



St Helen's Trowell

Renewal Project for community building

Who are we?

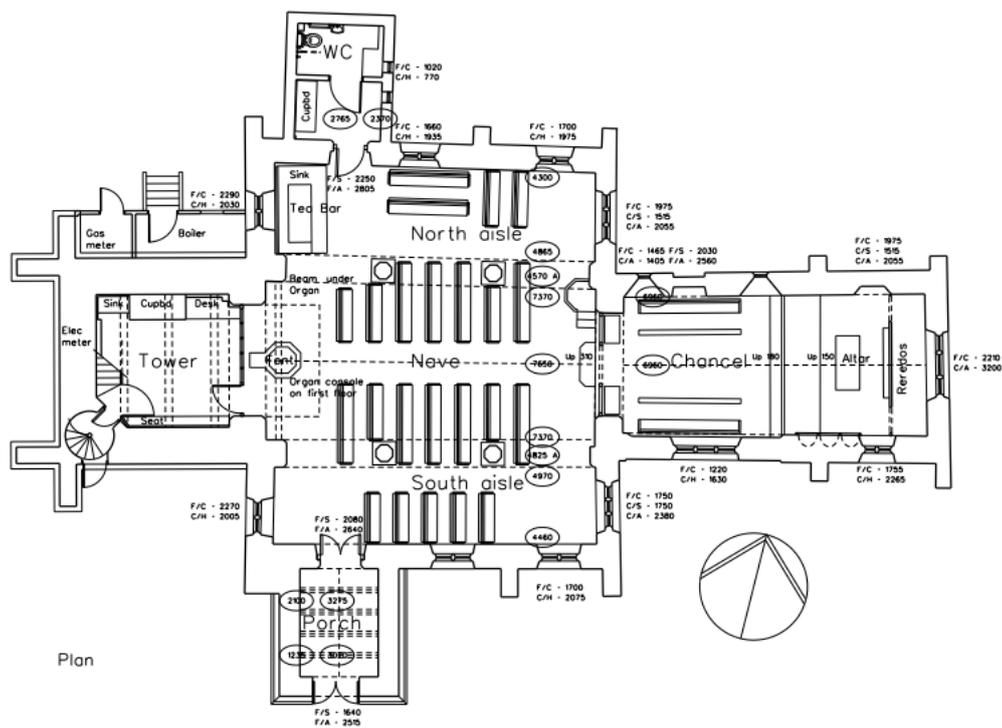
St Helen's Church Trowell is a Grade 2* listed building that was built in the 13th century, with evidence of a church on that site since 800AD. This ancient building of local sandstone has seen many changes over the years and it is vital that the building evolve to meet the needs of the village community now and into the future. Already the building is used by a Wednesday drop-in group for people living on their own, and for children's and youth events as well as by the local primary school but space is tight. The Renewal Project seeks to reorder the building in order to provide an adaptable and welcoming space that helps renew community, for St Helen's church but more importantly for the wider village. It can be found on the corner of Nottingham Road and Stapleford Road in Trowell, NG9 3QR.



St Helen's is part of the Benefice of Trowell, Awworth & Cossall – www.trowellchurch.com

The Rector is Revd Dr Andy Lord (who has been there 10 years), with Assistant Ministers Revd Brenda Brown and Revd Paul Whitehead and licensed ministers Paul & Margaret Humphries. We have lively modern services and more traditional services for all ages every Sunday as well as a Wednesday drop-in, fortnightly open youth group and children's activities, monthly Saturday coffee mornings, bimonthly Village Breakfasts as well as special events through the year. The church is also used each term by the local primary school when 200 children, staff and parents visit. We welcome people from the village for baptisms, weddings, funerals and annual Memorial & Thanksgiving services. The church has an open churchyard which is important in village life.

St Helen's aims to be a church that loves, prays, grows and serves in the way of Jesus. Service to and with the community is a vital part of the life of St Helen's. St Helen's is a charity, as are other Church of England places of worship, although with an income of less than £100,000 is not registered with a separate charity number.



What is the project?

The project aims at transforming the existing space to form an adaptable and welcoming place to enable the renewal of community. This has been planned in four phases.

