



Overview of Works Carried Out
at
St. James' Church
Bishampton, Worcestershire

Overview

St James' Church, Bishampton, falls within the Diocese of the Worcester, and is the largest church within the parish, within the Flyford's Family of Churches.

Originally constructed in the 12th century, with the addition of the western tower added in the 14th century, and rebuilt by Preedy in 1875, the church is an icon for the community, and is able to hold up to 120 people for events and ceremonies.

By 2010 St James, as many village churches, had been experiencing falling numbers, and it was recognised that re-ordering was needed to bring the church forward socially, and to meet modern standards and expectations. Following a village survey a master plan was conceived which was then phased in order of the priorities indicated by parishioners. The delivery of the re-ordering has been greatly assisted by the formation of FOSJ, Friends of St James, a secular village charity committed to assist in maintenance of the church fabric

The Church has therefore undergone a series of refurbishment and upgrade works over a 5 year span, with a continued and conscious approach to phasing of the works as funds have been made available, has been favoured over a single major refurbishment project. This has allowed an increased community engagement, as the continued development of St James has maintained and required a constant community involvement to be successful, and as such, this has seen the Church become increasingly utilised by the whole community.



Works Carried Out

Chronological Series of Works

- New Trench Heating & Restoration of Existing Floor/Tiles – (2011)
- New Casegoods and Internal re-ordering– (2011)
- New LED Lighting – (2012)
- Re-instatement of North Door and Initial landscaping/paths – (2013)
- Interior Painting & Redecoration of Church – (2014)
- Sub-Floor Consolidation Works – (2014)
- New W/C & facilities outbuilding – (2015)
- Carpark, external notice board and further landscaping – (2016)
- New Paths – (scheduled for Autumn 2016)
- Proposed further landscaping & heritage planting – (2017)
- Restoration of the Bells – (2017)

Future proposals include

- Installation of a hearing loop
- High level parapet works
- Replacement of cast iron guttering
- Restoration of the Millets box tomb

Community Support

Fundraising

The works carried out at St. James Church have been made possible through a number of modest grants, private donations and fundraising from local sources.

- Friends of St. James community charity
- Local Fundraising Events/Groups
- Welcome to Our Future Grant Funding
- Abberton Spire Grant Fund
- Lasletts Charities Grant Fund
- Private donations and bequests

The Bishampton PCC & Friends of St James, along with other village organisations, also run a number of community events and fundraisers, utilising the Church as a community venue, with the goal of raising further funds to continue the betterment of the Church fabric and enhancement of the facilities provided.

Heating Installation & Floor refurbishment

The heating and comfort levels of the Church were identified as the priority works to be carried out. The previous heating system was removed due to the presence of asbestos and had not been replaced. The Village survey highlighted that the lack of use by the community, and increasingly smaller congregations were predominantly due to an uncomfortable internal environment.

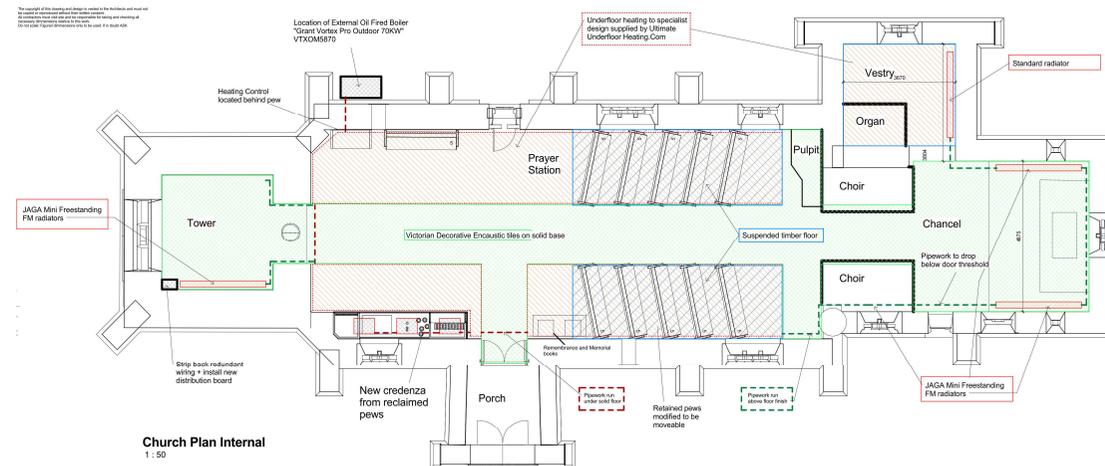
The heating strategy and proposal looked to achieve a sustainable heating method for a historic building, which would provide an easily managed solution, whilst providing optimal comfort control.

