



**December 2025**

# **Improving the Church for our Community**

## **Who are we**

Saint Mary the Virgin has been an active church in Weldon for the past 800 years supporting the Weldon community. We hope to continue in that tradition as we seek new and creative ways to be “Good News” to Weldon.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the local body corporate to support our Rector the Reverend Kane Taylor and his spiritual leadership team in delivering the Church’s mission here in Weldon Parish.

# Our Vision

Our vision is for a church family that is increasingly hungry to hear God speak, and humble to submit our lives to His will.

We want to be a church for our community every day of the week, not just on Sundays, and our care for one another can be seen in our midweek Home and Youth Groups, where we are better able to share our lives with one another, care for one another, pray for one another, and knowing each other well enough to meet one another's needs.

We aim for more people to join a Home Group, which are found across Weldon Parish, and to find the church itself more accessible as a 'go to' place for the community.

St Mary's Church can become a thriving community hub, whilst being a beautiful, historic place of worship.

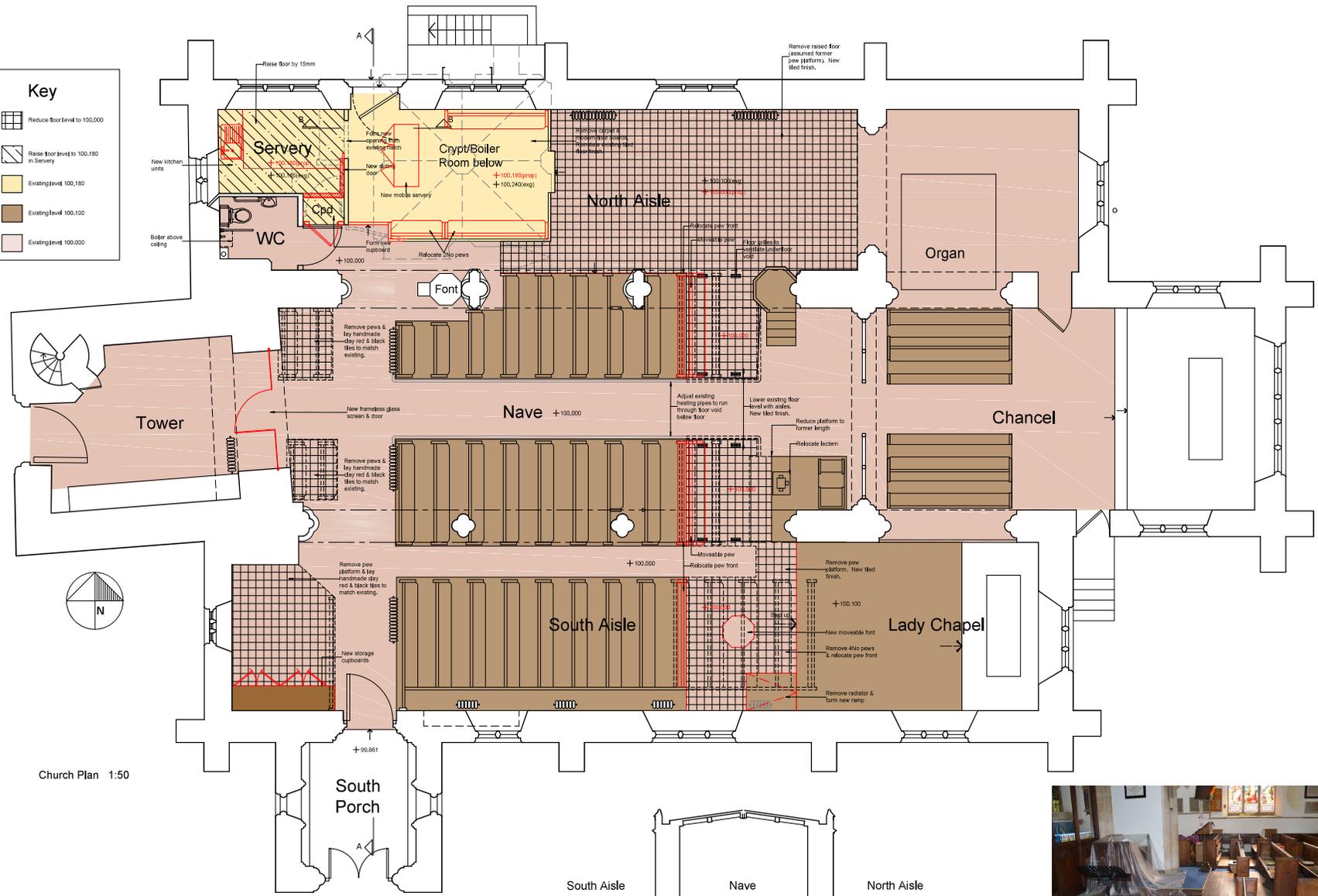
# The Proposals

The proposals you see here are the beginning of this next step in the journey, to make Saint Mary's Church facilities more relevant for everyone.

