

## From the Feb 2016 Turret Times – the original description

**The Church Rooms** Attached to the church, .... are the rooms called the .. vestries, along with a small flower room, kitchenette and toilet. Significant work needs doing on this area and ..the DCC wants to tell everyone about ....

### **The North Side Project or Holcombe Accessibility Project.**

A small group of Mike Burden (leader, also church secretary, Chris, Mike Kinsey and Brian Pearce) have been looking at the practicalities and after much thought and going back to the drawing board have reported to the DCC and commissioned schematic drawings from the architect who designed the St Gregory's project.

### **What work needs doing and why do we have to do it now?**

- 1) The metal roof over the choir vestry will not last much longer. The underlying fabric has rotted and there are leaks in several places. Repair is not feasible. Ignoring it is not an option. This roof needs replacing.
- 2) The external door frames need replacing. They have already been repaired quite a bit.
- 3) The window in the small vestry is being held in more by faith than fact – rot again
- 4) The roof timbers which can be seen from the front of the small vestry are rotting through
- 5) The small vestry floor requires significant attention



We could just opt to do this work, but the DCC have thought about all the options and consulted with those who are in contact with grant making bodies ...etc. We have also consulted the relevant Diocesan office and received helpful advice and support, including a site visit. It is clear that the above work would involve the clearing out and vacating of the rooms and to put it bluntly, make a bit of a mess. One piece of advice that we were given is that grant making bodies look for projects that are thinking strategically and which will benefit the community as a whole, rather than just repairing a roof. Even if we just decided to go with replacing the choir vestry roof, the cost for that would be in the region of £20,000, incl VAT. And the chances of a grant would not be as high as if we thought strategically.

So we thought about the other challenges presented by our rooms.

- 1) Access for the disabled, including those who walk with difficulty, is severely restricted.
- 2) There is nowhere to park a disability buggy. Pushchairs have to be lifted in.
- 3) It can seem strange to walk through the vicar's vestry .., and this can be very off putting to many people,...
- 4) There is nowhere in the church as a whole for a private conversation.
- 5) The kitchenette is cramped and does not have the means of producing food.
- 6) The whole area is lacking in natural light and considering that we live in a beautiful area and have a lovely garden, there is no connection at all with the outside

The conclusion is, that while we have to make a mess, why not reorder the interior, maximise the building's footprint and provide a light, accessible, multi-purpose space serving the community into the next generation?

**From 7<sup>th</sup> February plans and other information will be displayed on the notice board in the choir vestry** and the project steering group will be happy to answer your questions. We pray that our gracious Lord would guide us in the right direction. The church is not affected except that to the right of the Holy Table, on the other side from where the Christmas tree stands, would be the new site of the storage for the hangings. This would blend in with the existing wood. Not only does it have to be moved for reasons that you will see below (it is currently under the small vestry window) it is also currently in a vastly inconvenient location, which you will appreciate if you have seen the hangings being changed. *(NB Some of this has changed which you will appreciate when you read on)*

**Imagine standing in the road looking at the church.** To the left of the double gates, the wall will be lowered and capped to match the other side. The lowering will continue a little around the corner to give improved visibility up the hill. At the far end, at the front, there will be a new gate and the ground will be gently levelled/sloped to give step free access ..; the window into the small vestry becomes a door into a vestibule, using existing stone work and lintel. When you enter you will see the black door into the church but to your left is a new accessible toilet. *(The door behind the black door leads not to a flower room but to a small vicar's office which will contain the safe, a desk, shelving and room for two chairs).* In front of you a door way invites you through to a light, airy, multipurpose space lit by new roof velux windows, and at the end, a glazed door to the garden and a window in the far wall, behind an open plan kitchen area .. The toilet is no longer there. *(The existing kitchen becomes a store and flower room)* Can we do it? We won't know unless we try. ... Please pray about this. The DCC believes this will support the mission and ministry of the church. Indeed doing nothing would make the church very difficult to use as a centre of worship in the years to come. *(NB – we later realised that we had to have detailed plans and the faculty before we could apply for grants)*

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## **Excerpt from the Turret Times of Nov 2016**

... we plan to call a meeting of the congregation and whoever might be interested, **to explain the plans which have been further developed since the original schematic plans were drawn up.** . please give Chris or Mike Burden your details in writing, so that you can be kept informed.