The new heating system, which was primarily funded by 'Welcome to Our Future', was achieved through the installation of underfloor heating throughout the Nave, along with a number of fan assist wall mounted radiators in key areas such as the tower and chancel. These was supplied by an efficient oil boiler located to the rear of the church.

The low-temperature underfloor heating allows for a constant heating in winter months, retaining a year round comfortable temperature for occasional use (14deg). The additional radiators having an ability to quickly "boost" this system for major events to achieve indoor temperatures of around 20Deg.

The introduction of the heating system has allowed for year round use of the church, and comfortable temperatures for users to encourage increased congregational and community use.

Additional benefit of installing the new heating system was that the existing encaustic floor tiling, which had been significantly damaged by inappropriate repairs in the past, was restored

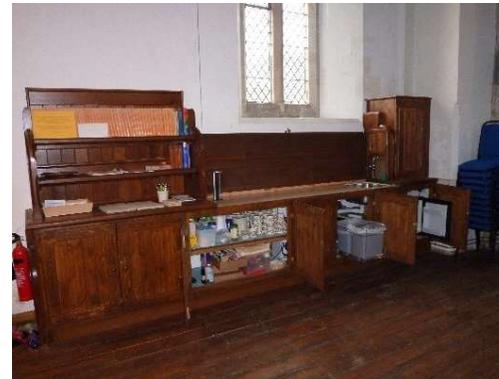


New Casegoods and FF&E

The installation of the underfloor heating system involved the removal of the pews to enable the works to be carried out. It was decided, on cost grounds, to reinstate the some of pews on completion, which had the advantage that the church has retained the character of Preedy's design. However in order to achieve the desired flexibility of space, the pews were fitted with sledge bases so that the pews could be moveable to accommodate different seating arrangements.

The next priority was to enable refreshments to be provided within the church to allow greater flexibility of use for congregations and community events. It was decided to salvage the redundant pews for the construction of the credenza units and other case-goods such as the prayer desk and memorial book stand. This allowed for savings to be made, and for all new case goods to retain the character of the church and to be appropriate for their setting.

The remaining fixtures and fittings that had collected in the church were rationalised to provide a cohesive interior. New notice boards for events were installed, curtains changed and various repair works undertaken.



