirs'; they are glad that it is open daily, value it as a major resource in the village, and have suggested ways to use it, e.g., Tower tours for young children, toilets in Church, and a venue to meet and chat.

In 2018 a village questionnaire was carried out, followed by a successful Church open day for people to come and discuss their views with Reverend Tonya Nixon (Priest in Charge at the time), Churchwardens and PCC members. People who live in the village attended, listened to the story being told and gave their opinions.

A summary of questionnaire results:

Would you mind if the Church closed?

Yes	94%
Not answered	6%

Issues: Loneliness & isolation	49%
Lack of community spirit	35%
Lack of community space	25%
Lack of facilities for children	57%

What would you like in the Village?

Café/meeting place	84%
Senior Citizens Club	55%
Concerts/Exhibitions	80%
Foodbank collection point	53%

Removal of pews from Church (no number was specified on the questionnaire)

Yes	78%
Some	8%
No	8%
No answer	6%

Following the questionnaire and open day, the Church started a weekly pop-up café. This has proved very popular & successful, initially being manned by all Church members, there are now a lot of “non-Church” members involved helping out and making cakes. However, to build upon this, toilet and fit for purpose kitchen facilities are required in the Church.

Foodbank collection has started in the Church; food is collected and regularly delivered to the near by food bank operation centre in Highbridge.

During the round 1 application to National Heritage Lottery Fund, an activity plan was drawn up identifying activities/groups that would use the Church if appropriate facilities were available. Summary of these Groups/activities below: -

Huntspill Art Group – hold art exhibitions lasting a weekend/week a few times a year. At present they really struggle to find venues for exhibitions due to time constraints in village halls. Exhibitions were requested on the questionnaire.

Burnham On Sea Camera Club – hold photographic displays over a month. Like the Art Group they struggle to find venues for displays due to time constraints in halls. The camera club would also be interested in holding workshops and competitions to increase their membership in the Huntspill area. They would like to work with other groups i.e. West Huntspill Primary School, Huntspill Scouts and Huntspill Projects Group. Exhibitions were requested on the questionnaire.

Concerts in Church – the acoustics are wonderful. Somerset Organists Association, Coast Line Singers and the local community Choir have all expressed interest in holding concerts in the Church. Concerts were requested on the questionnaire.

Bats & Pimms Evenings – the local Bat Group would like to encourage more people to be involved with nature; there is a bat tree in the Churchyard with a maternity roost. A summer evening spent watching and learning about bats; the Bat Group providing the information and

talk and the community providing the refreshments. There is also a heronry in the Old Rectory adjacent to the Churchyard and bees under the Church, so although Bats and Pimms have been identified at present, we anticipate building on this with other nature evenings.

Walks – The local Ramblers’ Group regularly park in the Church car park and walk through the Churchyard on the footpath up to the South West Coastal path or on the footpath across to the Huntspill River. If this is a pop-up café day, then they do drop in for coffee and say that they enjoy visiting the Church but wish the café facilities were available everyday and possibly more importantly they would like toilet facilities.

Burnham U3A walking group and strolling group would also like to use the Church as a base for walks/strolls when the appropriate facilities are in place. People in Huntspill do belong to Burnham U3A and if they used the Church as a base, membership from the Huntspill area could well grow, which could help to combat rural isolation.

From conversations with walkers the idea of creating circular walk maps/leaflets for local people and visitors to the area to use and enjoy the wonderful countryside and the heritage of the Church at the same time would be appreciated.

With Burnham On Sea, Brean and Cheddar all being very popular tourist resorts within 10 miles of West Huntspill, we have been in touch with **Burnham On Sea tourist information centre**. They would be happy to hold leaflets on the historic Church of St Peter & All Hallows, and walks based around the Church.

With the close proximity of the **South West Coastal Path**, 1 mile along a footpath from the Churchyard, signage to/from the South West Coastal path could increase visitor numbers considerably especially if café and toilet facilities were available in Church. We wish to work with the appropriate authorities to get signage in place.

Brown signage to the historic Church of St Peter & All Hallows from the main A38 Bristol to Taunton trunk road has also been identified. We will also be working to get that in place.

