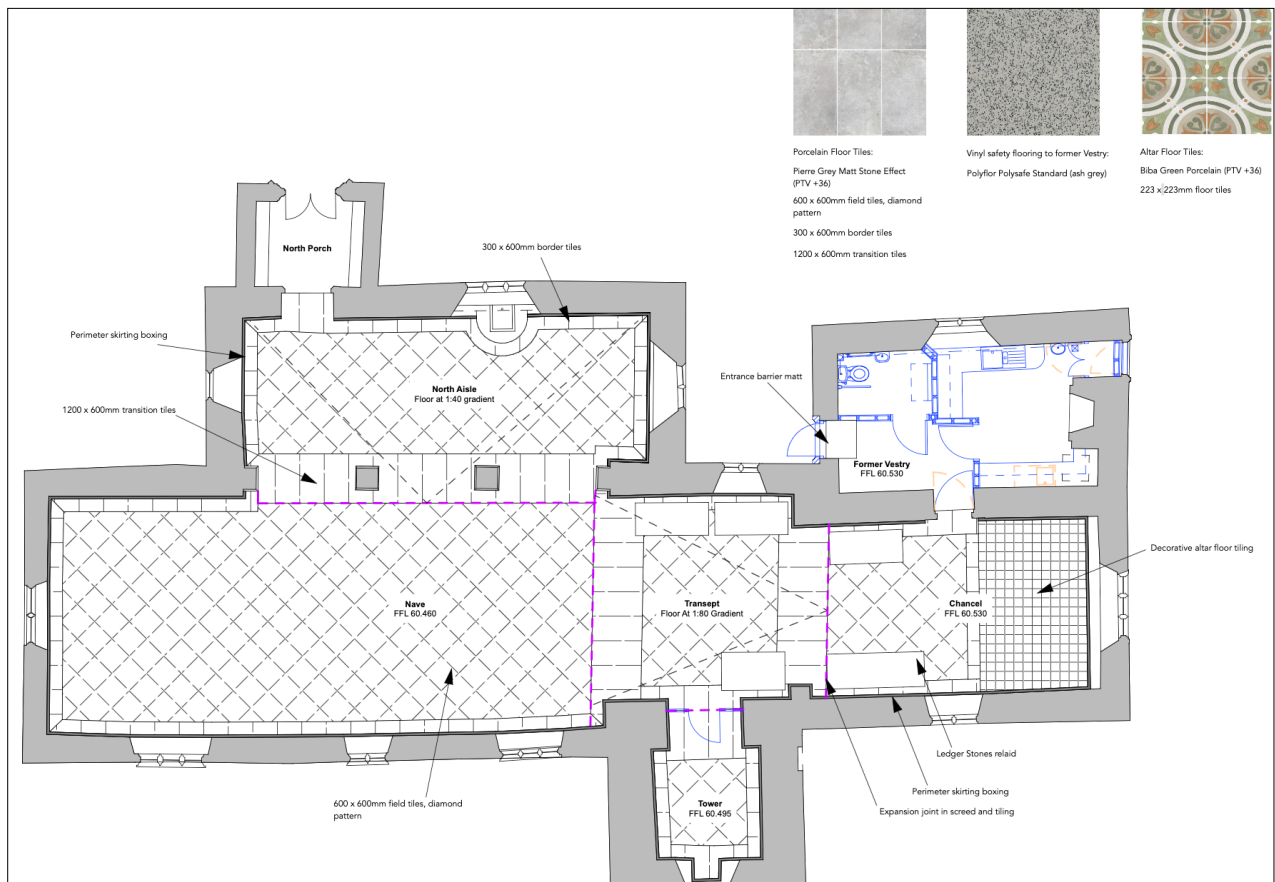




Including Questions and Answers



Prepared by: Fabric team

2 June 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why do this now?

Renovation of the church is one of the four visionary elements within the Heart of the Community Project of which we are now entering the final stage, the refurbishment of the Church building. This stage is made up of several elements– levelling the floor in the church, adding a toilet in the existing vestry, improving seating and heating, moving the vestry and redecorating to create a welcoming, and accessible church appropriate for generations to come

We have already:

- Repaired, retiled and insulated the church roof
- Reroofed and repointed the tower
- Made good the rotting tower door and cleaned out decades of pigeon droppings.
- Repointed the worst of the exterior walls
- Repaired cracked and damaged stonework.
- Made the old bells and frames safe and installed electronic bells.