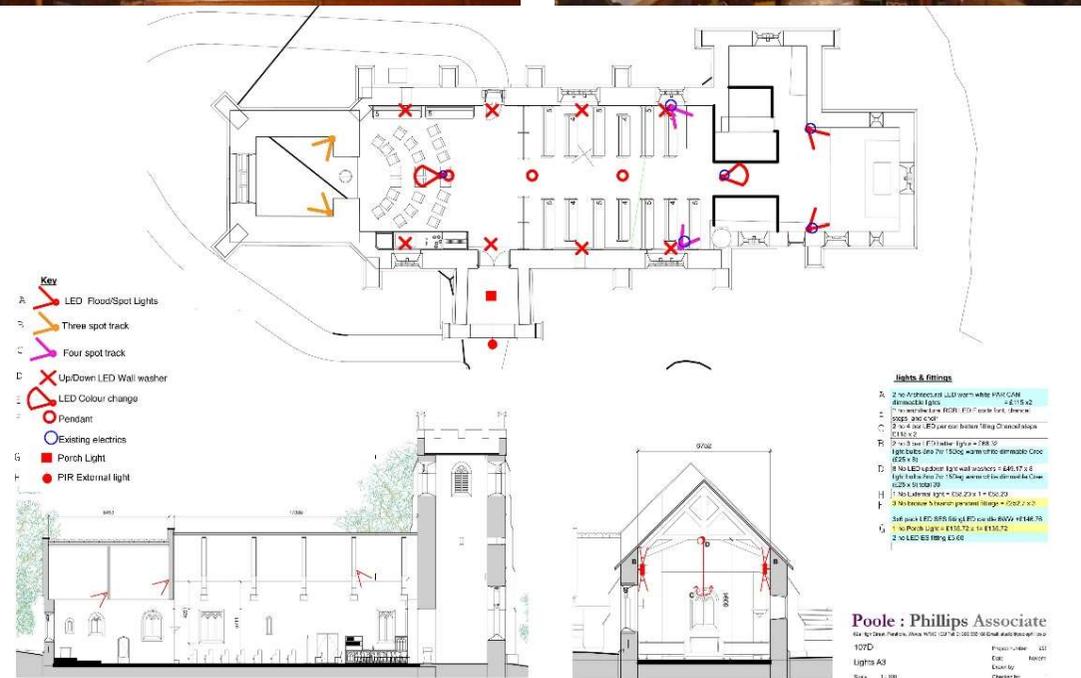
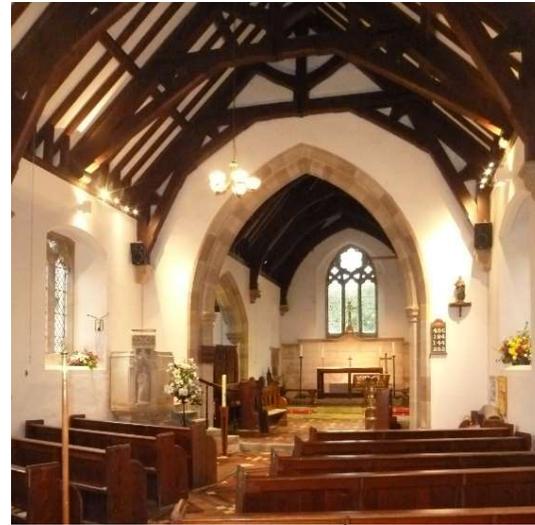
New LED Lighting

The proposed lighting strategy had been to remove and replace a series of high energy halogen spotlights fitted within the church, and replace these with directional/adjustable LED lighting, which could be changed to suit varying requirements/services/events.

Included within the lighting proposal was a number of ambient lights such as up-down lighters around archways and a series of small chandeliers above the aisle for overall ambient lighting.

The result has been a lower overall running cost for lighting within the church, along with a greater variety of events, where the lighting can be amended to suit.

So far these have included various live music and concert events, acting/drama and banquets, with lighting being adjustable to suit the required ambience/atmosphere.



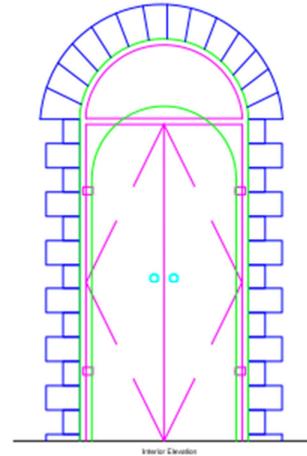
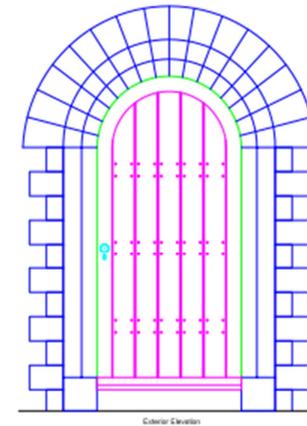
Re-instatement of North Door

The Norman North Door of the church was infilled as part of the rebuilding of the church by Preedy.

It was decided that the opening of the North Door would resolve problems of providing alternative accessible means of escape from the church with the added benefit of offering opportunities for community use for the area of churchyard not occupied by gravestones.

The re-introduction of the North Door has allowed for St James to re-host such events as the village fete and expand on such regular events as the Heritage Day open days, providing a flexible internal/external option for the church. For example marquees or covered walkways can be directly connected to the church's north door allowing holding of events such as the Queen's birthday celebrations, christenings and craft fairs to be held to a larger capacity if required, with an additional external space directly accessible from within the church.