Open the Tower up for tours, so that people can view the Somerset Levels to Glastonbury Tor, the Parrot Estuary, and the heronry in the Old Rectory Grounds.

Cycling - Link with the National Cycle routes (which already goes through the north east of the village) and work with the appropriate people to get a link to the historic Church of St Peter & All Hallows.

Huntspill & Highbridge Scouts have their own small Scout hut in the nearby town of Highbridge, but no outside area. They would therefore be very interested in using the Church for sleepovers and the countryside around, due to the extensive footpath network, for badge work – photographic, geocache, naturalist, local knowledge, bell ringing, community etc. The Scouts have in the past been bellringing at the Church and once the Tower is repaired would like to continue this. In the future we would like to build upon the Scouts sleepover and offer overnight accommodation for young people on Duke of Edinburgh expeditions on the South West Coastal path.

Primary School – at present the schoolchildren seldom visit the Church, due to the fact that the School is a mile away along the very busy A38, making walking dangerous. It is just not worth their while investing in coach transport to the Church for an hour or so, which is the maximum time that they can stay due to the lack of facilities. The School has recently had a new Headteacher who would like the children to visit for whole days to carry out projects: - history, art, crafts, music, nature etc. Whole day visits would mean that they could be brought to Church by parents in the morning and collected by parents in the afternoon. The

Headteacher would also like School productions to be at the Church due to the excellent acoustics and there being more space than in the School hall.

Digital Links – We have been in contact with CSW Digital link regarding having IT facilities at the Church with a trained volunteer once a week so that people who do not have IT facilities or can't use IT without help can have access to services. Without IT people are increasingly unable to access benefits, housing, doctors, prescriptions, bus passes, disabled badges etc. This facility will help to combat some rural isolation that was identified in our questionnaire.

The Local History Group are interested in using the Church for regular meetings and displays, with interpretation boards detailing the history of the Church, the fire and the local area, particularly the flooding in the Somerset levels.

Exhibitions – Exhibition space for community groups has been requested, with exhibitions being held say every 3 months. The suggestion is screens that fit into slots in the floor or fix to permanent fixtures from the columns. These screens could also be used by the Primary School for displays or backdrops/scenery for plays etc.

The village already has **allotments**; the possibility of setting up an exchange shop in Church for surplus provisions has been suggested. (The allotments are tucked away down a lane not accessible to the general public)

Reverend Tonya worked with **West Huntspill Day Centre**. They would like to be able to visit Church and incorporate it as part of their "away time", especially to welcome visits by animals from the local wildlife rescue centre (as animals are not allowed in their venue) We anticipate our new Rector also working with this group.

Friends of St Peter & All Hallows Church – Since the open day and village questionnaire which highlighted to the community the need for help to save the historic Parish Church in West Huntspill, an independent group of approximately 30 people set up a Friends Group to raise money for restoration of the Church Building. Whilst still in very early days it does mean that more people are involved with the project of Saving the Heritage, Sustaining the Community.

As of February 2020, the Friends Group has now grown to 104 members supporting the restoration of the Parish Church.

A Café/ kitchen could open up many possibilities to grow the mission of the Church: -

- St Peter & All Hallows Church is an extremely popular choice of Church for Wedding couples; it would be wonderful to be able to offer cake and champagne to guests whilst photos are being taken on the Church lawns.
- The facility to offer refreshments after funerals would be a fantastic asset, saving families having to travel to Public Houses.
- Cream Teas
- Coffee & Games Afternoons (board games) to help combat the isolation felt in the village.

Rural Isolation: In the questionnaire 49% identified loneliness & isolation as an issue; this can affect young or old. Rural isolation is a well-known documented problem in Somerset's rural villages. If we can make the Church a community building for all, with a café, meeting

place facilities and various activities available, this will help to combat isolation and loneliness felt by the 49% of the community.

Our aim is to reorder the inside of St Peter and All Hallows Church, to bring the building into the 21st Century, making it a multi-use building for the whole community, used every day for a wide variety of things. The priority is to make the building welcoming, a place where people want to be, a hub for the community. We anticipate that the more people that come to activities/meetings of groups in the Church or visit displays in the Church the more likely they are to be drawn to the life of the Church and that this mission is the best way to grow the Church community.

