

Statement of Need

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Prepared by the PCC of
All Saints Church Wokingham and



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1 Context: the parish and church today

Wokingham is a prosperous town of c.40,000 inhabitants in the Thames Valley. It is a rapidly growing town and a ten-year strategic development plan will have increased the number of houses in the town by more than 4,000 by 2026. It is seen as a desirable location for both homeowners and businesses, has excellent communication links, and a high proportion of owner-occupied housing. The church is situated in the largest of Wokingham's three significantly deprived areas - the Norreys Estate, an area of mainly council housing where a third of families have incomes below the national standard. The church is also at the centre of the three major housing developments, and we have most of these - 3,500 - in our Parish.

All Saints is a church with an open and approachable character and a wide range of worship from BCP¹ to Messy Church. As the oldest church in the town, occasional offices of funerals, weddings and christenings play an important part in the church activity. There are four Sunday services with congregations from about 20 to 120, and school, civic and Christmas services bring in 300 to 500 people on more than a dozen occasions each year.

The 2018 quinquennial has identified the need for repairs to the roof and clerestory windows and rainwater goods, work on the floors and on the outer surfaces of the columns of both the north and south arcades.

The main problems experienced by the users of the building relate to the fixed seating, poor accessibility, and inefficient and outdated lighting, heating, and AV installations. There are no toilets or kitchen. These issues prevent more informal and modern forms of worship and also restrict the use of the church building for activities beyond worship.

All Saints is a busy church, with many active groups, including house and nurture groups, junior and youth church, pastoral care, Mothers Union, bell ringers, Flower Guild, and choir. It runs exercise sessions and a lunch club particularly targeted at the community in Norreys Avenue; it is a participant in the Wokingham night shelter project and has a concert series and occasional exhibitions and lectures. Some of these activities take place in The Cornerstone, a community hub built by the church on the north of the site in 2004. Like the other halls for hire in the town, The Cornerstone is essentially at full capacity, with many regular bookings. These bookings generate much needed revenue, but mean that the hall is not available for any additional church activity or for any sort of drop in. It is only available for occasional weekday hire during the school holidays.

All Saints is financially sound. It continues to meet its Parish share using the Direct Debit scheme, and contributes 10% of its income to charities, including the major mission organizations. The record of giving to special appeals and through legacies is good. The decline in regular giving over the last 10 years has now levelled out, but finances have become more reliant on income from buildings and from grants and legacies. Hire of The Cornerstone and

¹ Book of Common Prayer

rent from two cottages are significant contributors to the reserves each year. The latest financial statements show net current assets totalling £379,643.

The needs and proposals outlined in this document are based on a detailed analysis of the current context of All Saints, including demographics, attendance data, the condition of the building, and the current uses of the building. This analysis is included for reference at Appendix 2.

2 Vision

We seek to realise a church building that is **flexible and welcoming**, allowing different types of worship and events to better serve a growing modern community: **accessible and open** to all people, regardless of need or ability, and above all an **inspiring holy place**, inspiring prayer and reflection and continuing All Saints' most important role as a home of Christian worship for over 800 years.

All Saints is a fine grade 2* listed church. Surrounded by busy roads, thousands of local people pass it daily. The building is valued by locals for its historic character as a place for the celebration of annual festivals (such as Christmas), and a place where important moments in their own lives, such as baptisms and marriages, are marked. However, despite being the largest public space in Wokingham, it is not well used by the community for the rest of the year - for worship or for other events.

The formality of the layout in the nave and lack of flexible space makes it difficult to accommodate the informal or modern worship that appeals more to busy working people than traditional formal services, at which attendance is in decline. In essence the interior was designed for a form of 19th century worship that parishioners today engage with in ever dwindling numbers. It also prevents more innovative use for drop-ins, fairs, theatre, and family activities that this large and lofty space would otherwise accommodate very well.

The Cornerstone serves at the heart of the local community as a popular hub, heavily used and helping sustain the church financially. Though this has squeezed the facilities available for church use, and in particular the use of small worship/prayer groups and youth/children's work, it would not be sensible from a community or stewardship perspective to displace existing and valued community users whilst the church building stands empty ten metres away.

All Saints **spaceforall** project is aimed at revitalising the church building, making it more open, more available, and more inspiring to the community it serves. The church members respect their heritage and want to retain the feeling of being a holy place whilst enabling a wider variety of worship and providing spaces for more and different church and community uses. Our vision is endorsed by the Town Council.

3 Needs

3.1 Liturgy and worship

The primary need for Sunday worship is to be able to have more flexible worship patterns, rather than just using forward facing rows and very little break-out space. This traditional layout, though appropriate for large scale formal services, and an option that must be retained, is detrimental to other worship styles, such as family services or “Messy Church” where flexible spaces are needed. It also prevents worship patterns that would be better conducted with the altar in the nave, such as “in the round” services, or “Taize” or other contemplative-style worship.

Another useful option for inter-generational Sunday worship services is to have spaces that can accommodate one or more of the children/youth groups. In particular, space is needed for younger children which is acoustically separate but directly adjoins the main body of the church, so that they are more connected with the main services, and parents of the youngest can be close at hand.

For smaller services, a smaller, private space, separate from the rest of the nave is necessary. We also need chapel space for visitors to the church who are seeking a space for private prayer. This must be visible from the main door rather than hidden away in a back room, and be useable whilst other events are underway in the nave.

More space is needed around the font for the baptismal party, and a location for the font where it has an architectural setting befitting its liturgical importance. It is currently placed up against the relocated rood screen at the south west corner of the nave, and looks too much like an afterthought placed in a space that was simply available rather than correct.

For any activity and particularly for the civic services and baptisms, funerals and weddings, a reasonable space is needed outside the west door where people can gather and walk safely.

It is important to be flexible for different numbers of worshippers – at a dozen services a year there are more than 400 in the congregation but the regular Sunday Parish communion has 120 attending.



The Messy Church team, seen here in The Cornerstone, would much prefer to have this activity in the church



Our children's corner



All Saints as the civic church – the local Scouts parade on St George's Day

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to worship:

- At least one **meeting space** with **acoustic separation from the nave**
- A **chapel** for individual prayer that is visible and accessible to visitors, but still feels private
- A **small worship space**, seating c.25-30
- A **moveable altar** and **dais**
- **Seating that can be reconfigured** by a minimal number of helpers to allow alternative layouts for worship
- **Space around** and an **appropriate liturgical setting for the font**
- **Toilets** which can be accessed direct from the church as one would find in any public building
- A more welcoming **assembly area** outside the west door.



A prayer tent installation just fits in the Lady Chapel, but prevents that space from being used for private prayer

3.2 A community hub

The aim of the spaceforall project is to open the church as a community hub – not just holding events as we have done in the past but also as a drop in one or more days a week.

We want to build our recent programme of classical, pop and folk concerts, lectures, discussions and exhibitions, all of which are of widespread interest across the community. However, such activities have only been accommodated with considerable difficulty, by fitting displays and refreshment areas around the pews. Attendees have to leave the church building to use the facilities at The Cornerstone, often queuing in the churchyard to use the one externally accessible WC. This is discouraging to people running and attending such events and restricts the number of new events that can be attracted to the church.



The Cornerstone thrives on regular bookings which makes it difficult to use for occasional but very important activities like funeral teas or inter church conferences; it would be sensible for the church building, standing empty for much of the time at present, to be able to accommodate these.

Over the last five years we have been through both a Mission Action Planning activity and a process of discernment under the aegis of Partners in Missional Church. The mission areas that we are now working on are discipleship and community development in the new housing areas and a growing commitment to respond to the needs of the vulnerable in our community.

The three new major housing developments are arranged in a horseshoe around our church, which is on the route into the town centre for their residents, and for many in walking or cycling distance. To serve these, we want to capitalise on our historic building, a massive asset in itself. From this location we can both offer facilities that cannot be provided, or would be too costly to duplicate, in each of the new areas. We see this dual approach as an effective way of ministering to them.

From our research in the town we have been told that the gaps in provision for the vulnerable are of “drop in” type, where information or advice may be gleaned on an informal or sometimes more formal basis. With its large floor area All Saints is in a good position to provide space for pop ups for these charities and other groups, and ideally situated for the most deprived on our side of the Borough.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to other activities:

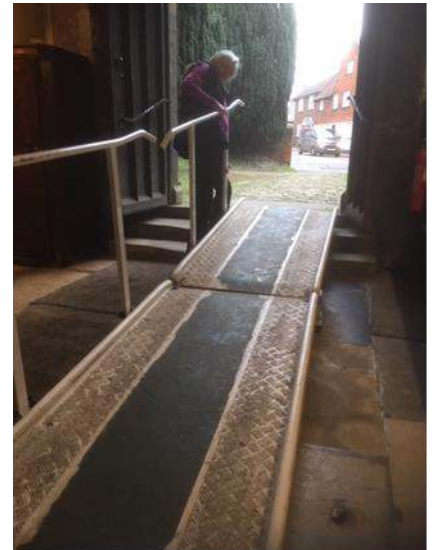
- **Moveable seating** and **accessible toilets**, as for worship needs
- **A large area with a level floor that can be cleared of furniture** in order to accommodate a range of activities
- **Kitchen facilities** with **sufficient space nearby to serve and enjoy refreshments**
- **Accessible to all** in line with needs in section 3.3
- **Meeting spaces** for local charities and other activity groups – these do not need to be single use or permanently set aside spaces
- A space that can be used as a “**green room**” lecturers or concert performers etc

3.3 Accessibility

At present the main entrance to the church is through the tower at the west end, which faces a pedestrian crossing leading into the town. Whilst the entrance itself is imposing from the outside, the cobbled path, which is difficult for people with mobility impairments is known to discourage the elderly from coming to church. The massive yew trees and narrow access from the pavement make this an unwelcoming entrance with a very poor assembly area for christenings, weddings and funerals.

From the west door there are three steps down to nave level. At present there is a crude temporary ramp that occupies half of the tower floor space, which is the only access to the building for a wheelchair user. It is not Part M compliant, and makes the steps hard, if not dangerous, for ambulant disabled people to use.

There are other doorways into the Lady Chapel and north vestry (both single doors) and south porch (double width door) - the north door is very small and reserved to staff use; the Lady Chapel door is currently unusable, and the south door is redundant as it leads onto a path terminating at the busy junction of London Road and Peach Street, where the pavement is narrow and there is no pedestrian crossing.



The ugly heavy ramp has to be lifted into place when the doors are opened or closed

Inside the church the lighting is poor, as is the sound reinforcement system; this makes it difficult for people with hearing and sight impairments to participate fully in services. Low lux levels for areas of congregational seating and in the choir make it difficult to read music and service sheets; there is no sectional control to allow greater light levels in areas as and when required. There are no accessible WC facilities at church - the nearest is in The Cornerstone, across the churchyard.

All Saints' linked CofE school has a provision for children with complex physical needs so accessibility is particularly important to the church.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to accessibility:

- Permanent **wheelchair access** that does not rely on a temporary ramp and can be safely used by unaccompanied wheelchair users
- A **level entrance** on the north side – this is nearest the church car park
- A **wider entrance** at the west end without trip hazards between the west gate and the west door
- A new **lighting system** with adequate task lighting levels and with sectional and dimming control
- A **sound reinforcement system** with **hearing loop**

- A **Part M compliant WC**, accessible from the nave without having to leave the building.