The door also is a step in restoring the church to its original form, by restoring and re-using the historic fabric as it had been originally designed. The new doorway has been carefully surveyed and had been designed to externally appear as a traditional doorway within the existing opening, however on the interior a pair of modern glass doors allow connectivity with the churchyard and the countryside beyond.



Interior Decoration/Refurbishment

Following the completion of the majority of works within the interior of the Church, the chancel and nave were redecorated and made good using traditional lime plaster and lime paint, to ensure the historic fabric retained a breathable construction.

These works were carried out, repairing plaster damage, construction damage or general wear and tear.

This was an opportunity to lose the stark brilliant white finish of the church interior and restore it back to it's original colour scheme, which had previously been identified as being a natural stone through colour render.



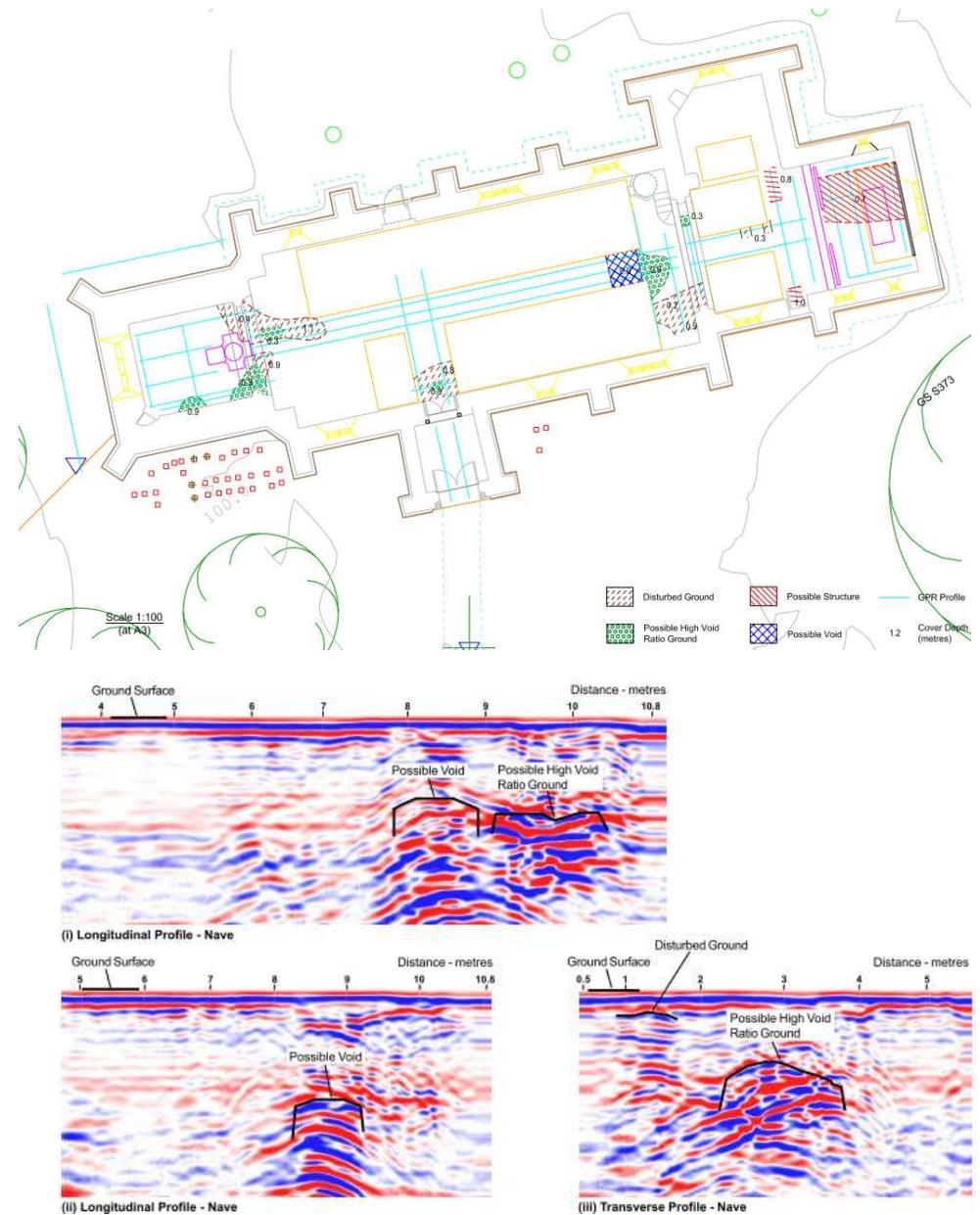
Sub-Floor Consolidation

In the mid 2000's, a fox set had been found under the church, and the foxes removed. However, the voids and tunnels were still present under the Nave floor, and subsequently began to drop and collapse causing damage to the original tiled floor. To avoid any further disruption to the historic fabric, a solution was required to avoid ground collapse and further damage.

To locate the voids, a ground probing radar survey was carried out, and based on these findings, along with a visual inspection, a suitable restoration strategy was identified.

The solid section of floor is made up with a lime screed, lime based concrete and limestone chippings to a total depth of around 700mm. Due to the breathable construction of the solid floor, a hydraulic lime based grout was utilised to ensure the current properties and characteristics of the floor were not compromised.

The repair work carried out pumped these voids, allowing a strong structural base and removal of voids for potential collapse. Following these works, the encaustic tiles within the nave were made good to return the floor to its original state.