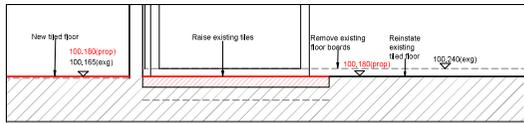
We would love to hear your thoughts on these proposals, and how Saint Mary's Church can serve our Church family and the wider community better.

**Key**

- Reduce floor level to 100,000
- Raise floor level to 100,180 in Servery
- Existing level 100,180
- Existing level 100,100
- Existing level 100,000



Church Plan 1:50



Section B-B 1:20



Section A-A 1:75



View of existing Servery at the west end of the North Aisle



View of Tower Arch from the Nave



Existing font location



View of pews at east end of the Nave

Rev.C 19/03/25 Font retained: moveable front pews,  
 Rev.B 07/02/25 Position of font amended to CB comments,  
 Rev.A 17/01/25 Revised to CB comments,

Client	St Mary the Virgin, Weldon	Drawn	RC
Project	Reordering	Date	Oct 2024
Drawing	Feasibility	Scale	1:50, 1:75@A1

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Drawing No. 2024/071/101  
 Revision C

## Statement of Significance – Major projects

Guidance on completing this form can be found on the ChurchCare website at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/statements-of-significance-need>

*This document must be accompanied by the Standard Information Form 1A*

### **Section 1: The church in its urban / rural environment.**

#### **1.1 Setting of the Church**

*How does the setting out of the church contribute to its landscape / townscape value and to its significance?*

The church whilst being visually highly significant in its rural setting, stands in isolation and does not form part of another group of buildings.

#### **1.2 The Living Churchyard**

*What is the significance of the natural heritage of the site?*

The Churchyard is an important nature reserve and is home to a number of species in need of protection.

#### **1.3 Social History**

*What is the historic and present use of the church and churchyard by the congregation and wider community? How does this contribute to its significance?*

The church has historical associations with Lord Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar. There is a Commonwealth War Grave in the churchyard.

#### **1.4 The church building in general**

*Provide a description of the church.*

The church has C13 origins but is mainly late C13 and C14. The west tower was rebuilt in C18 and the North chapel was added in 1862.

Construction is of square coursed limestone with ashlar dressings. The tower is limestone ashlar. The original spire was not rebuilt and the tower is capped by a wooden cupola and lantern light. (said to have aided navigation in Rockingham Forest)

#### **1.5 The church building in detail**

*Assess the significance of either each historical phase of the building or of each area within it. For example, north aisle, south chancel elevation, Norman tower*

Main entry is via the south porch. There are also North and West doors. The church comprises Chancel, Nave, North and South Aisles, North and South Chapels and a Bell Tower. A toilet and kitchen have been constructed at the west end of the North Aisle. The church is a Grade 1 listed building and there is a group of three chest tombs in the churchyard which are listed Grade 2.

#### **1.6 Contents of the Church**

*Provide a description of its contents and their significance. It is reasonable to group these if there is a contemporary scheme which is significant as such, for example one could say a complete scheme of 18<sup>th</sup>-century furnishings, of high significance.*

There are Victorian pews in the Nave and South Aisle. Pews in the North Aisle have been replaced by chairs. There is a stone font attached to a column at the west end of the Nave on the north side. There is a Victorian pulpit, lectern, readers desk and a well detailed rood screen. The Chancel contains choir stall and the organ is located in the North Chapel. Sanctuary flooring is Victorian or early C20 encaustic tiles. There are wall memorials throughout the church and good stained glass windows including one of modern design.

### **1.7 Significance for mission**

*What are the strengths of the building as it is for worship and mission? What potential for adapted and new uses does the church and its setting already have with little or no change?*

The church is an important part of village life and its preservation in its present form is important to those who have worshipped there for a long time. This is probably less significant for more recent members of the congregation but it is considered important to achieve a balance between these two views and efforts should be made to minimise the impact of any alterations.