STORAGE

Storage cupboard at the west end of the south aisle – for the children’s resources. At present these are left out all of the time and have become tatty. A Storage cupboard will tidy the area and ensure resources are kept in good condition.

Storage cupboard at the west end of the north aisle – required to house the kitchen facilities.

Storage area in the base of the Tower – a large storage cupboard will enable us to keep all the Church resources together, storing them safely instead of the area being a “dumping” place that it is at present. With Social/fundraising resources available to the people who require them. The vestry is already full of resources.

Specific place for the chairs and tables to be stored when not in use. Easily accessible to all. The only identified area for storage that is on the same level as the Nave where the tables & chairs will be used the majority of the time.

WOODEN SCREEN

The oak screen was only installed in 1989. The DAC agreed that the screen is of no particular significance (meeting at St Peter & All Hallows Church 13/2/19). Therefore, moving the screen to create the required space for the toilets/sink to all be on the north wall of the base of the Tower where there is already water/drainage seems the sensible solution. We do not wish to disturb the ceramic tiles on the base of the tower floor just to put plumbing on the south side for a flower arrangers/cleaners sink.

We have tried to balance the aesthetics of the Church with the function of the Church. For the re-ordering of the Church to function we need to bring the Screen forward to have sufficient space in the base of the Tower for the toilets/sink all on the north side of the Tower and storage on the south side for chairs/tables and a large cupboard which is desperately required for Church resources.

WOODEN SCREEN AMENDEMNENTS FOLLOWING ADVICE & CONSULTATION – OCT 2020

Following the reports from The Church Buildings Council and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Parochial Church Council of West Huntspill have reconsidered the proposals for the re-ordering of the west end of St Peter & All Hallows Church.

The PCC have very carefully considered and gauged the number of toilets required. The wholehearted feeling is that after struggling for so long without out toilet facilities in Church, we really do not wish to compromise on the number of toilets now. We understand that 2 would be

sufficient for normally daily use but when large concerts/events are held in the Church, with an interval everyone will suddenly wish to use the facilities, hence the requirement for 3 toilets. The vision is that the Primary School children will visit frequently, over 100 children, again 3 toilets will be required. The lack of toilet facilities is the sole reason for the Primary School children not visiting at present. With the current pandemic 3 toilets would be helpful for daily use as toilets need to be cleaned between users and unfortunately at the present time it would appear that the pandemic is going to be with us for a long time to come.

The Church Buildings Council and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings have expressed concern over the positioning of the Flower Arrangers sink, putting the flower arrangers sink on the south wall will add to the cost of the project plus the disruption of digging up the ceramic tiled floor in the base of the Tower to put plumbing on the south side of the Tower. This proposal would also lose valuable storage space. The whole project was designed to create minimal disruption and keep all the plumbing on the north side of the Church where there is water at present.

The space created by moving the screen forward will be very valuable. As stated in the Statement of Need, we do not have the facility of a Church Hall for storage and the Vestry is already at capacity for storage. On the south side there will be a large storage cupboard for resources for Services and resources for fundraising/social activities that do not need to be locked in the Vestry. The remaining area to be used as storage for tables and chairs on dollies that can be wheeled in and out as required. The PCC considered the storage aspect of the project to be essential.

The DAC in their meeting at St Peter & All Hallows Church on 13th February 2019 described the oak screen, installed in 1989, as having no particular significance and had no objection to the screen being moved or removed. If removed they suggested that it would be good to re-use the oak within the project. As both The Church Buildings Council and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings are concerned about the three sections of timber panelling/doors overly dominating the west end of the Church the PCC suggest removing the oak screen and replacing it in the forward position with something less visually dominant.

The proposal is now to install a painted plastered screen which matches the plastered walls of the church and be in a cranked forward position, to allow sufficient space behind for the toilets and storage but not hiding the Tower arch pillars.

Please see original and new plans below.



Original plan for screen across the base of the Tower Arch pillars



New plan for screen, cranked forward not to hide the Tower Arch pillars.