3.4 Repairs

Externally, there are leaks in the nave roof which need to be addressed either with patch repairs or a complete re-roofing. The remaining tiled sections of the roof (south facing Lady Chapel and side aisles) are also likely to need overhaul, and replacement of rainwater goods, though the precise specification for this must be defined by further investigations. The extent of repair work to the roof will also depend on the success of our fundraising. If the nave roof is replaced, it would be sensible to take the opportunity to introduce appropriate breathable insulation into the roof at the same time.



The pillars are badly in need of refurbishment

Internally, the priority is to address the poor condition of the nave floor, where tiles are damaged and loose, and the floor level is increasingly uneven. The 1923 timber pew platforms are suffering from the damp in the floor, and it is unlikely that a timber floor finish can be sustained here into the future. The tower entrance floor needs to be reviewed: footfall is high and causing damage to the ledgers that make up the floor, particularly at the end of the wheelchair ramp.

Preventing salt damage caused by evaporation from damp masonry is also a priority, as it causes unsightly damage to paint finishes and, more importantly, to historic fabric. This is exacerbated by the blown hot air heating system: it does nothing to control the temperature of the building fabric itself, and the constant heating and cooling cycles it causes generate further condensation problems. A gentler heating system is needed that will allow the masonry to gradually dry out and then hold it at a constant temperature year round.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to repair:

- **Commission investigation of nave roof** to establish the degree of repair required and draw up specification; **conduct repairs to the nave roof** and other high level works as advised
- **Remove the portable wheelchair ramp** in the tower and **relocate ledgers** to prevent further damage from footfall
- **A robust floor finish to the nave** that can withstand damp, heavy footfall, and the relocation of furniture
- **A conservation heating system** that can be run constantly at low level to protect the building fabric from heating/cooling cycles and excessive damp
- **Internal redecoration** in breathable finishes

3.5 Flexibility

Many of the problems experienced by groups using the church stem from the fact that the current seating layout, with fixed pews mostly facing east, is not appropriate for a wide variety of informal and drop-in activities that are an ordinary part of life for modern town centre churches. This puts additional demand on The Cornerstone (smaller than the nave, but the only flexible hall space on the site), or results in activities being restricted to those that can take place in such a formal space. In both cases mission and outreach are limited - either in terms of frequency and numbers of attendees, or audience, i.e. to the dwindling number of people attracted by formal services and events. Given the demographics of the town and the high rate at which the population is growing this is a problem; All Saints must be able to connect with and serve the needs of both the current and the incoming population if the church is to thrive.



The current arrangement of pews is inflexible and does not support the needs of the modern church and community

The church is the largest indoor public space² in Wokingham, but the seating currently prevents most uses that require a large amount of room. The pews functionally restrict the space that can be used for events like exhibitions and fairs to less than a fifth of the actual footprint of the nave and therefore render it impractical. Flexible seating would turn the main body of the church into a significant asset for increasing the use of the building and its connection to the community, particularly the new communities of our Parish. The nave and aisles together provide a large square space that can comfortably accommodate stalls or displays as well as hundreds of people; there is no wish to waste such an asset for the sake of a formal seating layout that is used only once a week. The basic principle is that the nave and aisle of the church should be multi-use spaces, but that the Lady Chapel should always be reserved for prayer and worship.

² The Borough Council as part of their redevelopment plan are constructing a sports hall which will adapt to an auditorium. It will seat at least 300 for concerts, possibly a little larger than All Saints. The Council itself views this as a complementary space with a very different atmosphere from the church.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to flexibility:

- **Moveable, stackable seating**
- **Storage** to allow seating and tables to be put away when a clear space is required
- **Flexible AV system** with either a wireless input or several input points, and screens or monitors that can be used wherever they are required for a particular event, and stored as needed
- **Power outlets** in floor boxes to serve different layouts
- **Replacement of the fixed dais** by a **moveable dais** to allow for different worship and event layouts
- The ability to **provide refreshments** in a discreet way that does not compromise the character of the interior as a place of worship

3.6 Sustainability

The principle of sustainability is a key element of this project to create a flexible community venue, that can attract people and revenue in order to sustain it for future generations. The work must be sustainable and designed:

- 1) to use minimal energy,
- 2) for a long life with minimal maintenance
- 3) to respect and protect the vulnerable historic fabric of the building, and
- 4) to allow a sustainable financial model for future use.

The existing lighting system requires expensive, high level servicing. The existing blown hot air heating system is crude – designed for a warehouse, it is not the right system for a building of this significance and mass - the internal volume of the church is large and the hot air does more to warm the roof space than the layer of air from floor to head height. It also creates strong convection currents that make many sitting in the main body of the church feel cold despite the increased air temperature. The system needs to be replaced with one that is more efficient, and does more to protect the fabric of the church and therefore avoid large repair bills in the future.

The current warm air heater is only two years old - unfortunately it had to be replaced very recently, and uses c.£4,000 worth of gas each year. The M&E consultant has examined options for heat pumps but concluded that a gas boiler is needed to produce adequate heating, and



Exhibitions and displays (such as this festival of vestments and flowers) will be much easier to stage when they don't have to be squeezed between pews



At a recent performance by Trinity Concert Band extra spotlights make it (just) possible for visiting bands to see their music

proposed a mixed radiator and underfloor system, which will provide improved levels of comfort and more constant levels of heat, for no greater energy bills..

Another necessary measure to minimise the future repair costs of the building is to address the floor, which was not of the highest quality when it was laid in 1864 and 1923. It would be a better use of the parish's resources to pay for a new robust floor, in a material appropriate to the building, than to patch repair an existing floor of no particular historic significance or architectural merit. Within any new floor existing ledgers should be reset in less trafficked areas, in order to minimise damage to these from footfall and moving furniture.

Finally, there should be no redundant areas in the church - every space should have an intended use (or uses) and be optimised to best perform it.



The south porch is currently only used as an emergency exit

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to sustainability:

- An **efficient gas-fired heating system** that delivers heat where it is needed (i.e. at ground level and particularly in the centre of the nave)
- A **low energy lighting system** that can be controlled sectionally and dimmed, using lamps and units with a long service life and carefully placed to minimise servicing at height.
- A new **stone floor** in the nave and aisles
- Enclose the currently redundant **south porch** for use as a store for valuable screens and other equipment

3.7 Choirs and music

The music at All Saints is of the highest quality and is a key element of All Saints' mission. The church has a highly trained choir and their singing at festivals is one of the key attractions to the "civic church". In addition to this the church holds secular concerts from What the Floyd tribute band to baroque music, and welcomes local choirs. A choir and organ accompany most of the main services, but the organ is no longer functioning properly and needs to be replaced. This is being discussed with the organ advisor.



The Copeman Hart organ installed in 1988 is showing its age

The choir lacks storage space for their music, and the worship band gave up because of the problems of equipment storage. The only space available to the choir is the choir vestry on the north side of the chancel, in the former north chapel. This space has to serve as vestry, music library, and on occasion a teaching space, as well as the flower arranging prep area and storage for cleaners' equipment. A choir vestry with logically arranged storage space

would go a long way towards addressing this problem, as would the availability of smaller meeting spaces within or adjoining the church that could be available for teaching.

The musicians have also identified issues specifically with the chancel that need to be addressed. The modern carpet over the dais and tiled chancel floor has a detrimental impact on the acoustics of the space. More generally, the fixed seating in the nave and fixed organ console position prevent an alternative seating arrangement for concerts that would make better use of the available space, for example by allowing more room for an orchestra.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to music:

- A **new organ**, possibly a stand alone pipe organ
- **Secure storage** for instruments and equipment
- An **uncluttered** choir vestry with purpose designed storage for robes and music
- **Acoustically separate teaching/green room space**
- **Seating that can be reconfigured** depending on the size and type of concert/event

3.8 Storage and service areas

Broadening the range of activities taking place in the church will in turn generate a greater need for storage. Tables and chairs need to be put away when not in use, and storage is needed for all the individual groups that use and take care of the church building – such as the Flower Guild and the cleaners. Both of these groups also require a utility area within the church but not in a public area, and ideally separated from any servery area for hygiene reasons. In addition, there continues to be the need for storage for books and printed information. Valuable AV and music equipment needs to be stored when not in use.

The following needs have therefore been identified in relation to storage and service areas:

- A **sink and bench with storage, and additional cupboards**, for the use of the Flower Guild, cleaners, and activities such as Messy Church
- **Secure store in the South Porch** for screens, valuable equipment, and some tables and chairs
- **Cupboards for smaller book and equipment storage**
- **Space for up to 200 seats** to be stored when not in use

4 The proposals

The first feasibility study exploring potential options was issued by David Finlay of Acanthus Clews Architects in Autumn 2016, in response to the first draft of the statement of needs issued earlier that year. The study proposed four broad options that included a) a gallery at the west end b) an extension directly abutting the north choir vestry, c) a two storey lean to extension running the length of the north aisle combined with a gallery in the north aisle, and d) a single storey extension running the length of the north aisle. Consultations were held with the DAC, Historic England, and Wokingham Borough Council on these proposals in November 2016 and in January 2017 the church launched a formal consultation with the congregation. There were 154 responses to the congregation survey with over 800 individual comments. Broadly speaking, the congregation were in favour of removing some or all of the pews, an extension, providing an open space for welcome within the nave, maintaining the main entrance through the tower at the west end, providing disabled access, putting WCs in an extension rather than the main church building, and replacing the fixed dais with a moveable one.

The responses from the statutory consultees at the DAC, WBC, and Historic England, raised no particular issues with the proposed replacement of the floor and the 1923 benches, but did express reservations chiefly concerning:

- 1) Harm to the north elevation caused by any extension running the full length of the aisle
- 2) The impact of the proposed gallery (open or enclosed) on the character of the interior
- 3) Insufficient proof of the necessity for additional meeting rooms beyond those provided in The Cornerstone.

In response to these concerns Oxford Heritage Partnership were approached to work with the church to provide more detailed statements of need and significance that would fully explain the importance of the church building and the constraints currently experienced by its users. On the basis of these All Saints returned to David Finlay for revised proposals, which are presented here.

The descriptions provided below should be read in conjunction with the outline plans provided by the architect.

4.1 Extension to the north of the vestry

A small extension to the north of the vestry, and linked to its existing north door by a narrower structure, will allow the provision of a more private space for children's/ youth group activities and smaller services that is still directly accessible from the church. This would be a multi-use Parish Room, for church and community meetings and related events that currently have to take place off site due to the unavailability of space in The Cornerstone. It will also open up the possibility of holding two services in the church at the same time – at present our once a month Sunday morning café church has to meet in The Cornerstone because there is a Holy Communion service at the same time in the church.

One WC in the link structure would still allow the use of this room without disturbing activities in the main body of the church, for example when being used for crèche or Sunday school during a Sunday service, or for midweek worship when there is an activity in the church.