The Bothy: New W/C & Facilities Outbuilding

The final series of works identified by the original masterplan, was to provide the Bothy, a new WC and storage outbuilding. This was essential as the use of the church was significantly restricted by the lack of sanitary facilities.

The proposal included the provision of a contemporary outbuilding with car parking, which would allow for parking adjacent to the churchyard, a new disabled accessible W/C, Kitchen/Utility facilities and a garden store for keeping equipment for grounds maintenance and church events. This in turn allowed the clearing out the vestry within the church which previously had been used to store a large amount of paraphernalia.

The construction of the Bothy, which was completed in 2015, has allowed, along with previously carried out works, for greater flexibility of the range and size events provided within the church due to its increased facilities. The range of programmes offered over the last 12 months, which is testament to its success, has included: -

- Music concerts
- History society talks
- Fashion show
- Pancake party
- Queen's Birthday celebrations
- Church fete
- Heritage Open days,
- Craft fairs,
- Flower festival
- Pippins preschool Christmas party

The Bothy also provides facilities for occasional visitors to the church and churchyard as well as offering a popular "stop off" point for cyclists as a landmark to take a break and use the facilities before continuing on their route



Car Park & Landscaping

The car park, completed shortly after the new outbuilding, provides parking spaces for 9 cars (2 of which are allocated for use by disabled persons), along with a greatly enhanced landscaping scheme.

The area of the Outbuilding and Car Park had been previously abandoned part of the old parsonage which had become heavily overgrown and impenetrable with trees and brambles.. The new Gravel parking, tree planting and landscaping now connects with the churchyard, with the entire site reading as a single community facility.