PEWS to the west of the north/south axial crossing

In response to the DAC's meeting of 16th December 2020 which raised concerns over the removal of all 4 rows pews to west of the north/south axial crossing in St Peter & All Hallows Church at West Huntspill and suggesting that two rows of pews are retained.

The Parochial Church Council have given the DAC and the Victorian Society's views and suggestion very carefully consideration and thought. The PCC understands why the suggestion has come about: -

- To continue the illusion of the Church being pewed down its entire length.
- The retention of the cross-aisle
- The need to provide distinction between the liturgical space and the community meeting space.

The PCC has discussed the suggestion at length and the points made. The decision to propose the removal of all 4 rows of pews has not been reached lightly.

WHY WE PROPOSE REMOVING ALL FOUR ROWS OF PEWS

Social Need

The application to remove the 4 rows of pews in the west half of the Church is based on a combination of past experience, and consultation about future activities. Trials (pre-COVID) of weekly coffee mornings, for example, showed popularity of village events, with 20-30 people regularly attending. Building on this foundation we need a flexible and multi-purpose space that crucially can be used simultaneously for different or overlapping activities i.e., can be furnished with permanent interpretation displays, tables and chairs, temporary exhibition boards all at the same time, so that people have a multi-dimensional visit, rather than just coming for a coffee or to see a display. (See floor plans 9 & 10 for multi-use of space)

Over the last year people have realised the importance of social activities in person rather than virtually/on screen – doing something 'real' – and realised the importance of small pleasures as a foundation in daily lives such as going for a walk with friends for a coffee, learning activities/keeping the brain active that don't involve looking at a screen. By choosing this approach, we want to appeal to broad audiences, rather than appealing to just heritage tourists, or isolated/elderly residents or school groups. People can come for a coffee and leave knowing more about their surroundings.

The housing developments will increase the population by about 50%, and we would like new and existing residents to feel welcome, and that the church has a modern role to play for all habitants as a vibrant community hub. (see floor plan 9 & 10)

Financial Need

Part of the re-ordering process is to look to the long-term financial stability of the Church. For the Church to be financially sustainable in the future we need a flexible and multi-purpose space that crucially can be used simultaneously for different or overlapping activities. We need to attract as many people as possible (both locals & tourists) to our Church and to do this we need the space for the café and the displays at the same time, rather than either or. It has been

apparent for a few years now that the small congregation, although very loyal, can no longer maintain such a large, beautiful grade 1 listed building and that regular income needs to be generated. I believe that the loyal congregation should be credited with acknowledging this fact and having the foresight to reorder the whole of the west half of the Church to ensure the long-term stability of the Church.

Why is the entire space needed?

The following activities/barriers have come up through local consultation and demonstrate a demand that would be difficult to meet with the pews in place. Please see the floor plans for the proposed activities with all the pews removed in the west half of the Church.

- Daily 'honesty' café (floor plan 2)
- Weekly coffee mornings (floor plan 3)
- IT café reaching those in digital poverty. (floor plan 2)
- The Community Council for Somerset social/themed cafés (floor plan 9 & 10)
- Village photography competition display boards. (floor plan 8)
- Somerset Arts Week (floor plan 6)
- School displays of project work following regular school visits (children find the pews intimidating and uncomfortable, and not suited to modern, active learning styles) (floor plans (9 & 10)
- Permanent interpretation
- Small scale drama events/school productions – meeting a need brought up by the local primary school. (floor plans 14, 15, 16 for proposed small productions without the pews)
- WEA courses e.g., on church, art or local history, as well as developing people's practical or vocational skills (floor plans 9 & 10)
- Champing (e.g., scout groups) (all tables and chairs packed away in the base of the Tower)
- Intergenerational art projects e.g., around Remembrance Sunday (see floor plan 8)
- Accessibility – a generous and inclusive space for a range of chairs, and allowing opportunities for volunteering including people in wheelchairs (meeting a real need) (see floor plan 4 regarding easier accessibility to tables and kitchen/severy for wheelchair volunteer helpers)
- Organised walking/cycling groups wanting a focus for their outing – correspondence shows that the combination of somewhere interesting with information to hand, dry, with toilets and refreshments, near established rights of way is what groups are looking for when planning trips. (see floor plan 8)
- Encouraging more people to address health and wellbeing issues, through walks and meeting socially. (see floor plan 8)
- Making a clear delineation between the secular and 'church' activities, making it easier for those not comfortable or confident in visiting a church to feel welcome.