4.2 Screen entrance to the Lady Chapel and reopening of chapel door

The Lady Chapel is a beautiful contemplative space. All Saints wishes to enhance its use for quiet prayer and small services by improving the feeling of privacy so that activities taking place in the nave do not disturb those at prayer. It is a key principle of the project that there must always be somewhere in the church for a visitor to come and pray, regardless of any other activities taking place. The Lady Chapel already reads as a distinct space thanks to Woodyer's low chancel arcade with its iron screen; this will be enhanced by installing a screen at the west arch to create a quiet prayer chapel. It will also have its own external entrance.



The Lady Chapel makes an excellent place for individual prayer but needs to feel more private.

4.3 Provision of welcome and servery facilities; relocation of font

The westernmost bays of the nave and north aisle will be kept clear of fixed furniture in order to provide a flexible welcome space. The servery will be located in the south west corner of the church.

The font, currently against the wall at the south west corner of the nave, would be relocated to a position to the east of the south door and centred on a window, where baptismal parties have space to gather around it.



The ancient font deserves a prominent position within the church

4.4 Removal of the 1923 pews and replacement with moveable seating

It is proposed to remove the 1923 pews from the nave and aisles altogether and replace them with moveable seating. A lightweight design that can be stacked and therefore requires minimal storage space has been chosen.



Refreshments being served before a multi faith discussion – the circulation space is cramped and the pew seating unsuitable for conversation

4.5 New stone floor with underfloor heating

The current floor dates largely to the Woodyer restoration of 1864, though with woodblock pew platforms installed in 1923. It sits awkwardly with the column bases, and in some places covers their plinths entirely. The condition of the floor is poor and needs to be addressed. The church wishes to remove the carpeted dais from the east end of the nave and install a new limestone floor throughout the nave and aisles and into the chancel, incorporating underfloor heating that can be run constantly at low level through the winter to prevent the wetting and drying cycles that are damaging the building fabric at present. The floor would also be an aesthetic improvement, and provide a hardwearing and maintainable finish, unlike the existing. Historic ledgers, already moved from their original locations by Woodyer, would be reset into this floor, carefully sited to minimise mechanical damage. The layout of the flooring will reflect the Victorian design. At the west end of the nave a labyrinth design will be worked into the floor, picking up a very ancient tradition for contemplation.

4.6 Audio-visual and lighting

It is proposed to install a new LED based lighting system with simple pre-set controls to cover the main categories of services and events the building will host. A new AV system will have a mixture of fixed screens and portable LCD screens that can be used wherever they are required.

The sound system will be designed to be suitable for both music and voice, and with low profile speaker units to minimise its visual impact. In order to avoid the necessity for a large fixed sound desk the supplier will be asked to provide a simple wireless mixer or mixer app for use on a tablet.

Wi-Fi will be installed in order to facilitate a wireless system and to better serve community activities, including heritage expositions, as well as lectures, exhibitions, and drop-in activities including 'pop-up' charity stalls.

4.7 Installation of new outer doors to south porch

New external doors and the regrading of the floor in the south porch will make it a useful store for valuable items, and c. 200 chairs. A recent review of fire safety in the building, has indicated that this doorway is not required as a fire exit.

4.8 Creation of new north door

After careful consideration it seems impossible to offer Part M compliant access through the west tower. The difference in level from the raised churchyard to the internal floor level of the nave is too great to be accommodated by simply regrading the west path; there would have to be either a permanent ramp or a platform lift within the footprint of the tower. The ramp would not conform to building regulations and would, as the existing temporary ramp does, create a dangerously small step and walkway for ambulant people. A platform lift would conform to regulations, but again would take up a great deal of floor space, and comes with the additional issue of servicing and maintenance.

It would be more practical to create a new north door to the west bay of the north aisle. This need only be of single width, and would provide level access from the existing pathway from The Cornerstone and church car park to the west end of the church. In order to minimise the visual impact of this new opening no porch or internal lobby is proposed, and design elements from Woodyer's north vestry door would be used in order to ensure that it was in keeping with the north elevation. Whilst this element of the proposals may be controversial, it will entail a much smaller impact on the appearance and material of the historic fabric than the substantial remodelling of the west entrance needed to provide level access.

4.9 Improvement of the access at the west

Although the west entrance cannot be made accessible it is an essential ceremonial access point from the town and a gathering space after large services. It is proposed to remove the cobbles and replace them with textured, non-slip sandstone paving laid on a mortar bed with colour matched joints in order to create a level approach from the west gate. It is also necessary to level a metre wide strip of turf on either side of the path from where it meets the west tower to its junction with the path leading north across the churchyard, and remove two of the Irish yew trees.

4.10 Repairs

The quinquennial inspection in 2018 has recommended a range of repairs with the most important being those to the roof and clerestory area, with associated repairs of rainwater goods. Internally, the pillars will be repaired and redecorated. More detail of the QI is included in the Appendix.

5 Justification

5.1 Growing worship and extending mission

The population in Wokingham is growing, as is the monthly attendance and attendance at the less formal acts of worship. Attendance at traditional services has been declining. Demographically the town is quite young, with a large number of families that do not engage with more traditional forms of worship but do identify themselves as Christian. The church wants to reach out to these people by increasing the variety of forms of worship offered, and by welcoming them into a place of worship which can meet their modern needs whilst remaining in character a historic and holy place. At present any alternative forms of worship are essentially confined to the Lady Chapel, as the only relatively flexible space in the building. It seats only 30, and this is actively limiting the size to which such a congregation can grow.

Now is the crucial time to address this - with 3500 extra homes in the parish there is the opportunity to put worship at the heart of normal family life in Wokingham. Otherwise, there is a real danger that “church” will be regarded as “something other people do” by these young families - the impact of which on the life and mission of the church is obvious. One option would be to offer worship for these communities in modern venues closer to them. However, this would leave a vacant church in the centre and we view it as an inefficient and unsustainable use of our resources. We see our mission to the new communities in Wokingham as combining local activity to build those communities but also bringing them into the church which is geographically at the centre of the three new communities. Nor is there a desire to attract new worshippers by forcing out the old; traditional worship will still be done to the highest standard, but alongside a variety of other services enabled by a flexible interior that will serve parishioners wherever they are in their journey of faith.

5.2 Community engagement with church and heritage

One of the most difficult steps for many “unchurched” people is simply crossing the threshold into a church building. Hosting community events is an unthreatening way of introducing church into the life of these people, connecting with those who would not otherwise come to church. Making the church a local resource as well as a local landmark also gives a powerful way of bringing the historic building to the attention of the population, ensuring it is valued and understood, and therefore widening the pool of people who might support it, financially or as volunteers, when repairs and maintenance are necessary. The Town Council see us as partners in their overall developments in Wokingham.

5.3 Resourcing and sustaining this historic church building

Creating usable community space within the church, which is the largest public building in Wokingham, will also help increase the revenue needed to meet the on-going costs of running and maintaining this historic building. This is particularly important in the wider context of the

Church of England, where the parish share takes up most of the money given by the congregation, often leaving parishes dependent on grants and legacies for works of repair and development to their churches.

It is poor stewardship to be reliant on such variable sources for expenses that are inevitable for a historic building - repairs will always be required, and the needs of users will always change over time. In order to keep the church on a secure financial footing it is essential that the building can generate at least a proportion of the revenue required to keep it going. Combining the various aspects of building management for the church and The Cornerstone will save money overall.



Wedding receptions (not just the wedding) in the church could be so much more convenient in a refurbished church and bring in welcome revenue

Beyond financial calculations, our plans are more ambitious – we see our building as a drop-in location particularly for vulnerable and lonely people: a place where they can seek information and support if then need it or just come and sit, at times just absorbing the quiet atmosphere but at other times joining in the activities.

Appendix 1: Overview of current and proposed activities

				Requirements				
Activity/Group	Attendance	Frequency	Storage (1)	AV	WC	Kitchen	Meeting Space /crèche	Quiet /prayer space
Existing activities which need more facilities								
Small service	5 - 25	2 /week	Negligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Large traditional service	100 - 120	2 / week	Music (2)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (3)
Large family service / Messy Church	30 – 40	5 /month - plan to increase	Craft and music (2)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Morning and evening prayer	1- 5	5 /week	None	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Festival services	300 - 500	5 per year	Small	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (4)	No
School service	350 - 500	8 – 10 /year	Negligible	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (4)	No
Private Prayer	1 at a time	Every day	Nil	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Bapt./ Wedding/ Funeral	10 - 200	1 per week	Negligible	Yes	Yes	Yes (5)	Yes	Yes
Current activities that are very difficult to hold in the existing church								
Youth groups	20 - 100	2/ month (6)	Lots!	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Concerts and lectures	50 - 250	(7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes (8)
Social events after occasional offices	50 - 200	1/ month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Exhibitions and receptions	10 – 500	(10)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes (8)
Church meetings	5 - 20	2-3 a week	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	(9)	No
Proposed activities that are impossible in the current building								
Community drop in e.g. café, web café, library, charity "pop-ups"	4 – 20	1 – 2 per week to increase	Kitchen and space for tables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes (8)
Conferences, away day hosting	30 - 150	2 or 3 a year initially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (4)	Yes (8)

Notes

- On going storage for cleaning and flowers. There will be a need to store about 200 chairs when the church is in use other than for large events, and when there are large events, storage for café tables
- For band equipment
- For prayer ministry after a service
- For assembly and dressing
- Not all require a kitchen but many will
- Very little use at the moment but the youth worker is looking for somewhere for a Friday evening session. (The Cornerstone as it is already occupied by the Brownies)
- Currently about 6 pa, but have been as many as 15 pa and with better facilities could return to this number
- Important during rehearsals and set up for events
- PCC currently holds its meetings half in church and half in The Cornerstone because of limited availability. Other meetings have similar problems

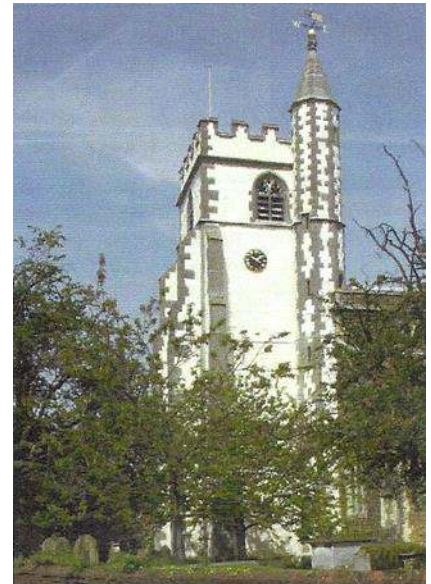
Appendix 2: The parish today – detailed analysis

1. Location and setting

Wokingham is a town in Berkshire, c.7 miles south-east of Reading, 4 miles west of Bracknell, and 40 miles west of London. It is the administrative centre of Wokingham Borough, a unitary authority, which covers a small area between Wokingham town in the east and Reading in the west, the River Thames in the north and Sandhurst in the south. The Borough is characterised by small historic towns with rapidly expanding suburbs, separated by corridors of agricultural land. Some small villages remain to the south and west of the Borough, whose populations rely on Wokingham, Bracknell and Reading for services and often employment. Wokingham itself remained small and Victorian in character until the 1960's, when the western suburb of Joel Park and eastern Norreys Estate were built, more than tripling the size of the town. Bean Oak, Ashridge Park and Woosehill were added in the 1970's, and Keephatch in the 1990's.

