

BROADWELL CHURCH PROGRAMME

What is needed? Our vision for developing the church

The church faces two significant challenges. First, it is a large and beautiful building located in a parish whose size has shrunk dramatically over the centuries. If we are to preserve the church as a viable place of worship and as a significant asset for the village, we need to broaden the range of uses to which it can be put, to preserve a space for worship and to extend its use for serving the whole parish. This might include, for example, hosting concerts and lectures, as well as providing a more suitable building for weddings, funerals and baptisms. For this to happen, we need to improve its amenities. In particular, the building urgently needs better heating, adequate kitchen facilities and toilet facilities. If these are the preconditions for extending its use, we also need to develop the existing enthusiasm and will in the village to make greater and more creative use of the church.

The second challenge is simpler, but also pressing. The botched rehangng of the bells at the end of the 19th Century means that remedial work is now needed. The 2014 quinquennial review concluded that, "The iron frame is extensively corroded with cracking and some bulging/looseness of masonry where iron beams are set into walls. The condition of the embedded beam ends should be investigated and the ironwork and masonry treated/repared as required." Simply lowering the bells, removing the frame and repairing the tower is an option, but not one that respects the history of the building or preserves its heritage. The need for remedial work presents an opportunity for restoring and rehangng the bells that will both meet the obligations of conservation facing the PCC and re-establish an amenity that has been lost to the village for a century – a fully functioning peal of bells. There is sufficient interest within the village to assemble and train a team of bell-ringers, and to attract ringers from neighbouring villages – several have expressed an interest in recent months.

The proposal

1. Heating

In an ideal world we would hope to heat the church using renewable energy, such as a geothermal heat pump. However the expense would be disproportionate to what we can hope to achieve in terms of extending usage in the short term. For the present, therefore, we have been advised that the existing system of convection and radiant heaters should be upgraded, the latter being 'retired'. We are in the process of commissioning a heating advisor to provide heat loss calculations, to enable us to prepare a specification for upgrading the heating, and then to secure three comparable quotes for the work. We are hoping that this will cost in the region of £10,000, and that that finance for this can be located.

2. Kitchen and toilet facilities

There are two possible sites for these facilities, which are best located near each other, for ease of plumbing.. Many churches have opted to use the area at the base of their bell-towers and there is space for this in our church. Alternatively the kitchen facilities could be located in the north transept, and a toilet installed in the redundant early C20th boiler-room, built against the east wall of the north transept. A door would be created through the rubble wall of the north transept to provide access to the toilet. We believe that the north transept/boiler-room option is preferable for four reasons:

1. The bell tower area is much more usable than the north transept for extra seating during well attended services, such as weddings and funerals, and offers much better sight-lines down the nave. (The organ almost entirely blocks views of services from the north transept.)
2. Connecting to the mains sewage from the bell tower would be much more disruptive than from the north transept, and would involve disturbing the many graves surrounding the tower.
3. Depending on decisions about a bell-ringing chamber, the bells may be rung from the base of the bell tower area.
4. It is a very cost-effective solution to repurpose a currently unused asset, the boiler-room.

The advice of the church architect is that high-quality oak kitchen units with sink, draining board and oven could be installed on the north wall of the north transept behind the organ in the north transept. He has suggested that connecting up the loo to the mains sewage from this point would be straightforward. The old boiler room could comfortably accommodate a loo and baby-changing facilities, with access from inside the church through a door in the north transept.

We recognise that this option involves some changes to the historic fabric of the church, as we propose to construct of a doorway into the boiler room through the rubble wall on the east side of the north transept. However, as we discuss in the Statement of Significance, there is evidence that the area of wall in question was altered when the original heating was installed, and altered again when the heating system was removed, probably in the 1960s. Thus constructing the doorway will not involve the disturbance of *previously untouched* mediaeval features. We shall be undoing much more recent infill work to this wall. Connecting the toilet to the mains sewage system from the boiler-room appears straightforward, avoiding the disturbance of existing graves. The cost of these works would be in the range of £25,000 - £30,000, depending on the specification.

