



PROJECT INSPIRE

- ◆ Conserving our heritage
 - ◆ Making bold improvements
 - ◆ Creating welcoming spaces
 - ◆ Reducing our carbon footprint

Hard work behind the scenes

Despite the many months of Covid-19 measures affecting daily life, our project team continues to tackle various aspects of our plans on behalf of the PCC. Some of the main elements are summarised here to bring parishioners up-to-date ahead of a further period of consultation, we hope, in spring 2021.

Heating

Technical experts have been consulted about the options for heating the church. We have examined under-floor systems, and trench heaters as well as the infrastructure to make it work reliably and in an energy efficient manner with due regard for the Church of England's environmental goals. This is proving a time consuming and complex matter but with confidence that the right choice will be made.



Installation of a typical underfloor heating system

Lighting

A reordered church will need well designed lighting not only to facilitate services, concerts and the variety of activities held in the church but also to present the interior well. Again, informed sources on lighting schemes have met the team to advise on the position and type of lights and how we can exploit proven modern technology (LED lamps, for example) and positioning to enable easier maintenance than we now have. A concept design will be developed leading to proposals that will form part of our submission to the Diocese.

Furniture

The reordering scheme offers a superb opportunity to rethink seating just as the Victorians did in 1882. A study has been undertaken of a wide range of chairs that will suit the style of our church, be comfortable, robust and, importantly, enable flexible seating layouts. Likewise, tables with storage systems have been examined. In the spring we plan to obtain samples so that parishioners have the opportunity to try them and provide their views. Ideas have also been obtained during visits to other churches in the last eighteen months so we are confident that the right choice for St Lawrence church will be made.

The launch

It scarcely needs stating that the Covid-19 situation has set our plans back many months and our proposed autumn 2020 launch was just one casualty of the pandemic. As things stand, we are looking at a parish launch in April 2021 if local and national circumstances permit such an event.

After the 20th April 2021 launch date there will be ample time for parishioners to view and comment on the designs. Work is in hand on a brochure and some form of audio-visual presentation utilising old and new photographs with plans and sketches produced by our architects. By working closely with our architect, archaeologist and heating and lighting specialists, the project group is confident that the most appropriate designs will be presented consistent with our future needs and conservation of this 15th century church.

Quinquennial Inspection (QI)

Our early 2021 QI was brought forward to late October. Access equipment was hired to allow the architect to examine the underside of the roof, clerestories and other high level places; advantage was also taken to change a few lamps and lubricate window fittings. The report is awaited and, whilst no showstoppers are anticipated, minor work can be included in the restoration and reordering once underway. The spire was also inspected some months ago and a few loose clips on the lightning conductor were secured; otherwise, the spire is in very good condition.



The 2020 QI in progress

Shelley's Walk

Site meetings with representatives of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) Public Rights of Way examined several options to relay the cobbled section of Shelley's Walk so that a surface suitable for the heavy daily footfall and for the built environment of the location (including the immediate area of the north porch) will be achieved. GCC is developing funding proposals. Progress here is seen as a major step to improve the path for all.



Shelley's Walk

What next?

When exhaustive consultation has been completed, the PCC will submit a petition for a faculty to the DAC accompanied by a large body of evidence to support the plans. The DAC has been kept informed as our scheme has unfolded but undoubtedly there will be details to be explored further before the faculty is granted. It is difficult to state when the faculty will be granted but current thinking places it around summer 2022.

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