At present further housing development is underway to the north east and south east of the old town, much of it available under shared ownership schemes. By 2021 the borough will be 50% larger than it was in 2011, with two vast developments including an additional 3500 houses in the parish of All Saints, an increase of about 50%. In 2010 Wokingham Enterprise Ltd was established to manage a £100 million regeneration project aimed at redeveloping the town centre to serve this rapidly increasing population; it has completed the redevelopment of the train station and the area surrounding it. The town centre development is shifting the civic services to the south side of the town, whilst the major development and the area of greatest need are in the east – and All Saints is in a pivotal half-way position to offer facilities closer to home for these people.

A market town from the 13th century, the main sources of employment in Wokingham are now the service, light engineering, and technology industries - the latter two largely based in the commercial/industrial estate to the south of the town centre. The town's location at the centre of the Thames Silicon Valley is reflected in the occupations of the church members.



All Saints church is a landmark on the main entrance to the town



Montague Park – part of the Southern Development of 2,500 houses in the south east of the parish

The town has excellent transport connections via road (the M4 and A329(M) lie immediately to the north) and rail (Great Western). There are four state secondary schools and fifteen primary schools, three of which are CE controlled or aided, with All Saints School enjoying particularly good links with the church.

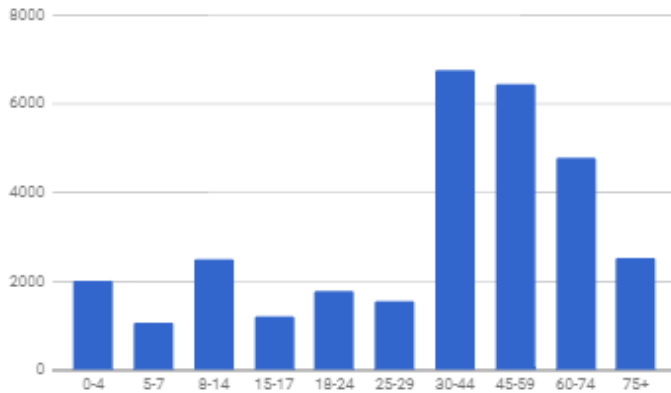
Local leisure provision is also good; there are eight public parks and two sports and leisure centres, as well as a library, a cricket club, and an open air cinema. Indoor provision for cultural activities is not as good: the popular Wokingham Festival takes place outdoors in Cantley Park; the main hall in the Town Hall seats a maximum of 120. The church of All Saints is the largest indoor civic or performance space in the town centre.

The Parish of All Saints covers the eastern half of the town, including the Norreys estate, a significantly deprived area of mainly council housing, where of the 658 households, 198 children are living on or below the poverty line and 211 families have incomes below the income standard.

The western half is covered by the later parish of St Paul, and the south by St Sebastian. In addition to these parish churches there is Christ Church Wokingham (an evangelical congregation, without regularised status, currently meeting at St Crispin's school, about 300m east of All Saints) and Woosehill Community Church. As well as these Anglican congregations there is a Roman Catholic church (Corpus Christi), a Methodist chapel and a Baptist chapel, Norreys Church, Salvation Army, the Society of Friends, and Kings Church and the Oakwood centre (no building in either case). All Saints has the oldest building out of all of these congregations and is the original parish church, created from a chapel of ease to Sonning in the 12th century.

2. Population and demographics

At the 2011 census the town had a population of 30,690 in 12,629 households confined to an area of just under one square mile. 2506 households were rented, 9954 owned. The average age was 40.6; the largest broad age groups are working age adults and younger children (up to age 14); the number of retirement aged people is noticeably lower than in comparable towns outside the London/Reading commuter belt, but growing in part as the elderly return to be closer to their young families.



Above: age profile based on ONS 2011 Census data [from NOMIS Oct 2017]

The majority of the working age population is in the “white collar” professions, with the remainder split between the service industry and technical to routine jobs in light manufacturing - 11, 460 of the 22,151 usual residents of employment age work in higher or lower managerial, administrative, or professional occupations; 1255 were full time students, and the remainder were largely in technical or routine occupations, or self-employed. 0.9% of the working population is classed as long term unemployed.

In summary the “average” parishioner in Wokingham owns their house (79% of households) and lives in it with their partner (69% of population) and at least one dependent child (30% of population). They are most likely to work in an office-based profession (54% of population) and hold the equivalent of a higher education qualification (43% of population); regardless of their socio-economic status they are most likely to identify as Christian (61% of population).

For a full area report on the civil parish of Wokingham please see <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170221195>

3. Worship and Prayer

All Saints is an active congregation with an open and approachable character. The church offers a wide variety of worship from Common Prayer to Common Worship Eucharistic services using contemporary language. Church members value the quality of music and preaching. Informal family worship and family-friendly events and activities are a vital part of its mission and outreach; its theology is inclusive and holistic. Because it is the oldest and “original” parish church in Wokingham many locals wish to have their occasional offices - weddings, baptisms, and funerals - celebrated at All Saints. Alongside this the church has a role as the civic church, as there is the capacity to host large civic services, such as on Remembrance Day, on behalf of Churches Together in Wokingham (CTW), the cross-denominational partnership for Christians in Wokingham.



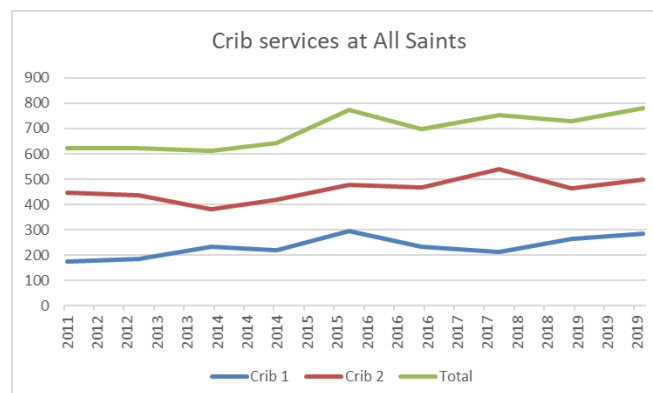
Parking space for prams for a midweek communion service would be much more appropriately provided in a back corner

There are four services every Sunday: a quiet contemplative communion without music at 0800; a Common Worship parish communion at 0930, with concurrent crèche, junior, and youth church groups being held in The Cornerstone across the churchyard; the 1100 “slot” is a Family Service, and once a month a BCP communion is also held following the 1662 rite; In the evening choral evensong alternates with said evening prayer.

In addition to these Sunday services there are a number of events throughout the week.

Common Worship morning and evening prayers are held in the Lady Chapel at 0900

and 1700 daily, Messy Church is on every second and fourth Tuesday (regrettably in The Cornerstone because there are no suitable facilities in church), and a simple communion service is held for parents and toddlers (“Wednesday Mums”) at 1000 every Wednesday. There are four study groups that also meet during the week.



Monthly attendance at services averaged 2200 in 2017, up considerably from c.1250 in 2012 and reflecting the large number of activities and events the church runs beyond traditional Sunday worship. The Crib Service continues to grow and attracted 782 people in two shifts in 2019. Once a month, Baptisms frequently attract 100 – 200 people and school services (about 8 a year) attract 300 – 450 people.

The electoral roll has remained largely stable and now stands at 250. In contrast to the general attendance figures, Christmas and Easter communicant numbers have both dropped over the same period, as have numbers at the more traditional, formal services.

The church is open weekdays from 0900 to 1700, and on Saturdays until 1300, for visitors and for private prayer.

4. Condition of the church building

The last Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by Richard Oxley in 2018. It identified the following necessary works, and items in bold will be included in this project:

Utmost urgency

- **Reinstate loose flashings.**
- **Overhaul and decorate rainwater goods.**
- Repair windows in accordance with recommendations of specialist report[s].
- **Implement holding repairs to the nave roof**
- **Instigate works to remedy water penetration**
- **Continue to address trip hazards by re-bedding loose tiles in the nave**
- Initiate boundary wall repairs

- **Initiate works to mitigate health and safety risks in the churchyard**
- Decide on future of the external store and implement repair accordingly
- Clean out and maintain redundant boiler room

Urgent – within 18 months

- Paint the fixings to the supports to the flagpole.
- **Repair and maintain the tiled roof coverings**
- **Implement a programme of repair of the nave roof coverings and, where necessary, the roof timbers**
- **Implement repairs to the copings**
- **Remove render from nave parapet walls, repair walls and, if deemed necessary, re-render the walls.**
- **Repair, redecorate rainwater goods**
- **Puddingstone – apply render to clerestory to reduce serious health and safety risks**
- **Repair south west quoin to the clerestory**
- Assess condition and plan programme of repair for stonework
- Overhaul/upgrade window guards
- **Implement works that mitigate movement and evaporation of water and salts**
- **Initiate programme of repair to churchyard tombs and gravestones**

Attention within next quinquennial period

- Budget for the overhaul of tiled roof coverings not recovered in 2016
- Pointing & render – assessment and removal of cement pointing and render
- Reduce external ground levels
- Stonework to windows – review condition
- Decorate metalwork to doors

In connection with the 2013 quinquennial inspection major works were carried out to retile the vestry and chancel roofs (see <http://www.oxleyconservation.co.uk/all-saints-wokingham-photos.html>) and to redecorate the clergy vestry internally, a Garden of Remembrance was completed in the churchyard, and a glazed screen installed in the tower arch.

5. Stewardship and finance

Regular giving at All Saints is generally holding steady, but property income is rising and is a vital element to supplement regular giving. It is common to run a deficit, particularly in years where donations and legacies are low. Details are shown overleaf

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Income										
Regular giving	122,426	112,335	119,127	131,831	133,519	131,638	120,732	121,591	117,389	113,023
Donations and legacies	91,688	41,015	41,602	71,704	46,301	54,459	46,618	37,978	77,905	128,447
Gift Aid income	36,510	32,504	34,532	38,640	39,568	39,480	34,608	34,272	42,989	32,285
Fees	13,808	10,888	10,837	15,008	13,114	18,022	12,096	12,579	12,970	14,863
Grants/ special legacy	4,953	4,985	5,267	12,757	2,322	9,592	23,766	90,350	29,992	1,992
Property rent and hire	54,886	50,347	56,255	60,848	59,451	56,051	59,587	64,354	79,768	83,407
Other inc trading	22,141	17,564	19,467	25,255	27,487	37,135	38,813	26,848	22,743	27,177
TOTAL INCOME	346,412	269,638	287,087	356,043	321,762	346,377	336,220	387,972	383,756	401,194
Expenditure										
Parish share	122,902	126,320	128,673	136,372	139,396	131,949	132,163	131,819	130,543	131,701
Running costs - clergy, youth, worship and music	29,899	31,263	24,484	44,593	69,870	76,203	58,035	38,025	51,144	46,233
Running costs – admin, utilities, churchyard, other	60,941	54,186	73,550	45,853	57,178	71,998	89,450	71,621	73,587	65,306
Building works	2,013	4,174	6,354	1,096	0	0	16,026	162,667	22,254	31,203
Property operation and R&M (excl church)	27,600	38,217	25,722	42,179	27,179	23,299	47,539	66,147	37,038	33,859
Gifts to charity	18,298	16,952	18,772	20,394	19,487	22,397	20,021	18,652	17,524	20,525
Other inc depreciation	23,778	23,778	23,778	35,649	26,818	24,870	26,818	23,518	23,518	23,518
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	285,431	294,890	301,333	326,136	339,928	350,716	390,052	512,449	355,608	352,345
<u>Surplus/(deficit) in year</u>	60,981	-25,252	-14,246	29,907	-18,166	-4,339	-53,832	-124,477	28,148	48,849
Net current assets	301,431	300,454	308,374	351,874	359,219	379,993	344,608	252,636	306,429	379,643

6 Current additional uses of the church building/site

6.1 All Saints Bellringers

All Saints has a very active group of ringers including individuals at all levels from beginner to expert. Tuition is offered to new ringers, which often takes place before practice sessions as well as at other times throughout the week. There is a formal practice session every Monday evening, and the bells are rung before every major service with quarter and full peals a regular part of any celebration.