There is a C of E primary school in the village and the church needs to accommodate in excess of 220 people on occasions when the school is present. Any planned alterations must retain or increase this number of seating places either in pews or stacking chairs.

Currently we have two worshipping communities that meet on a Sunday, a Common Worship communion at 9am and a contemporary expression of church at 10:30am with coffee between the services so the two groups can have a place to meet with each other – this is to fulfil our mission vision of two congregations, one church.

## **Section 2 : The significance of the area affected by the proposal.**

### **2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal.**

Areas affected are entirely within the church. These are Nave, Bell Tower, North Aisle (including the toilet and kitchen). South Aisle and South Lady Chapel.

### **2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.**

Kitchen and toilet are utility areas for the convenience of worshippers. The others are fundamental to the functioning of the church as a place of worship.

### **Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals**

#### **3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.**

These proposals have been designed to increase the flexibility of spaces within the church and to make it a fundamentally safer building than it is at present. This includes better means of access for the disabled and better provision for children. They are also intended to enhance the kitchen and toilet facilities and to provide an alternative moveable font.

The most significant proposal is to create an enclosed space under the Bell Tower for children's work.

#### **3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.**

Existing walls for kitchen and toilet will be retained with slight modification. Visual impact of the alterations will therefore be minimal. Pews to be removed in the Nave will be retained in mobile form so again visual impact will be minimal. Removal of pews in the South Aisle will be more significant. The space to be created will allow more to be made visually of the Lady Chapel. This is considered to represent an enhancement of the church. The space will also provide a location for a moveable wooden font to be used for baptisms. This arrangement will obviate the need to move the existing font from its current location.

The creation of a usable space within the bell tower will be achieved with the provision of a fully glazed screen. This will have a considerable visual impact but with careful design this should be an enhancement to the church.

#### **Sources consulted**

List the sources consulted

Local knowledge

Historic England listing

National Churches Trust

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## Statement of Needs – Major projects

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*This document must be accompanied by the Standard Information Form 1A*

### **1. General information**

St Mary's is a lively and growing church with two Sunday services providing for the needs of the more traditional congregation at a 9.00am communion followed by a contemporary service at 10.30 aimed at a younger and more family orientated group. Coffee is served between the two services which allows the two groups to meet and socialise. Some people stay for both services. A lack of flexibility of the spaces within the church has led to the feeling that much more could be achieved if there were fewer restrictions on the use of space.

At the same time it is recognised that St Mary's as well as being historically significant is a particularly beautiful church in which the Victorian pews make an important visual contribution.

Their wholesale removal is not considered to be an acceptable option.

### **2. What do you need?**

1. A better welcome area with more space to greet people and to display information about the church and its activities.
2. An area where children can play safely during service and be seen but where their inevitable noise can be lessened for the benefit of the rest of the congregation.
3. A kitchen better suited to the serving of coffee and light refreshments between services and on other occasions including funeral wakes. The adjacent disabled toilet is in urgent need of refurbishment.
4. A more flexible space at the front of the Nave to cater for the differing requirements of Café Church, concerts, weddings and baptisms.
5. A safer church with consistent floor level in order to remove multiple trip hazards and to provide adequate means of access for the disabled to the various parts of the church,