(c) Bell Restoration

The 2014 quinquennial review concluded that repairs to the bell-frame to contain corrosion and damage to the stonework should be done within twelve months. It also recommended that within five years we should secure specialist inspection of the bells installation, with advice on repairs required to bring the bells back into full use.

Our proposals are based on the combined advice that we have received from Adrian Dempster (surveyor), the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Ringers and from three bell-hanging companies who have quoted for the work.

We have provisionally appointed Nicholson Engineering as preferred bidder amongst the three bell-hanging contractors who submitted tenders. At £77,000 + VAT they are offering:

- To cast a sixth bell, tuned as a treble to create a set of six;
- To cast a replacement to the existing ancient 2nd bell, cast in 1350. The new 2nd bell could be finely tuned to match the other four and the new treble.
- To rehang the old 2nd, so that it could still be rung, in an adapted part of the existing bell frame.
- To include passive provision in the new frame for a further two bells, to be added to the peal when funding permits.

There is a need for some additional local building work, preparing the site, repairing the damage done by the existing bell frame, and part-dismantling this, and installing sound-

control. Some remedial work to the steps up the bell tower is also needed. We have estimated the costs of this local work at £13,000.

We are also considering creating a new ringing chamber on the first floor of the bell-tower. This would cost around £15,000. A decision on whether to go ahead will turn on: securing agreement from the DAC; funding; considerations of access for bell-ringers; and ensuring that the bell-ringers have effective contact with the body of the church building.

Why?

We regard this programme as essential to the church's survival both as a physical structure and as a social asset. Obviously the basic structure will survive for many years – once the repairs to the bell tower have been made – regardless of the uses to which the church is put. But our programme is designed to extend both the uses to which it is put, to preserve a space for worship and to extend its use for serving the whole parish. The church will then provide a stronger focal point for the life of the village and the wider neighbourhood, and will also generate a larger flow of income that will ensure our ability to maintain the condition of the fabric of the building.

We already have funding for much of the work in place, and are confident that we can raise the balance from private donations or additional grants from charitable trusts. The PCC and others in the village have the capacity to drive the programme to a successful completion.

There is some urgency in pressing ahead with repairs to the tower, as identified by the 2014 quinquennial review, but in any case we think it important to press ahead with all elements of the programme now, capitalising on the enthusiasm and the will that we have built to get the work done. [We are in the process of consulting the village and other stakeholders, and the results of this consultation will be fed into this statement of needs at a later date.]

Justification

The proposals will improve the amenities that the church can offer, and thus extend its uses, without reducing and damaging the quality of this Grade 1 building. On the contrary, the proposals will help provide some sort of guarantee that we can preserve those elements of the building that we have highlighted in our Statement of Significance.

Financing the programme

We plan to finance the works for which the faculty is sought as follows:

1. Heating

[We are securing the services of a heating consultant recommended by the DAC, to assess levels of heat loss, and to recommend how the heating should be upgraded.] We hope to raise in the region of £10,000 in the first instance from charitable trusts to upgrade the present electric heating facilities. We shall approach one or more of the

following grant-giving bodies: the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust; the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2. Kitchen and toilet facilities

The Trustees of the F R Goodenough Trust have made of commitment in principle of up to £30,000, which should cover the building costs in full.

3. The bell restoration project

We need in the region of £90,000 for the first phase of this work. The trustees of the F R Goodenough Trust have committed £60,000 to the project (or more, if the building costs for the kitchen and toilet facilities cost less than £30,000). An application is under consideration from the Oxfordshire Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers which may raise in the region of £15,000 We have been offered a small grant of £1,700 from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. We hope to raise the balance from private donations, RAF Brize Norton and applications to the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, the Barron Bell Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation or the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We shall seek to recover all VAT under the Listed Places of Worship (LPOW) scheme.

[THIS NOTE IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL'S DRAFT 'STATEMENT OF NEED' THAT WILL FORM PART OF THE APPLICATION TO THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT WORKS.]