6.2 All Saints Fellowship

Fellowship meets monthly in The Cornerstone for prayers and a themed talk. It also supports a local charity every year, and organises other social functions such as Christmas quiz and games evenings, and a theatre evening. Meetings largely take place in The Cornerstone due to the lack of a suitable warm space in the main church building.

6.3 All Saints Flower Guild

The Flower Guild provides arrangements throughout the year, as well as for weddings and festival services. The members also run workshops at Christmas and other times for people new to the art.

6.4 Pastoral care

This is a core part of All Saints ministry and one that can be significantly developed as a result of the spaceforall project. A bereavement care group offers supportive listening to any parishioner who has suffered a bereavement, with no time limit and holds an annual memorial service in November. Training is offered throughout the year for new volunteers. There are also related groups for prayer and healing ministry, a home communion group, and a baptism care group.

6.5 Church Choir

All Saints has an excellent musical tradition, with a very high quality of choir participation at the major festivals and civic services, and a small choir present at all major services.

6.6 Wokingham Concerts

Wokingham Concerts has started to promote the church of All Saints as a concert venue for choral, chamber, and folk music. There have been around 6 – 10 concerts a year. Highlights of the programme have been an annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* led by the church Director of Music with the children and adults of the church choir. The concert programme has now been reduced because of the uncertainties as to when the building work can begin but has been an excellent pilot and demonstrated the quality of the venue.

6.7 Mothers Union

The MU meets once a month, largely in The Cornerstone due to the lack of facilities in the church, with a range of speakers attending. Occasional bring and share lunches are held

together with those attending the Wednesday parent and toddler service, and regular fundraising activities include cake stalls and tea parties.

6.8 Willing Spirit Exercise Group

An exercise group meets every Wednesday in The Cornerstone, with a pilates class from 1300-1415, and a “Keep Moving” class for ages 40+ from 1415 -1445.

6.9 Lunch Club

A light lunch for £3.50 for the over 60s is held at The Cornerstone on Fridays and The Cornerstone is one of seven church venues in the town offering a night shelter.

7 Existing facilities and services at the church building

7.1 Heating

The church is heated by a blown hot air system with its large ducts built against the interior wall of the north aisle, and served by a plant room built against the exterior north wall. The system is inefficient and there are anxieties about the effect that a forced warm air system has on the fabric of the roof and ceiling.

7.2 Lighting

Lighting is provided at high level, mounted on the wall plate in the nave and aisles. There is little sectional or scene control of the system, and nor is there adequate task lighting for the choir or for reading in the pews, and maintenance at such a high level is very expensive.

7.3 Seating and flexible space

The choir stalls in the chancel are modern, lightweight and moveable. The seating in the nave and aisles is made up of square ended fixed oak pews, which have no cushions. In the Lady Chapel there are a small number of open backed pews which, although heavy, can be moved if required.

The seating at the west end of the south aisle has been rearranged to form a small play area for young children, and at the east end to create a clear space for a piano. There is a large carpeted dais at the east end of the nave.

7.4 Other facilities

On the north side of the chancel are the choir and clergy vestries, the former in what was a medieval chapel but owes its furnishings and finishes to the Victorian restoration.

On the north side of the churchyard is **The Cornerstone**, built in 2004 as a community centre. The main hall on the ground floor is served by a small catering kitchen, and is subdivisible into three smaller rooms with moveable partitions. The hall seats 140. The de Vitre meeting room on the first floor seats 30; also on the first floor is a lounge seating 8-10, and a kitchenette. Disabled access to the first floor is via a lift, and toilets are on the ground floor. Wokingham Job

Support Centre is also based at The Cornerstone, and leases a large office. Use of The Cornerstone is extremely heavy as a community centre in its own right, and income from the lease of rooms is sufficient for it to return a surplus and therefore contribute towards general PCC funds. There are no regular slots left available for church or other use without cancelling existing paying community bookings; meanwhile the church building itself is largely empty during the week.

8 Other public facilities in the area

8.1 Town Hall

The only other historic public building in the town centre is the Victorian town hall which has one small meeting room seating 16, three larger ones seating 25-30, and a large hall that will seat 120. It is serviced by modern WC and catering kitchen facilities, and is a quarter of a mile away from All Saints. The availability of this venue is extremely limited, there is no parking, and the main hall space has less than a third of the capacity of the nave of the church.

8.2 Community and church halls

- Woosehill - serves the western suburb of Woosehill, two miles from All Saints. The main hall can seat 100 and there are two smaller meeting rooms seating 25-35. A good venue for local clubs and societies as well as fitness and arts classes, like The Cornerstone it is already operating close to capacity; its small size means that it is best used by one user group at a time. It cannot accommodate the informal "drop in" type activities the church would like to run.
- Emmbrook Village Hall - Three miles to the north west of All Saints, this small village hall seats 80. It hosts St Nicholas' community church as well as dance and exercise classes and other small community events. Due to the church use there is no Sunday availability.
- Bradbury Centre – a very successful town centre facility run by the Methodist Church, with similar and equally well used facilities to The Cornerstone.
- Norreys Evangelical Church – just down the road from All Saints, Norreys Church has a small hall.
- St Pauls Church in the west of the town has a large hall serving the west side of town
- New community facilities with halls for 80 – 150 are expected in the new housing estates but have not yet been built.

8.3 Theatres and auditoria

- Wokingham Theatre (seating 145)
- Whitty Theatre at Luckley Oakfield School (seating 176)
- A new development is planned by the Borough for the south edge of the town in the form of a large multi-purpose hall for up to 400 people. Its main use will be for badminton and other sports and neither the ambience nor the acoustics are likely to be of comparable quality to All Saints.

9 Other benefice churches

Wokingham All Saints is a single parish benefice with only one church, and therefore does not have the option of relocating any of its services (or congregations) to other sites.

Appendix 3: Letters of support

All new so not marked as a change

All Saints has received many private messages of support and some more public, including 45 positive comments from parishioners when the planning application was submitted (WBC Planning Application 191037).

We also have had the following letters

From The Bishop of Reading The Rt Revd Andrew Proud

The Rector and Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church Wokingham are seeking to refurbish and extend the church building, including adding a new accessible entrance. These improvements are planned to ensure that this important and prominent building remains open and available to the community as a functioning public space, and place of worship, which meets the requirements of accessibility, inclusion, safety and energy efficiency; and the contemporary expectations of a public building

The plan aims to enhance the provision of community space for a town growing in population, by ensuring flexibility for future needs of the community in both worship and other, more general, community gatherings. An additional room linked to the church, and walkway linking the church building to the adjacent existing community centre (The Cornerstone), will meet a demonstrable need for more meeting space in the location and, by linking the two buildings, provide even greater flexibility for

integrated uses of them by the community. New pedestrian approaches to the existing and new entrances will increase accessibility.

I wholeheartedly support the plan for the re-vitalisation of this building because of the increased benefits it will offer to the local community. The plan will help meet both spiritual and social needs in the community in a sustainable way for the future, and ensure a historic building remains viable and useful.

From Lady Elizabeth Godsal

“The Rector and Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church, Wokingham, are seeking to refurbish and extend the church building, including a new accessible entrance.

These improvements aim to ensure the building remains open and available to the community as a functioning public space as well as a place of worship, which meets the modern expectations of a public building; accessibility, inclusion, safety and energy efficiency.

The plans will enhance this community space for a town growing in population, by ensuring flexibility for the future needs of the community in both worship and other, more general, gatherings.

An additional room linked to the church, and walkway linking the church building to the adjacent existing community centre (The Cornerstone),, will meet the need for more meeting space in the location and, by linking the two buildings, provide even greater flexibility for integrated uses of them by the community. New pedestrian approaches to the existing and new entrances will increase accessibility.

I support wholeheartedly the plan for the re-vitalisation of this building because of the increased benefits it will offer to the local community. It will help provide for both spiritual and social needs in a sustainable way for the future and ensure that a prominent historic building remains viable and useful.”

From the Head of All Saints Primary School

All Saints Primary School and Nursery are very lucky to be able to use All Saints Church several times a year for services and visits. Each year we have a Christmas Service, Easter Service and in the summer term, a Leaver's Service. The whole school walk up to the church for these events. We have always been made so welcome and the wardens go out of their way to support these services.

Over recent years our school family has grown and we now struggle to sit all our children and parents in the church. At recent services there have been a number of parents and family members that have had to stand at the back of the church for the duration of the service. Also as you can imagine a lot of our families come with younger siblings in buggies that also take up a lot of space.

We are very excited about the prospect of updated facilities at the church which will enable us to continue to hold our services in the church and not have to restrict the number of parents who attend. The removal of the fixed seating will provide us with so many options and hopefully mean that we can include a larger congregation for our events and possibly extend the number of events that we hold in the church.

One issue that has affected us is not having a toilet in the church. Due to the ages of our children - aged 3 to 11 - there are always several children that need to go to the toilet in the middle of a service. Having to leave the church to go to the Cornerstone building has never been ideal, especially when it is raining.