With 2 rows of pews being retained in the west half of the Church some of the above events could possibly take place individually, however simultaneous events happening would be impossible.

The font being relocated to the centre of the Church requires the removal of the half pew of the front row of pews on south side of the centre aisle. (see floor plan 1& 3D picture on page 13 of lighting report)

With the font being repositioned in the centre of the Church on the south side of the main aisle and the west side of the cross aisle (See floor plan 1& 3D picture on page 13 of lighting report). We would like to put a welcome station on the north side of the main aisle, west side of the cross aisle. (see floor plan 2) This would in effect divide the back secular half of the Church from the front religious part of the Church, but still allow the Church to expand into the west half for large Services. (see floor plan 1)

If the front row of pews in the west half of the Church are removed to accommodate the font on one side and the welcome station on the other and the back 2 rows are removed, then this would leave row 2 of the pews in splendid isolation, which seems a little pointless.

Chairs in the west half of the Church, will increase the overall capacity of the Church, especially at the present time under social distancing rules. (see floor plan 1)

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PEWS INVOLVED.

- The whole of the front row of pews to the west of the cross aisle appear to be later additions, as they are not set into the wooden pew plinth, as all the rest of the pews are, but screwed to the top of the plinth and over the tiles of the cross aisle.



- The front row half pew adjacent to the south door was repurposed from the Lady Chapel when that was glassed in and the pews removed in 2011. This pew does not match the 3 pews immediately behind it, the end is completely plain not patterned as the others are, shown in this picture.
- The front row half adjacent to the north door is only a standing rail, no pew. This pew was removed when the internal vestibule glass doors were put inside the north doors in 2011. This standing rail was made up from bits of pew removed from the Lady Chapel in 2011, it is lower than all the pews in the west half of the Nave as it has no plinth.
- Jerry Sampson's archaeology report quotes that Edmund Rack visited the Church in the 1780's while working on John Collinson's *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset* (published in 1793) and left the following eyewitness account of the building at that date. "Here are five doors, 20 windows and 7 pews." If all the pews are removed in the west half of the Nave there will still be considerably more than 7 pews remaining.

DISBENEFIT OF RETAINING THE PEWS

Social

The following will not be able to take place in the Church building: -

- The Community Council for Somerset social/themed cafés (floor plan 9 & 10)
- Village photography competition display boards. (floor plan 8)
- Somerset Arts Week (floor plan 6)
- School displays of project work following regular school visits (children find the pews intimidating and uncomfortable, and not suited to modern, active learning styles) (floor plans (9 & 10)
- Small scale drama events/school productions – meeting a need brought up by the local primary school. (floor plans 14, 15, 16 for proposed small productions without the pews)
- WEA courses e.g., on church, art or local history, as well as developing people's practical or vocational skills (floor plans 9 & 10)
- Champing (e.g., scout groups) (all tables and chairs packed away in the base of the Tower)
- Intergenerational art projects e.g., around Remembrance Sunday (see floor plan 8)
- Accessibility – a generous and inclusive space for a range of chairs, and allowing opportunities for volunteering including people in wheelchairs (meeting a real need) (see floor plan 4 regarding easier accessibility to tables and kitchen/severy for wheelchair volunteer helpers)
- Organised walking/cycling groups wanting a focus for their outing – correspondence shows that the combination of somewhere interesting with information to hand, dry, with toilets and refreshments, near established rights of way is what groups are looking for when planning trips. (see floor plan 8)
- Encouraging more people to address health and wellbeing issues, through walks and meeting socially. (see floor plan 8)
- Making a clear delineation between the secular and 'church' activities, making it easier for those not comfortable or confident in visiting a church to feel welcome. (an open back to the west of the entrance will aid this whilst 2 rows of pews would not)
- Weekly coffee mornings could take place but if they grow as we plan, then in time, we would be back to the same problems that we have now. (floor plan 3)

Financial

A smaller nonflexible space will mean less events happening in the Church building and therefore less income to maintain the beautiful grade 1 listed building for future generations to enjoy.

