

ST. CHAD'S CHURCH, PATTINGHAM WITH PATSHULL

North Aisle Re-Ordering – Statement of Needs

1. The Proposal

The present North Aisle of the Church is a much under-utilised area of the Church which also houses an oak timber screened choir vestry. This has become not only an area in which to dump unwanted paraphernalia, but it masks the two most important stained glass windows in the Church. Whilst being sympathetic to our heritage, we want to bring this whole area into regular use such that it can enhance the present activities of the Church and open up the windows in order that they become readily visible and are rightly restored to prominence within the Church.

Our proposal for the North Aisle is therefore to:

- a) Remove the 10 fixed pews from the area.
- b) Dismantle the choir vestry which was installed in 1954 whilst making use of the wood in the structure.
- c) Create an open area for a range of activities to which we will refer later.
- d) Create an open kitchen area at the west end of the area.
- e) Modify the existing small kitchen to become a Vicar's vestry.
- f) Enlarge the present Vicar's vestry to become a choir vestry.

2. General and Background Information

St. Chad's Church, Pattingham serves a parish of approximately 2,500. It lies in a prominent position at the centre of the village and is approached from the main road via a tarmac path, through a well maintained churchyard. The building is open and available for quiet contemplation and prayer during daylight hours and many people walk through the church grounds every day.

The parish is currently in a lengthy period of interregnum but the Church is maintaining its position as a prominent influence in community life. Weekly services are currently restricted to Sunday morning with a regular congregation of 60/70 and twice monthly on Sunday evening with a regular congregation of 25/35. Additionally, it is a popular venue for baptisms and weddings and there is a weekday Communion Service each Wednesday morning.

The Church maintains strong links with the Church First School in the village with, for example, all children visiting the Church at least once each term for a service and members of the congregation visiting the school bi-monthly for an "*Open the Book*".

The Church is currently embarked upon an initiative to drive even closer relations and involvement with the community after completing a survey of local needs during 2021 which coincided with the start of the interregnum. This has pointed to needs at either end of the age spectrum for which the Church has first embarked upon the appointment of a Youth and Family Worker. We see this leading to an increase in activity dedicated to the younger generation and whilst some of this could potentially be accommodated in the local School or Village Hall, an important element of such activity includes one to one, confidential and non-judgemental discussions between suitably qualified staff and young people, to discuss issues and problems which they may feel unable to share with family and friends. Our plans for the North Aisle will provide an ideal place for such counselling.

The present kitchen situated at the front of the North Aisle is totally inadequate for the present needs of the Church. It is too small, lacks proper kitchen facilities and has a hatch which opens the wrong way towards the centre of the Church. This creates congestion and is a health and safety risk when hot drinks are being served after every Sunday morning service.

St. Chad's has no church hall and very limited storage space. This is very limiting in terms of the activities which can be undertaken and the proposed open area within the North Aisle constitutes an ideal remedy.

3. What is needed?

a) A multi-use open space for a variety of activities to include:

- Social space for serving of refreshments after a service.
- Use by the Youth and Family Worker or similar as referred to above.
- Study groups such as Lent Group, Bible Study Groups or Discussion Groups.
- Get togethers after baptisms/funerals.
- The serving of post-concert refreshments.
- Space for showing appropriate films.
- Area for informal worship to include messy church, pram services, youth services, café style informal worship.
- Place of welcome – warm space for use after weekly Wednesday Communion service.
- Mother and Toddler Group/
- Coffee mornings/afternoon teas.
- Use by our established Shower Singers singing group/choir.
- Community activities such as art classes, flower arranging etc.
- Dementia related activities for which we find this type of space vital.
- Community space for a myriad of activities, including confidential counselling and/or hired space.

We confidently expect this list to grow in the light of experience and particularly once our Youth and Family Worker has been appointed. It will be used 7 days a week for various activities.

- b) Because of the need to serve refreshments at most of these activities, the area needs to be furnished with suitable tables and chairs and the plans include an area for safe storage of the tables. The chairs need to be of good quality, comfortable and stackable, particularly as they will also be set out in that area for services when numbers dictate.
- c) A kitchen area big enough to facilitate the preparation of appropriate drinks and snacks. In this area the panels in the present choir vestry will be re-used in its construction.

4. How is this to be achieved?

The proposal is to:

- a) Remove the 10 fixed pews which currently seat approximately 50 and offer them for sale.
- b) Remove the choir vestry using the oak timber in the construction of the serving area which divides the proposed kitchen area from the remainder of the North Aisle.
- c) Purchase 8 round tables each with a seating capacity of 6 minimum.
- d) Purchase at least 50 good quality, stackable chairs for use at these tables. Additionally, they will be used for additional seating, set out in rows, on those occasions when they are required, such as special services and funerals etc. The tables would be stored away in a purpose built area adjacent to the kitchen.
- e) Establish a kitchen area to the west of the North Aisle which will accommodate a sink with hot and cold water, a dishwasher, a cooker, a servery and cupboards for crockery etc. The services for this facility will be routed under the floor of the North Aisle area using existing channels which will become defunct.
- f) This will then enable the two significant Kempe and Tower Kempe stained glass windows, which are currently hidden from general view, to be accessible and visible for all to see.
- g) By eliminating the need for the present small kitchen, it is proposed that this area be converted into a Vicar's vestry which will be far more conducive to personal service preparation than present. Whilst relatively compact, it will easily accommodate a desk, chair and cupboard and create ideal personal space.
- h) It is proposed to enlarge the present Vicar's vestry by reducing the existing lobby area and changing access to the toilet, all of which will create an area sufficient for choir needs.
- i) It is proposed that the AV system will be extended to the opened-up North Aisle area to maximise the use of this space.
- j) It is proposed to remove the predominantly raised wooden floor area where the pews currently sit, save the old tiles for future use/repairs and then lay a new wooden floor to create a warm, useful and comfortable ambience. It is further proposed that the ducted heating pipes in this area be removed to the wall side.

5. Justification for Proposal

In 2000/2001 the nature of the north side of the Church was fundamentally changed with the building of the Loft. It included the creation of the Loft, the kitchen and two toilets and what is now proposed can be regarded as a natural extension of that development.

Whilst the present plans extend considerably the facilities available to all users and visitors to our Church, it is also the impact on the building which is considered beneficial. The present choir vestry arguably detracts from the architectural merit of the building and certainly fails to recognise both the significance and beauty of the stained glass windows which it encompasses. The proposals also re-energise a somewhat dismal and under-utilised area of the Church and are an opportunity to improve both the appearance and flexibility of the seating.

The Loft area will continue to be fully utilised as an administration and resource area as well as a facility for confidential meetings. The new Vicar's vestry will create a much needed quiet space for the Incumbent particularly and the new choir vestry becomes part of the permanent fabric, rather than having the appearance of a temporary structure.

In developing these plans we have been acutely aware of the Church's Grade II listing status but consider that the overall proposals will considerably enhance the impression when entering the building. When the North Aisle was added in 1860 it had the effect of making the nave wider than it is long. This severely affects the lines of sight from these pews to the chancel and the altar and is the reason why it rarely attracts the congregation to that area. It has been modified twice, once in 1954 when the choir vestry was added and again in 2000/2001 when the east wall of this aisle was moved back to create the kitchen and the toilet. This has resulted in a large blank wall at the east end of the aisle which undoubtedly detracts from the general ambience of the Church. This proposed project will help to improve both the appearance and the usefulness of the North Aisle.

Parochial Church Council
St Chad's Church, Pattingham with Patshull
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