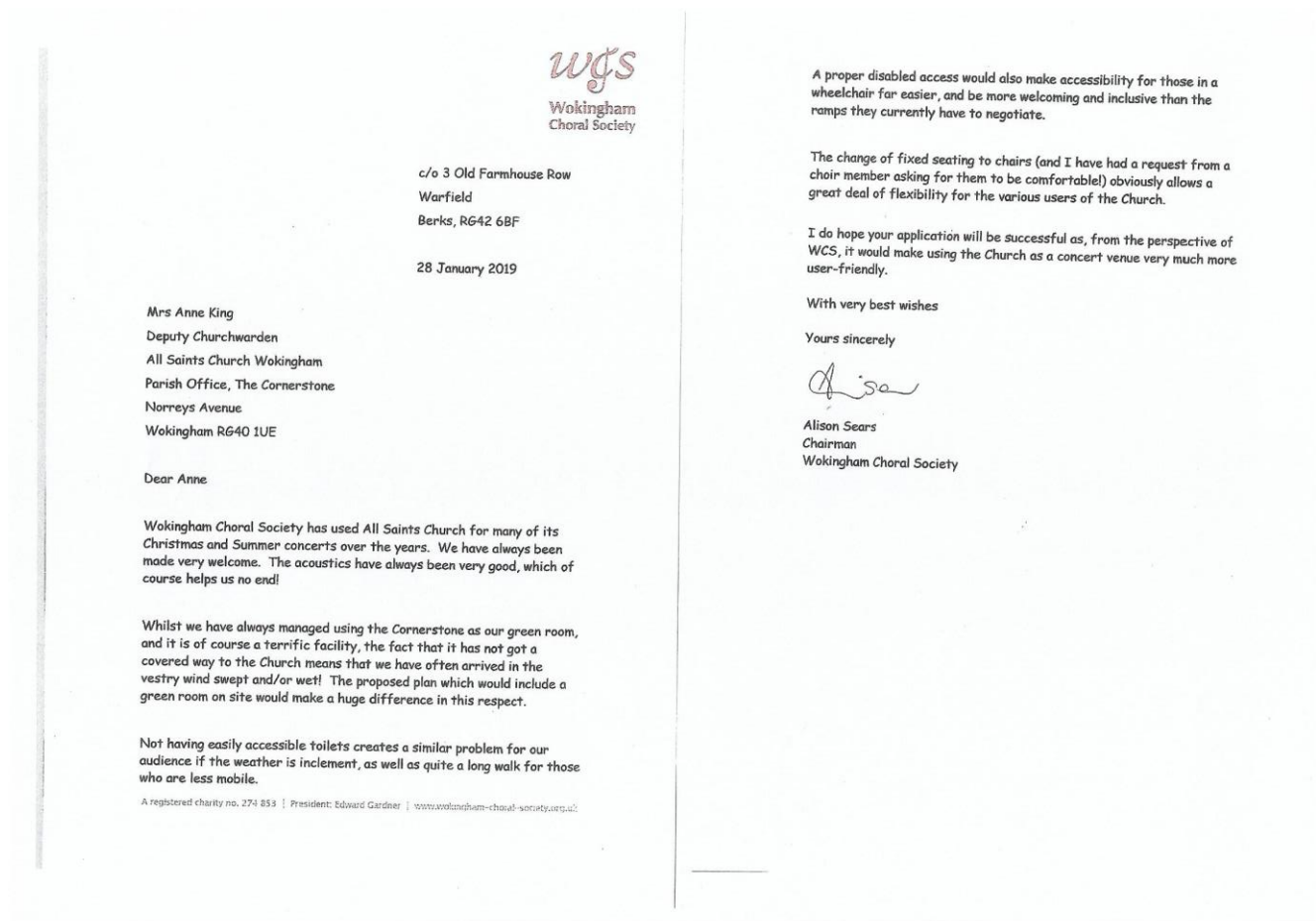
All Saints Primary School and Nursery also has a resource unit for children with complex needs including physical disabilities so we have a number of children who use wheelchairs and walking aids. Having a more accessible entrance to the church would be very beneficial to these children and their support staff.

We have never been able to offer our parents and family members any refreshments at the church services and the proposed inclusion of a servery in the extension would give us that opportunity. Being an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming school is so important to us and these small offerings help to build our relationships with our families.

Our school choir practice so hard for the church services and are an integral part of the running order. They always arrive at the church ahead of the other children and having a green room in which to warm up and practice would be very beneficial.

All Saints School are very hopeful that the ease of use and the better accessibility that the project would provide would be an amazing benefit to our school and our families.

From the Chair of Wokingham Choral Society



Appendix 4: Consultation responses

There have been consultations with the congregation, the Borough and Town Councils and with a number of charities in the town:

- From the Councils we have had support particularly as our development is seen as complementary to their development of the town centre, and offering additional facilities, particularly cultural for the 3,500 households expected to arrive in the town in a ten year period.
- From the charities and other research, we have learnt that the groups in most need are:
 - those with learning disabilities - Wokingham has the second highest learning disabled population needing support in the south east
 - there is a significant need for Alzheimer's support and for support for carersand that the greatest needs are for:
 - informal drop in facilities
 - "pop up" stalls for charities for both support and information
 - Meeting rooms and larger halls that can be hired on an occasional basis and are not booked permanently by regular community activities

The consultations are continuing with the charities and community groups About the way we will be able to use the very flexible space in the church.

The initial designs were intensively researched with the congregation, starting with All Saints' Mission Action Plan, where we saw the need for a more flexible space for worship and community activities.

To compile the brief for the architect, we held further workshops. Acanthus Clews then presented four options for display in church and discussion with Historic England, the Borough Conservation Officer, and the Diocesan Advisory Committee. This was then the subject of a formal survey of the congregation in spring 2017 (see Appendix 4.2)

Following the options appraisal, we also asked the groups in the congregation for their input. The answers are in Appendix 4.1.

Appendix 4.1 Consultation with groups

Q1 What do you particularly like now about the church that makes it appropriate for your group?

1. A sacred and historic feel to the space
2. Quiet contemplative space when we are working there (from the Flower Guild)
3. Open all day
4. Few seats with restricted view behind pillars
5. Good for civic services, as one of the largest churches in the town (from the Town Council)
6. Reasonable seating capacity (300-350)
7. Prayer cross/cards in prominent position for anyone unfamiliar with church
8. The bereaved value lighting a candle even if not regulars

9. Tower has sound control so ringing practice not constrained
10. Unusual and relatively beautiful place to host concerts
11. Acoustics are good for many types of music
12. Large space to use as a stage
13. Various entrances and exits to the stage - you can be artistic with a performance
14. Communion rails move as do most things on the platform - you don't have to work around permanent bits of furniture
15. Use of Cornerstone as a 'backstage' area
16. Good central location with some parking nearby (even if charged)
17. The church is local to the schools that we work in and walking distance for students

Q2 What does your group particularly dislike now?

Traditional music for worship or performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pews are not particularly comfortable and the church's platform is carpet, which is a disadvantage to the acoustic. The acoustics are not at all good for choral church music; the church is not reverberant enough. The carpet is particularly problematic. • Lighting is a problem for music on worship AND concerts • Storage and robing space has been a problem when the vestry is being shared with the Flower Guild and with the concerts programme. • It is probably essential to have portable choir stalls in a church like All Saints but the current stalls have a tendency to fall over. It is also uncomfortable for anyone taller than a child to sit in the front pews.
Band music for worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¶ The church is not at all geared up for an amplified music group. In order to perform, such a group currently has to install all its equipment (drum kit, PA, monitor PA, combos, mixer, keyboards etc), including all cabling, from scratch every time it wants to play or rehearse.
From the Flower Guild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of comfortable space in vestry in which to prepare, condition and soak oasis, small surface area, little or no standing area for buckets, and unsafe storage area for heavy wrought iron heavy stands (i.e. up steps and storage on cupboard tops. • This is particularly difficult when preparing for festivals when about 15/20 arrangers take part on the day and more recently when a group of six prepare the afternoon prior to arranging day.
From the cleaners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The variegated floors are a real challenge for the cleaning team. • Currently, the pews are hard to keep clean but chairs would probably simply be replacing one challenge with another. The pew hassocks are really only fit for throwing away but we feel any replacement would be good, so many of our older congregation members prefer to kneel.
From the Wed Mums, bereavement group, prayer, home communion and pastoral care teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to easily use the church space for refreshments. • We are disappointed by the lack of space and facilities for providing refreshments. • Some people currently visit the graveyard but they may not always feel they are also welcome inside the church. • Prayer after the 9:30am is very difficult because of 11 am services. We need a more private space. • There is nowhere to have a discreet/private conversation, especially after services. • There is not enough interaction between all the different congregations/services – pastoral care covers everyone not just one service. • ¶ Difficulties with the church building and accessing it often account for older or frailer parishioners having to stop attending church services, or gatherings in church, whereas if facilities were better they would not need to stop attending. Problems with the current church format acting as a deterrent to attendance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cobbles on the path leading to the West Door • The current ramp arrangement • The lack of an internally accessible toilet including disabled • toilet • The lack of space to move freely, to gather around and to share hospitality within the church building • The audio system does not cover all areas of the church, e.g. • the Lady Chapel • Lack of flexible and separate spaces within the church building so different service or events can run concurrently- mid-morning is good for families AND the elderly - • Lack of parking space very close to the church
Welcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ramp in the porch • The flooring in the porch is uneven. It would be useful to have space for push-chairs and mobility aids.
Servers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to unbolt and re-bolt the heavy connecting door between the Clergy Vestry , where communion sets etc are stored, and the sanctuary, which is the route to access the Lady Chapel where the consecrated communion wafers and wine are stored. • It feels awkward for us to access the Lady Chapel to collect the consecrated elements if a service is occurring in the body of the church or especially in the Lady Chapel itself.
Vestry guild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be obstructed by stuff being stored. The frontal chest lid is very heavy, and if anything falls down, it can be difficult to retrieve.
Director Music, visiting choirs and others in relation to concerts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The platform probably can't support a good piano (not that we have one at the moment) meaning that the range of music we can offer is quite limited. • The pews are uncomfortable for concert audiences and the heating can be temperamental. The latter is quite important for ticketed events at which the audiences are right to expect some level of comfort, and also of course for the performers. • Limited space at front for a good size orchestra which we need for larger concert repertoire. • Toilet and bar facilities could be better • Lighting is a problem. Although portable lights have been used to some good effect, so much more could be done with modern LED fittings, both aesthetically and for giving performers appropriate practical levels of light (particularly good down-lighting for score reading choirs). • Flexible seating for the audience would enable a wider range of performers but, perhaps more importantly, give control over perceived capacity. • Items of any value can't really be left in the church in any case because of security concerns. That raises issues of storage and groups of this type are quite equipment-heavy, even with recent developments in PA's and n-ear monitoring (which are not to every musician's taste).
From the bell ringers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no fresh air in the ringing room. • The needed air conditioning hasn't yet been installed. • There is no convenient ante room near the ringing room (for teaching or relaxing without distracting those who are ringing).
Concerts – jazz and pop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's difficult to get all the performers raised to a height at which they can be seen well be the audience. • There is something very odd going on in the electrical system, that creates peculiar hums & buzzes. I'd imagine there are all kinds of earthing issues

Q3 What are the top requirements for your group in a refurbished church ?