Lack of value in terms of the Church worship

On a more prosaic level, the continuation of the pews to the west end of the church offers no value to anyone worshipping within the building as those seats are only ever occupied for the biggest services. However, they actively thwart our endeavours to make the building more

socially accessible and enriching to the community – as well as curtail our energies in seeking to achieve financial sustainability. As a Church sidesman commented the other day “there is no point in keeping that front row of pews because I can never persuade anyone to sit in them.”

CONCLUSION

The disbenefits outweigh the benefits of retaining pews that offer little value and, having been previously moved and disturbed since the 19th century re-ordering, are of minor heritage significance in remaining in-situ.

The PCC note that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Ancient Monuments Society and The Church Buildings Council do not object to all the pews being removed.

The decision to propose the removal of all 4 rows of pews has not been reached lightly.

Updated Feb 2021

Ravened Christine Judson became Priest in charge of The Benefice of The Huntspill and Mark on 24th February 2021. Reverend Christine Judson made the following comment on the removal of the pews from the west end of the Church: -

“Far from the removal of some of the pews being detrimental to worship within the church, there is a sense in which this would provide greater flexibility to the worship space. Cafe worship is an obvious aspect to consider, along with space for movement and dance, or for labyrinth installations, and the opportunity to be creative in the use of alternative seating arrangements at times would also be beneficial.”

Updated March 2021

FONT

The Font was moved to its present position in 1989, when the oak screen was put in the base of the Tower Arch, previous to that the Font had been in the base of the Tower. When the Font was moved to its present position in 1989 it was not set into the ceramic floor tiles but just plonked onto them. At the moment the Font is not treated with respect and is just a good place to put coffee cups during the pop-café. We would like to move the Font to a more prominent/significant place in the centre of the Church. Please see Architect’s drawing 0605.SK.033 for how the Font will be set into the ceramic floor tiles in its new position. Please also see Architect’s plan 0605SK039 which shows how the Font and welcome desk will keep the north – south cross aisle and keep a divide between the worship and secular part of the building.

COVID -19

The current pandemic has highlighted how restrictive the pews in West Huntspill Church are. Pre-Covid -19 the Church could accommodate 68 people in pews to the east of the central cross-aisle and 48 people in pews to the west of the central cross-aisle, a total of 116 people in pews. The current restrictions of people sitting 2metres apart (August 2020) have reduced this to a total of 22 people in pews all the pews, an amazing reduction of 81% in available seating in pews. Chairs on the west side of the cross-aisle would give a much greater flexibility in at least half of the Church, as they could be positioned to accommodate 2 metre social distancing and therefore sit more people in what appears to be the new normal.

Due to current regulations (August 2020) we have been unable to re-start the very popular weekly pop-up café due to a lack of space for a serving area and then tables and chairs. We have calculated that the most we could have is 4 separate bubbles, as most people that come to the pop-up café are on there own this would not be practical. If there were chairs on the west side of the cross-aisle, then there would be far greater flexibility to arrange the tables and chairs 2 metres apart, the required social distancing, The other problem with the pop-up café under present regulations is the kitchen facilities. At present the helpers would have to funnel in and out of the door in the screen to access water, crockery, washing up facilities etc. social distancing would just not be possible. The present kitchen is not fit for purpose, hygiene is a concern, that is why a separate flower arranging/cleaners sink is required. With the present pandemic the pop-up café helpers do not consider the kitchen to be hygienic enough to use, as surfaces cannot be cleaned properly. During the shutdown and now not being able to re-open the pop-up café has also made us think of putting tables and chairs outside, when the weather is good, for the pop-up café and all sorts of events as this now appears to be a safer option. The pop-up café can't re-open outside at the moment due to the kitchen difficulties mentioned above.

Conclusion - if the proposed reordering had already taken place: -

- More people would be able to attend services.
- The pop-up café would have restarted as there would be sufficient space for tables & chairs at the required social distancing and a safe serving area for the helpers.
- The helpers at the pop-up café would feel safe as they would be able to clean surfaces and keep everything hygienic.