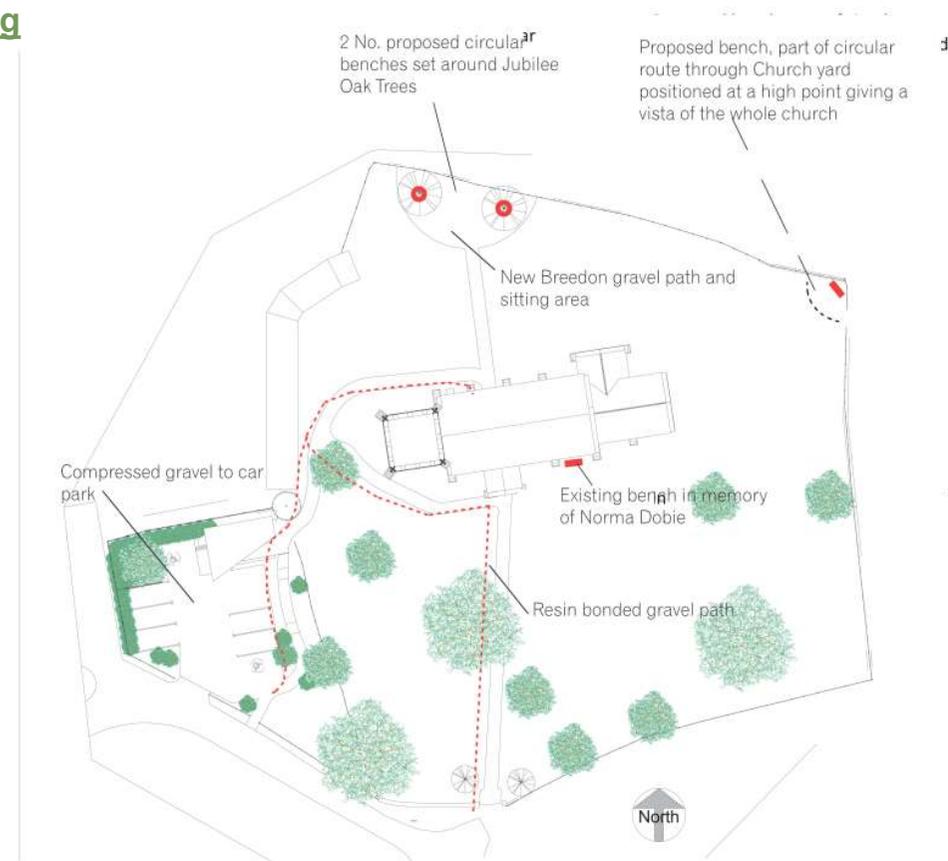
Proposed Future Landscaping The 'Living Churchyard'

In 2017 Funding was secured by FOSJ, from Welcome to our Future to enable the replacement of the existing church paths with a resin bonded gravel.

In addition, St James PCC was also successful in securing grant from Tesco 'Bags for Life' fund for the construction of a 'Living Churchyard'

The proposal involved the construction of an accessible memorial garden and seating area as well a wildflower wildlife corridor to the perimeter of the Churchyard. It is anticipated that this work will take place early in 2017

The ecological habit offered by the churchyard was then enhanced by a further donation from the VCT Charitable Trust with the installation of bat, bird and bug boxes.



A Resin Bonded path will be installed to link the road with the WC/ carpark and will continue up towards the entrance of the church.



Compressed Gravel will be used as the car park finish, bringing a clean traditional aesthetic to the church frontage.



Poole Phillips
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

69a High Stret, Pershore, Worcs, WR10 1EU

(01386) 555166

studio@poolephillips.co.uk

Restoration of the Bells

Bishampton's 300+-year-old Church Bells to be refurbished

A specialist bell foundry has recently completed the refurbishment of St. James' Church's three hundred year old bells

John Taylor & Co from the Loughborough Bell Foundry, undertook the project in readiness for Heritage Open Day on September 9th and the Festival of Bells Bishampton is holding on 4 and 5th November 2017 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the re-hanging of the bells.* The installation works work overseen by the Evesham bell master Chris Povey and local volunteers from the village

The bells, which were re-consecrated in 1870, are housed in the tower of Grade II* listed, 12th Century St. James church.

Originally the church had five bells purchased by the parish and cast at Worcester by John Martin, bell founder, of the parish of St. Martin in 1661, at a cost of £43 but these did not last long. So the five, plus an additional one, were recast in 1690 by William Bagley. The bells are inscribed as follows:-

1. GULIELMUS KEYT BARONET HUUJUS MANERIS 1690.
2. ROBERT GAYWOOD AND WILLIAM FARLEY CHVRCHWARDENS 1690
3. WILLAM GRIMIT 1690
4. WILIAM BAGLEY MADE MEE 1690
5. WILLIAM POWELL CHVRCH WARDEN 1705 RD. SANDERS MADE MEE
6. FEARE GOD AND HONNOR THE KING 1690

Reverend Gary Noyes, said: "It is a momentous occasion that these bells, which we estimate must have rung out for church services, and family events innumerable times over the past 317 years, are to have a bit of well-deserved TLC. They are a stunning reminder of 17th century craftsmanship so it will be a fitting tribute to get them ready for celebrations later this year."

The refurbishment work was generously jointly funded by donations from FOSJ and the Worcestershire and Dudley Change Ringing Association.



1937: The re-consecration of the bells



2017: Bell refurbishment team