

Kingston Deverill Church Reordering Programme

Statement of Needs

Section 1. General information

The civil parish of the Upper Deverills comprises the villages of Kingston Deverill, Monkton Deverill and Brixton Deverill. It lies some six miles south of Warminster. Brixton has a church – St Michael the Archangel – but Monkton's (dedicated St Alfred the Great) was confirmed redundant in 1971. Kingston Deverill and Monkton Deverill together consist of 127 houses with some 250 inhabitants. In 1972 St Mary the Virgin church was joined with the churches of Brixton Deverill and Longbridge Deverill and later Horningsham to form the ecclesiastical parish of The Deverills and Horningsham, itself now part of the benefice of Cley Hill Villages.

The Cley Hill benefice is led by the Rector who lives in Longbridge Deverill. She is assisted by an Associate Priest and two Licenced Lay Ministers, together with occasional retired clergy.

The Parish is overseen by the Parochial Church Council (PCC), chaired currently by the Churchwarden of St Mary's.

St Mary's church offers services on alternate first Sundays – 8am Holy Communion – and the alternate second Sundays – 10.30am Holy Communion. There are regular baptisms and weddings in the church – it being a special place in many families' lives – and funerals.

St Mary's hosts the annual Remembrance service as the valley's only outdoor war memorial is situated in the churchyard. A village-managed carol service is held in the church every Christmas. These are extremely well supported, as are the Christmas and Easter services, by the community as a whole.

A number of musical concerts are performed in the church – by amateur and professional musicians both local and from farther afield. A variety of musical genres is offered. In recent years a performing arts series has been staged in the valley, using St Mary's as a prime venue as it has the best acoustics of all the local churches. The bi-annual Wylde Valley Art Trail has also used the church as a significant venue.

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Section 2. What do you need?

What is needed is a church that is up to the standards of the 21st century in terms of comfort, warmth, lighting, functionality and facilities.

Comfort. There is no WC in the church – and no public convenience in the villages which it serves. This lack is brought into sharp focus at baptisms, weddings, funerals and other non-routine services attended by many guests and visitors. The sides-people and churchwarden are often told of the congregation's disappointment and frustration. The same is true regarding non-sacred events such as concerts. Indeed, when told during a ticket enquiry that there is no WC, potential audience members often decline to book. However, the most significant and troubling effect of not having a WC is that several members of the congregation do not attend services at all – for fear of being embarrassed or having to leave early.

Warmth. The church is cold. Whereas there is a rudimentary heating system consisting of overhead radiant heaters, it is far from adequate. Unless there is a full congregation/audience that provides ambient body heat, in the winter months it is distractingly uncomfortable and detrimental to sacred activities and the enjoyment of performances. A modern heating system is needed, controllable in terms of temperature and focus. It should also be economic and sustainable so, as well as installing modern equipment such as wall heaters, the roof needs to be insulated. Enhanced draught-proofing will also help to improve comfort conditions.

Lighting. The church is currently lit by high wattage spot lamps situated on the walls just below the wall plate. They are not controllable in terms of output and they are inappropriately positioned for the services and social activities of the future. In particular, the lamps do not offer clarity for reading nor appropriate lux levels for sacred and secular occasions. A modern, programmable system of low-wattage variable lighting is needed.

Functionality. The church is one of only two public social buildings in the villages, the other being the low-ceilinged, small and aging village hall. We wish to develop the church to provide comfortable, warm, well-lit space for a variety of sacred activities such as services, of course, other ecclesiastical events such as prayer meetings, retreat days and children's Christian activities. We also propose to host more secular activities such as performing arts – both music and drama, celebratory meals, talks/presentations and visiting exhibitions, e.g. Wyllye Art Trail. We will manage these in conjunction with the village hall. We see that the synergy of such a partnership is key to offering optimal facilities to the community – to both regular and non-church goers alike.

Facilities. We need to meet the expectations of contemporary congregations and audiences in being able to offer refreshments. However, there are no preparation facilities at present. Equally, there are no adequate storage facilities for crockery, etc, cleaning equipment or activity-specific items.

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Section 3. The proposals.

It is proposed to:

- Install a fully compliant WC.
- Install a preparation area/servy for the provision of refreshments.
- Replace the current heating system with an economic mix of low-wattage radiant and convector heaters.
- Install draft-proofing in order to enhance insulation.
- Replace the current lighting system with low-wattage units that provide appropriate lux for congregations/audiences and also illuminate the ceiling.
- Replace the current audio system to address the requirements of hard-of-hearing congregations/ audiences and the demands of more sophisticated vocal and musical sources.
- Remove eight pews to allow for more social gathering space and to facilitate the installation of the WC and preparation area/servy.
- Repair the font.

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Section 4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

In the 1840s the church authorities, funded generously by a local peer and landowner, decided that they too would bring the church up to the standards of the day. They made drastic changes structurally and installed pews and facilities that would have been seen to be radical. This is the situation we find ourselves in today – a need to meet the requirements of the current community and be fit for future generations while honouring the heritage of this historic building.

Comfort. We are aiming to improve our ability to be fully inclusive, so that everybody, whatever their needs might benefit from services, worship and other events held in the Church. This specifically refers to non-ambulant individuals. There is no other way of satisfying the need for toilet facilities than actually building a WC. There is no necessity to build one as an extension or as separate building in the churchyard. There is space in the current under-utilised vestry.

Warmth. The current church heating system is old, inefficient and not fit for current purposes. We wish to install a system that will meet modern expectations so that the congregation/audience can be warm and comfortable.

Lighting. Similarly, the lighting system is basic, inflexible and inadequate for current uses and future activities. Just adding extra lamps or different bulbs will not address the need. Also, to showcase the magnificent ceiling and beams, enhanced by the proposed insulation infills, a new lighting scheme is needed.

Functionality. The congregation is dwindling, and the demographic of the community is also changing. We wish to address both these dynamics by reordering the church for the benefit of the current congregation/audience and to present a welcoming environment for future populations – just as the Victorians did in their time. We wish to see the building restored in order to be used for its original purpose – sacred and secular community social activity. The proposals are measured and sufficient to develop a congregation and to satisfy many of the social needs of the community.

Facilities. Currently hot water, tea, coffee, etc, are brought in for services and events, the space to serve them is inadequate and restricted. A wider range of refreshments would be offered with better facilities, tidying up after events will be easier and more manageable with the installation of a preparation area/servery. Cupboard space is very limited at the moment and will be more so when the WC is constructed in the vestry, so that more storage space is urgently required.

Section 5. Justification.

The proposals are relatively modest. Apart from the removal of some of the pews to allow for more gathering space and access to new facilities, none of the proposals affect the features or their meaning as detailed in the Statement of Significance. The synergy delivered by the various linked projects will facilitate liturgical flexibility and local mission together with community engagement and ownership.