So far we have spent in the region of £250,000 to make the exterior secure and weatherproof for decades to come.

Goals

Now is the time to turn our attention to the interior - which all began with the truly vexing question of where and how do we install a toilet? From that debate came the realisation and opportunity that much more was needed to make the church safe, comfortable, accessible, less costly to run (greener) and more flexible in usage.

The current plans should deliver on all these issues.

This paper

Explores the refurbishment of the Church building by asking some of the important and more relevant questions that have been asked. We hope that any questions that you might have are addressed in this document. If it raises more questions or fails to address a particular concern you have, please approach a member of the Church leadership or Fabric committee.

ST MICHAEL'S FABRIC TEAM

Why do we need a toilet, as we have managed for centuries without one?

It is expected that a building in the 21st Century, and used by the public, should have a toilet. Especially for events such as weddings and baptisms, where people travel distances and require a loo on arrival, or children's and uniform services where urgency can become an issue, and, let's face it, as we all get older it's a comfort to know such a facility is close by!

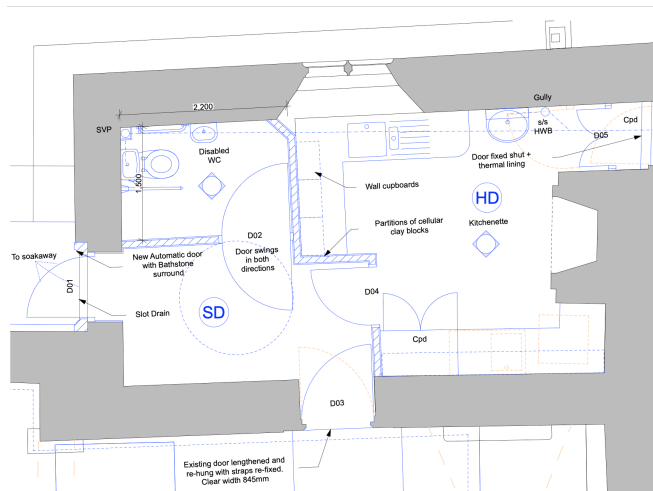
Where will the toilet be situated?

Over the years there have been several plans and ideas as to where a toilet could be sited – most of which proved to be far too expensive to be seriously considered. It was the 'discovery' of an existing, but blocked in, doorway in the West wall of the current vestry that enabled the current plans to come to fruition.

The current vestry will be partitioned into a toilet area and separate storage and kitchen unit. The principal entrance for the toilet will be via a new pathway from the church porch and through a new door created in the East wall of the current vestry. It will also be with level step free access from the interior of the church.

It is a single unisex toilet equipped for disabled and accessible for wheelchair users.

The toilet will only be available during services and church meetings and will be managed by the duty wardens and events team. It will be maintained by the Operations Directorate



What is the reason for changing the flooring in Church?

In places, the flooring has become a significant trip hazard, it needs levelling. It also severely restricts accessibility for those with mobility issues. New floor tiles will enable us to better insulate the church, reduce damp issues and facilitate the installation of additional heating options underfloor.

What will happen to the ledger stones?

The ledger stones will be preserved and integrated in the flooring of the chancel area alongside the new tiles.

What will the new flooring tiles look like?

The flooring will be level throughout the nave and chancel, as it was in the 70's, however this time the vestry, kitchen and toilet areas will also be on the same level making all areas of the church accessible to all users. The only raised area will be by the West wall where the altar table is currently positioned.

The flooring will be 600mm x 300mm matt mid grey ceramic tile engineered for secure footing. It will be laid in a criss cross pattern. The effect, especially with chairs rather than pews, will be to make the church lighter and brighter.