### **3. The proposals**

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2

1. To create a welcome area adjacent to the south door. This area is currently used for children.
2. The area under the bell tower is currently used only for storage and is screened off by a curtain. This is considered to be an under-utilisation of space which could be used to accommodate the children and Sunday School. The proposal is to fill the arch with a fully glazed screen which will provide visual inclusion of the children but with significant reduction of noise. Visually it is considered that the proposal will be an enhancement of the church, allowing as it will a view of a fine stained glass west window which is currently obscured.
3. The existing disabled toilet to be refurbished. This will include a ventilated dry-lining to deal with a damp problem and also the provision of some sound proofing which is at present inadequate.
4. Re-planning of the kitchen and the adjacent serving area by moving the access door to a position currently occupied by the serving hatch. The existing door opening will be re-utilised to create a much needed storage cupboard. To make this possible it will be necessary to lower the floor level of the serving area to be the same as that of the kitchen. At present there is a wooden floor over the Crypt. This floor is subject to damp from the adjacent wall and has started to rot. It has been ascertained that a solid floor can be created at the same level as the kitchen.
5. Lowering the wooden carpeted floor to the North Aisle to the base level of the rest of the church.
6. Removing the front two pews in the Nave together with the pew platform, again to create a consistent floor level, and to gain more flexibility of use. It is considered desirable to retain these pews but to make them mobile to allow for easy removal when needed for Café Church or for concerts.
7. Permanent removal of some of the front pews in the South Aisle and the construction of a ramp to allow disable access to the Lady chapel. This is particularly important as this area is used for the signing of Wedding Registers. There is at present no adequate access for the disabled.
8. The siting of the existing font is far from ideal. Typically, baptism parties sit at the front of the church then have to move to the rear to take part in the ceremony. This is a problem for them and also makes it difficult for the rest of the congregation to see the baptism. There is a strong feeling within the congregation that the font should not be moved both for historic reasons and also because it is feared the font is fragile and would be damaged by any attempt at removal. It is therefore considered that the solution would be to have a moveable wooden font which could be sited in the South Aisle in front of the Lady chapel. It is proposed that the new font be constructed of timber reclaimed from the pews to be removed, and in design terms should reflect the features of the existing pulpit base.
9. It is recognised that these proposals will require significant modification to the heating system pipework. This may lead to the adoption of an alternative electric heating system in line with the C of E commitment to net zero. This will be investigated further and will be the subject of a secondary application to the DAC in due course.

#### **4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?**

*Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals*

The need has been explained above in the context of the individual items of the proposal. Some of these are considered more urgent than others and also finance is not yet available for the whole project. A phased implementation is therefore proposed:

1. The top priority is the toilet/kitchen/serving area so this would be phase 1
2. Floor levelling and pew removal and new heating system.
3. Creation of a new Welcome Area and the west end "Narthex" for children

#### **5. What is the evidence for the need?**

*Please explain who has been consulted.*

Positive response from community at open meeting to discuss proposals.

Problems encountered during current church activities and difficulties foreseen with other things we would like to be able to do (concert for example)

#### **6. How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?**

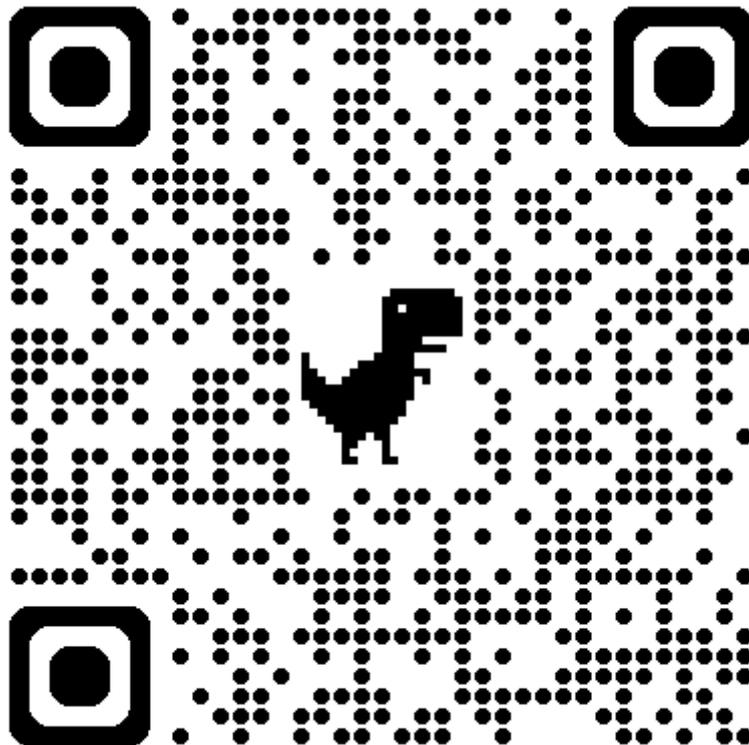
*How is it reducing the carbon footprint, contributing to the Church's commitment to be 'net zero carbon' by 2030?*

The proposals will contribute to environmental sustainability by bringing forward the replacement of the existing oil-fired heating system.

#### **7. What other options were considered**

The proposals are the result of extensive consultations with the Diocesan Architect during which various alternatives were looked at before arriving at what is considered to be the optimum solution. For example we considered siting the Font in the Welcome Area.

**Your thoughts and ideas are important to us!**



**Please scan the QR code to give your valuable feedback.**