Traditional music for worship or performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing the carpet on the platform to improve the acoustic and make a more professional looking performance space. Better lighting would be great. • Acoustics • Good lighting • The ability to perform from a location that enables good communication with the organist, and in a position from which the organ can be clearly heard in a supportive way.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to sing in a traditional liturgical format, i.e. Cantoris & Decani, from the chancel. • Having a church that is beautiful and that acknowledges, through its architecture and furnishings, respect for the liturgical traditions that gave rise to good choral music.
Band music for worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate audio for speech reinforcement and instrument/band, plus a band often needs monitor speakers.
From the Flower Guild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper cupboards and a more generous work-surface. This would also benefit the cleaning team. • A much larger sink – Belfast size or double current one. • A tall cupboard would be useful with flexible shelving for storage. □ Floor level storage for all large items
From the cleaners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new floor of one uniform surface would be good for the cleaning team. • Book racks on the back of chairs would be useful to worshippers but nearly as much fun for cleaners as the boxes with cards and envelopes we have at present.
From the Wed Mums, bereavement group, prayer, home communion and pastoral care teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That if it were possible and practical a space for the homeless / and a refuge for safety in a crisis. • Need for a partly enclosed space to use for things like Wed Mums – this must be no smaller than the present platform. • Open space with few places to hide! • However quiet space for prayer and reflection • Space for training sessions - nearby electricity points for PowerPoint etc • Toilets plus a disabled one. Easier access for disabled people • it is essential the church retains the sense of being a sacred space for quiet contemplation and prayer. • Would welcome a "kitchenette" or at least facilities to enable us to produce hot drinks and simple snacks, e.g. following the Memorial Service - ease the practicalities and make social interactions possible. • Need a quiet, separate space (but not a closed room), possibly in the Lady Chapel, where we can sit with people in distress or in need of private conversation and / or prayer. • Lady Chapel, or a similar quiet space, made welcoming by not being blocked by closed doors – particularly wooden – as people who are unfamiliar to the church may feel reluctant to open a closed door. • The Book of Remembrance desk should be in or near a separate, private area (possibly the Lady Chapel) and must be next to an electric socket.
Welcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved entrance so that there is a welcoming atmosphere and sufficient space to talk to people as they arrive (no-one wants to linger in the porch on a cold winter morning!) • The church should be seen to be accessible both in the physical sense and also not intimidating.

Vestry guild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the material needed by the Vestry guild is located in the clergy vestry, and this should not change. • The location of the frontal chest needs thought. It does not have to be in the church, but at over 10 feet long, there are a limited number of places it can be positioned. If the church decides to remove the high altar, then the frontal chest will not be needed. If the church decides on a different set of arrangements for dressing the high altar, then different storage may be necessary.
Director Music, visiting choirs and others in relation to concerts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good piano & the ability to position it for performances • Comfort for the audience –reliable silent heating • Retaining a substantial and flexible performing space • Please do not reduce the size of the platform – this makes the church quite unique for us and is what brings us back time and time again. • Having a beautiful building and interior • Better bar/toilet facilities • Good acoustics • The need to more easily provide chairs for the choir (up to 90/100 singers) plus instrumentalists (maybe 30/40 players). • A room in which performers can congregate. • Improved lighting. • A better quality piano in the church and improved organ. • Chairs in place of pews would be more comfortable and provide greater flexibility and more effective use of space. Improved disability ramp. • Facilities for refreshments (e.g. tea, coffee) • If it remains necessary to carry refreshments, chairs or anything from Cornerstone, a covered way with level footing would be a great improvement. • Space • Easy access for all
Soulscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large welcoming adaptable space to be able to hold workshops /prayer spaces and discussions presentations for local students and parents with atmospheric lighting and good sound so that it could be used for our reflection prayer activities but also for drama/arts exhibitions music events • It needs to feel welcoming and warm without being the same as community buildings sacred and welcoming mix would be ideal • Looking ahead it would be great to have a space where pupils and parents could find an alternative place from school being off the sight but within walking distance where they could have lessons and activities in a different environment to main stream school many pupils and parents struggle with the normal school environment and a police and alternative space would be wonderful • Education an solace from the world ,as has been so often been provided by the church when society is failing to meet these needs in the way that the most vulnerable or poor can access.
From the bell ringers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usable spaces near the tower for teaching, courses, etc. • Video feed so people can see the bells / ringers when entering church for a service
Concerts – jazz and pop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly installed cabling (principally XLR breakout boxes and 240v points) a PA and appropriately located mixing desk. Either semi-permanently installed drum kit, keyboard, monitoring etc (with security issues addressed) or easily accessible secure storage for the same. • A relatively dry acoustic is best but clever positioning of PA speakers and the use of sonic baffles & panels (especially around the drums) can help a lot. A specialist would need to be consulted of course.

Q4 How many people should the church accommodate for you?

- As many as possible – we are the only place of worship which can accommodate large numbers (450+)
- Current capacity is more than enough for us. Remembrance is biggest event.
- Reasonable seating capacity (300/350)
- When we do workshops we often have between 30-200 pupils
- Our presentations can be to whole year groups 200 pupils and classes are usually 30 but on drop down days we have more than one class operating at once
- Around 200 is great.
- Up to 20/25 per training session
- We have 1 service per year which needs to accommodate 60 – 70 people.
- Individuals attend the church for quiet contemplation on an unknown but regular basis.
- The bigger the capacity the better. However, flexible seating so that it is possible to host small-scale, intimate events without embarrassment would be useful. A concert with 30 in the audience can be a cultural and financial success but in a cavernous space without due consideration to seating layout it can feel half-hearted.
- The church has shown itself acoustically and demographically capable of supporting rock concerts; however, for any concerts in which audiences tend to stand and/or dance there would have to be a serious re-evaluation of the seating in the Nave. One could imagine a standing capacity of 500+ though this may not be a route with which the church is comfortable.

Q5 If you need storage in the church, how much?

- Altar frontals– see above
- Flower Guild and related:
The structure of the Easter Garden, the Easter figures; the Christmas figures Harvest Jugs, flower buckets all reached from floor level. We (FG) have an area in the loft of the Cornerstone for seasonal items, for Advent, Christmas, Easter & Harvest.
Storage area for porch screen and two arrangers' tables which are used occasionally for workshops , weddings and festivals
- Cleaners: storage space for our supplies-dusters, polish and of course Henry Hoover and his entourage of brooms, brushes and dustpans.
- Storage of some basic supplies e.g. the making of tea and coffee.
- It would be useful to have a small cupboard/drawer to store things like pastoral care type leaflets from other organisations, badges Memorial Service booklets and name badges.
- Traditional music as now - other styles of music need storage for drum kit, amplifiers, dedicated PA, instruments etc.
- Platform storage is the biggest issue . Proper staging (as opposed to the small number of blocks we now have) could be useful and might help attract more choirs etc, but it's not small. Chairs for choirs
- If the church wanted to stage more rock concerts, the issue of PA & lighting would be an interesting one!
- There is a continued need for storage of communion service equipment (e.g. portable communion sets, service and hymn sheets, portable music equipment) close to the same place that the consecrated elements are kept in church.
- Bell ringers: No particular requirement. If video was fed to the porch (see above) the display would preferably need secure storage, preferably nearby
- We would value any space but a room like a small shed would be amazing for all our prayer space resources -then these could be used by others
- It depends how much essential gear is permanently installed in situ, but all together (assuming a permanently installed mixer & cabling) enough space for: F-o-H PA, approx. 3 sq. m, drumkit, 2 wedge monitors, approx. 1 sq. m, guitars & keyboard(s), 4 mic stands

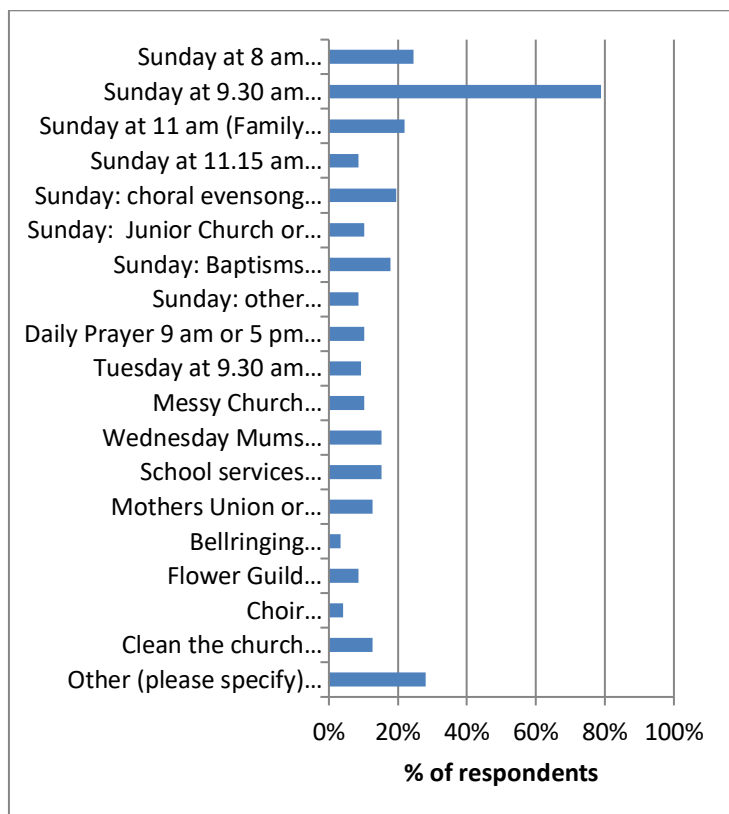
Appendix 4.2 Consultation with the congregation on the options

This is the information that guided us to our final preferred option.

- removing pews
- west end gallery in preference to north side
- the larger extension (Option D)
- open space for welcome
- west end for the main entrance
- a lowered path to provide a west end entrance, and very few favour a platform lift
- toilets in an extension rather than inside the existing building
- a moveable dais.

Who responded

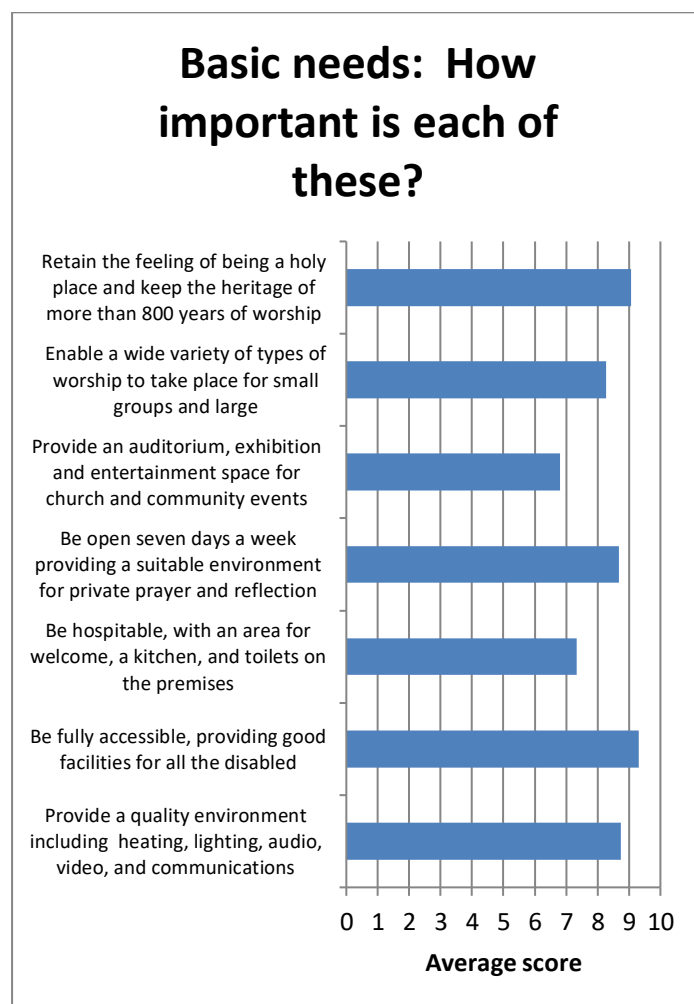
We have 154 responses of which 122 people answered every question. All congregations were represented. People could select more than one service/ activity.