6. HOW IS THE PROPOSAL CONTRBUTING TO THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?

As we are a tidal graveyard, and our history is marked by natural disasters – flood and fire – we are very mindful of the implications of climate change and the need to care for our environment better:

We have already installed PV panels and glazed our North porch to conserve heat and are keen to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

One of our core activities is encouraging people to walk to our church from the coastal path &/or to enjoy circular nature walks from the Church.

The scouts are keen to plan a geocache project to encourage a wider range of people to access the countryside.

We will also encourage local people to walk to the Church for events.

Our café will source local produce where possible, asking our suppliers to reduce plastic where possible.

Some of our activities will be nature-focused including bat evenings (bees & Herons in the future) and naturalist badges for the scouting movement.

Flora & Fauna - Our churchyard is rich in wildflowers and birds, with foxes, badgers and deer commonly seen. An unused area in the south east corner of the Churchyard is left wild – part of our project will be planning how we can improve the flora & fauna of the Churchyard in future phases.

We will install low flush WC's.

By keeping all of the toilets/sinks on the northside of the base of the Tower, where there is already water & drainage, this will lower the environmental impact of the project. (If we are not able to bring the screen forward and plumbing has to be installed on south side of the Tower as well this will considerably increase the environmental impact of the project)

Being a tidal graveyard and close to the sea, our interpretation will include messages on how environmental changes have an impact on us.

Re-purposing the decorative carvings from the back pews into the new storage cupboards at the west ends of the north and south aisle and into the welcome desk.

7. WHAT OTHER OPTIONS TO MEET THE NEED WERE CONSIDERED?

Originally the project was to repair the Tower and the Roof together. As the project has grown the decision has been taken to break this into 2 stages in order to make each part manageable. The logical way is to repair the Tower first, as masonry is falling from the Tower on to the roof, so pointless repairing the roof first for masonry to fall on it. In stage 1, the Tower repairs, we have included the re-ordering as the toilets and kitchen facilities are desperately needed to open up the Church as a usable building for the community. Stage 3 (at some point in the future) will be considered once the Tower repairs, internal re-ordering and Roof repairs have been completed.

Balliol Hall next to St Peter & All Hallows Church (village Hall). Our mission is to offer alternatives to the groups that are running very successfully from the Balliol Hall. We wish to complement this facility, not to take groups/activities or people away from the Hall. The Balliol Hall is basically running at full capacity with regular weekly/monthly bookings, we wish to accommodate the groups that want long term displays and activities or drop-in sessions, that do not fit into the busy Balliol Hall programme.

Various possible locations for toilets were discussed with Church members, the wider community and Architect (as specified in section 3). The conclusion was the base of the Tower, which would tie in with the Tower repairs.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

February 2013, Reverend Tonya arrived at West Huntspill into the newly formed Benefice of "The Huntspills and Mark" this includes St Peter & All Hallows Church.

February 2013

- St Peter & All Hallows Church closed apart from Services
- Church only used for services
- The Parochial Church Council reluctant to open Church
- The Parochial Church Council against making any changes.
- Roof being patched when drips appear.

2014 – Children services launched with craft activities, bible story, songs plus squash and cake. A successful All Souls Service; following the service, emphasis was placed on quality refreshments so that people could linger and have a reason for staying. This has proved very successful, and much outreach is done. Church members saw the benefit of this.

Gradually over the years Parochial Church Council began to see the need for change in order to grow and survive.

2015 - The PCC agreed to the Church being open daily; this was launched with a very successful Coffee Morning in Church, whilst the Primary School children were involved designing an Open Church Sign.

Links with the Primary School started.

Quinquennial Report identified major roof repairs required – *realization of the situation begins to dawn, fundraising begins.*

2016 - Major Tower problems identified.

2017 – Pop up café in Church on Saturdays through August – well supported.

2018 – Pop up café every Monday in Church, started in May 2018 – very successful and still growing.

Craft group started to use the Church once a week during the pop-up café.

2019 – Saving the Heritage, Sustaining the Community application to National Heritage Lottery Fund. Round 1 pass Sept 2019

2020 – Development of the Saving the Heritage, sustaining the Community project.

2021 – Reverend Christine Judson became Priest in Charge of The Benefice of The Huntspills & Mark