Phase 1: Accessibility (£55,000). There is a need for more adaptable space in the community as both our Church Hall and the Parish Hall are well booked with some bookings turned away as we are unable to accommodate them. Currently the Church building has two levels and fixed pews that hinder disabled access and use of the building by the wider community. The project aims to level the floors by lowering the chancel flooring and installing a new oak floor across the whole. This will create two spaces for use: the nave which can accommodate groups of up to 80 and the chancel smaller groups of up to 20. The porch area will be updated with glass outer doors rather than the current iron gates. This will allow the heavy inner doors to be left open and provide better visibility and access.

Phase 2: Renew Heating System & Refit for Better Community Use (£52,000). The existing heating system will be replaced with a system that will provide the essential heating throughout the winter that the current system can't provide. New comfortable seating will be provided throughout that can be positioned as appropriate for different uses and stacked when not in use. Recognising the historic nature of the building and the way this draws people in, the aim is to retain, reveal and enhance the best of the church's historic features and architecture. We have a beautiful stained glass window at the eastern side of the church which was made by the renowned Victorian stained glass designer and manufacturer, Charles Eamer Kempe. This, sadly, is currently hidden by wooden carvings which were introduced in the Victorian Era. By lowering the level of the floor in the chancel area, and the lowering of the existing reredos screen, this will enable this window to be revealed and its beauty enjoyed again. The wood carvings would also be preserved and reused within the project. Thus the Victorian wood work in the chancel will be adapted to retain the general look whilst allowing more adaptable space.

Phase 3 – Renew Lighting and Electrics for better use (£38,000). A new lighting system will better highlight the medieval features of the building and give a bright atmosphere of welcome. A new electric system will replace the existing old wiring and also provide a better modern sound and visual system for users.

Phase 4 – Renew Heritage & Vestry (£44,000). Work is needed to restore the walls and East Window to preserve the heritage of the building. Extensive restoration was started in 1928 and this included work to the floor, walls, roof beams, bells and tower. It has been reported that during this time, unskilled parishioners were asked to re-point much of the stonework joints inside and outside of the building. This was done with a very strong mix of cement mortar, rather than the traditional lime mortar. Furthermore, internal eroded areas were filled with cement mortar render. This resulted in a rather untidy dark grey patchwork effect which has meant the medieval walls in particular need treatment to preserve and enhance them. The vestry will be updated to provide a small crèche area visible from the chancel area and providing storage. Other work related to the churches use of the building amount to £9,000.

Renewing Community. Trowell has a strong sense of community, winning the Nottinghamshire village of the year in 2009. It was also chosen to be the Festival of Britain Village in 1951 and this honour is remembered with the local pub being called The Festival Inn as well as a memorial obelisk which was erected in the village at the start of the new millennium by the Parish Council. A village committee continues to ensure that this historic achievement is celebrated on anniversaries, with recent commemorations taking place on the 50th and 60th anniversaries. These involved the village community and church with various activities taking place over a three day period including dances, events for children, flower festivals, displays of heritage and old memorabilia and Songs of Praise type services. The church building is at the centre of the community and many know the building and visit the churchyard. A renewed building would provide additional and different spaces for meeting than are currently available. This would allow better use by groups such as the school and uniformed organisations. There is a need to sustain and develop the sense of community in Trowell and this project seeks to do this through the sensitive development of St Helen's building.

This vision has developed over a number of years in consultation with our architect and with advice from the Diocese and national church. The planning permission (Faculty) was granted in early 2015 and the congregation asked to raise money, for which £53,000 has been raised or pledged to date. The overall cost of the project is just under £200,000 – a figure calculated by a Quantity Surveyor alongside the architect.

How is it to be funded?

The project has been split in two with initial funding sought for phases 1 and 2. We asked for regular members of St Helen's for gifts and pledges of money towards the work. We also have held regular fundraising events within the wider community. To date these have raised £53,000. We have also been awarded £43,369 from WREN, a not-for-profit business that awards grants for community, biodiversity and heritage projects from funds donated by FCC Environment through the Landfill Communities Fund. We have also had smaller charity grants totalling £13,200 which is great news. This enables us to organise the initial work to be done to enable a more adaptable and welcoming building.

Having raised over half the finances required for the project we are looking for further grants that will enable phases 2, 3 and 4 to be completed. We are getting tenders for all the work and expect to start later in 2017 in stages based on finance raised. Cheques should be made payable to Trowell Parochial Church Council.