The need for the work

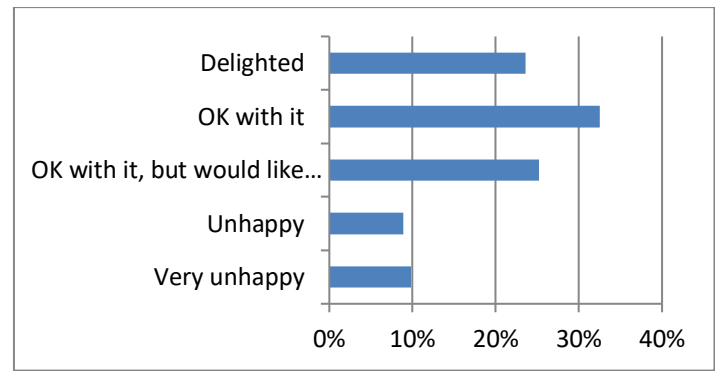
When asked how important each of the needs in the brief was, most people saw them all as important, but two were a bit less important: the provision of an auditorium, exhibition and entertainment space for church and

community events and being hospitable, with an area for welcome, a kitchen, and toilets on the premises.



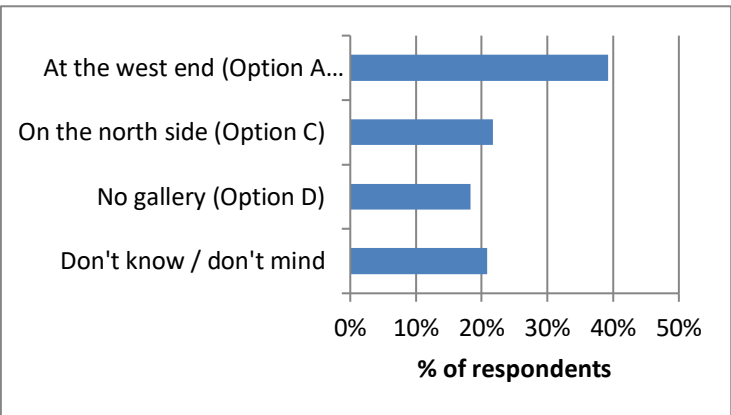
Pews

Removing the pews is a feature of all the options and critical to meeting the needs of our Mission Plan. Since the PCC and project team need to drive this through we have looked at the support for removing pews separately for the members of the PCC and the team and the rest of the congregation. Overall fewer than 20% of people are unhappy or very unhappy.



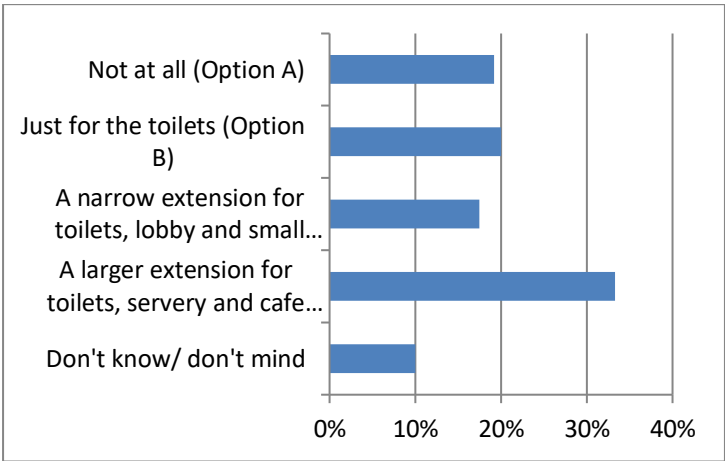
Galleries

We asked if people preferred galleries at the north side or west end. There is clearly a preference for the west end.



Extension

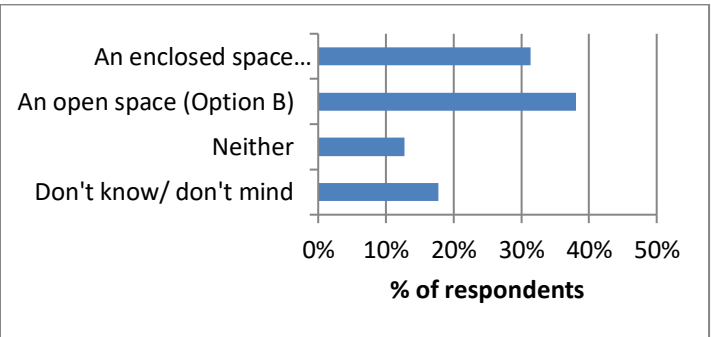
There is clearly a preference for the larger extension.



Subsequently it was noted that there are a large number of very recent burials of cremated remains under the east end of the planned extension in Option D, and thus Option was rejected.

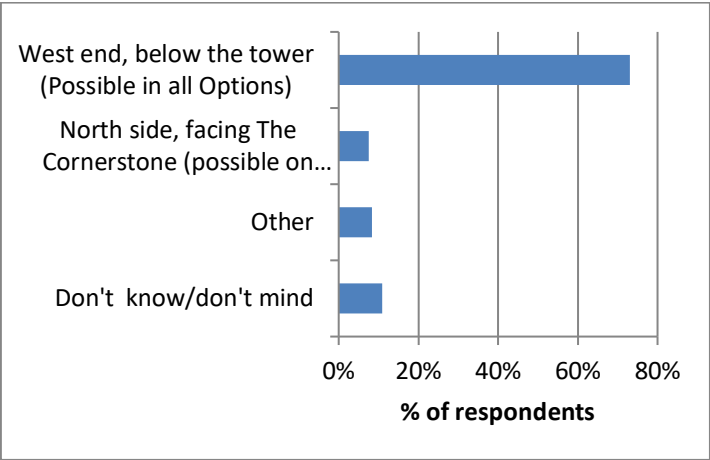
Consequently the PCC decided to ask the architect to develop a preferred option for an extension that extends further to the north than in any of the current options and which could be at the east or west end such that it avoids the very recent cremated remains.

Welcome space



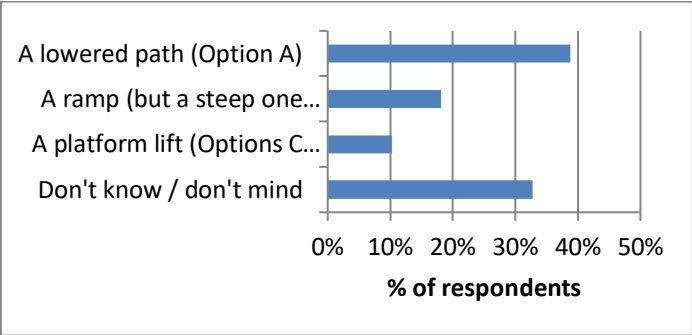
The PCC reviewed the results and comments and noted that there is much more flexibility if we keep the space open

Main entrance location and dealing with physical access



An overwhelming preference is that the main entrance should be the existing west door.

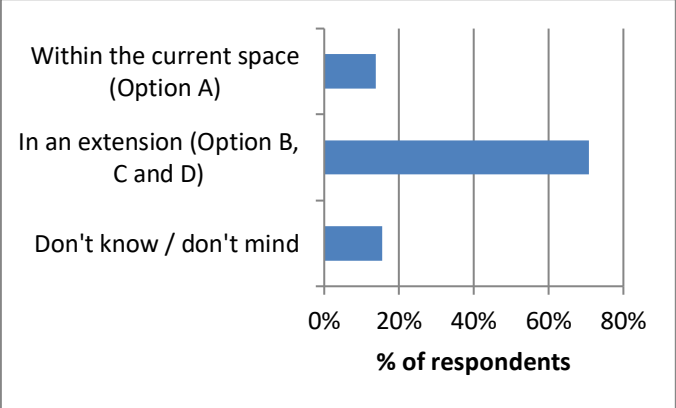
West porch treatment



PCC decided to ask the architect to follow this up with detailed designs, including some ideas about the landscaping of the area outside and the treatment of the cobbled path.

Toilets

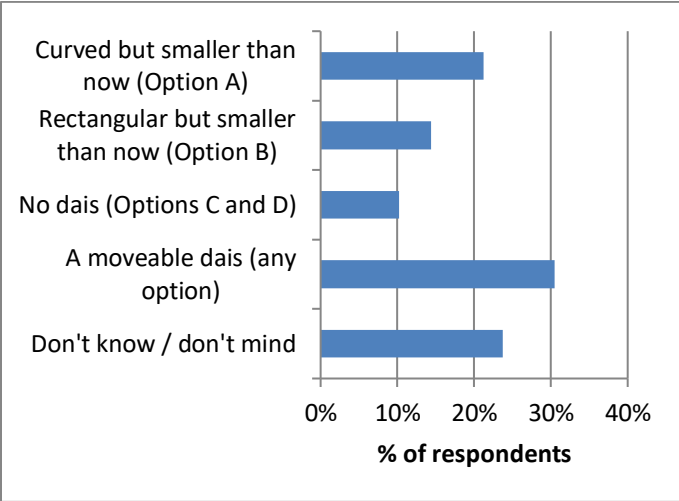
There was a very clear preference for not trying to squeeze toilets into the existing floorspace.



The PCC noted that several people had expressed worries about having toilets at the east end because of the embarrassment of going to the front of the church, but also acknowledged the fact that people seldom left on the middle of the service to use the toilet; it was more often at the start or finish.

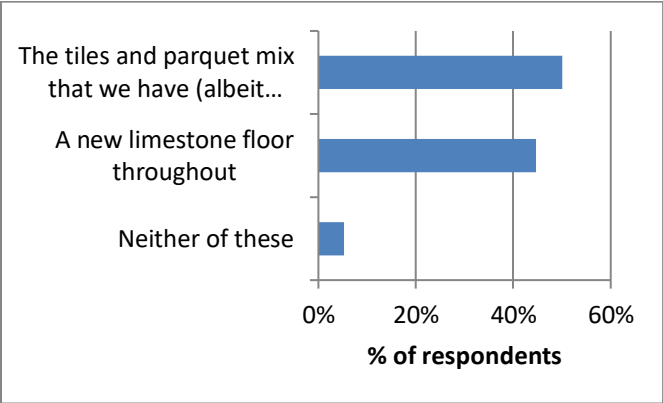
They were advised that Historic England had said “it was an easy option” to put toilets in the vestry. Given the overwhelming preference for an extension they felt the options for toilet location will be fixed by that.

Dais



Flooring

Respondents were asked which floor finish they preferred



PCC were advised that we could use any type of stone or indeed timber for a new floor, and that Historic England did not feel there would be any requirement from them that we should keep the floor. PCC expressed surprise at how many people preferred the tiles, and wonder if people are fully aware of the poor state that the tiles are in.