The positioning of the chairs will dictate the aisles but having a uniformity of colour across the nave and chancel gives the opportunity to make use of colour co-ordinated carpet runners for weddings or special occasions.

If the floor is level will we be able to see the service leaders and preachers?

That is pretty much how it is now. However, it is most likely that a mobile platform will be used to raise those who need to be seen as they preach and lead communion. Worship leaders and musicians will be on the same level as the congregation, but again with a level floor and extensive cable trunking installed throughout, their positioning will not have to be limited to just one area of the church.

Can we still kneel to take Communion?

Yes. We will endeavour to raise the communion rails so they still comfortable for those wishing to kneel to take the bread and wine.

Will we be keeping the existing heating system?

No. The Diocese of Bristol has requested that churches should move away from gas fired heating to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and help reduce our carbon footprint. Therefore, the existing noisy heat exchangers (radiators) will be replaced by a number of wall mounted infrared heating units.

Modern infrared heating has been successfully adopted by other local churches, St Michael's Church Winterbourne and St Matthews Kingsdown, and has the advantage of giving almost instant heat to the congregation rather than having to expend time and energy heating up huge volumes of air.

However, as the flooring is being replaced the decision has been taken to install the basic pipework for an underfloor heating system. Doing this work now, and for a relatively low expenditure, would drastically reduce future expense if additional low-level heating was ever required.

Are we changing the seating? If so, why?

The current seating is a mishmash of pews and different types of plastic chairs, most of which are old and well worn. The pews, of which many have already been removed because of their poor condition, are of no significant historical value, are uncomfortable, damage and splinter easily and many are unstable.

What will the new seating offer?

The new seating, combined with the new level flooring, will bring an aesthetic conformity to the interior. The chairs are ergonomically designed for greater comfort and have already been used in many churches and cathedrals throughout the UK.

Being lightweight individual chairs, some with armrests, they will also give greater flexibility with seating arrangements, especially for those smaller groups that use the church during the week and making temporary space for wheelchair users. Individual chairs will also give a more comfortable defined capacity during busy services eliminating the practise of inappropriate shoehorning of people into pews.



Will we have cushions and kneelers

Whilst the new seating will be wood - more hygienic and easier to keep clean than upholstered seating - there will be the option for seating pads (and kneelers) if required.

Will there be book holders?

Yes, provision will be made for service books and Bibles where needed.

Are we able to buy any of the redundant pews?

Yes. Please inform the church admin office if you have an interest in making an offer on any of the existing pews the number to call is 0117 969 2486 or email admin@stmichaelsbristol.org

Did you think about taking out the columns to improve visibility?

This idea was considered and put forward to the Diocesan Advisory Committee – the church equivalent to local planning – but this proved to be a step too far for many of the legislative bodies that need to be consulted when making such extensive changes to church buildings.

The work was designed and costed but ultimately proved to be a hindrance to ever being able to get the project agreed in anything like a sensible time scale.

We did not fully appreciate that the pillars were one of the more unusual features of the 1770's church.

Will we be able to use the church whilst the work is being done?

No – There will be major construction work both inside and outside the church.

The sequencing is likely to be as follows...

Outside: A new sewer will be laid from the existing vestry to link in with the preschool drainage.

A new three phase electricity supply will be installed via the direction of the churchyard gate leading to the station car park. An old door on the west wall of the vestry will be opened and a new one constructed. A new footpath will be laid between the church entrance and the existing vestry.

Inside: We'll also want to remove other items from the church for safekeeping and plumbing.

All the floors will be lifted and prepared for membranes, insulation, pipework, trunking, levelling and tiling.

The vestry door will be lowered and the tower room prepared to become the vestry.

Partition walling will be built in the 'old' vestry and toilet and units for the kitchen area installed.

Finally the church will be redecorated

How long will all this take?

Our architect considers 4-6 months to be a reasonable timescale.

Where will the 9am service be held during this period?

The Lower Hall, adjacent to the Coffee Shop will become the temporary home for the 9;00am congregation.

FINANCIAL COSTS

Tenders

At the time of writing, we are awaiting tenders on the project. These Tenders will be assessed by both the fabric team and the PCC of the Church.

We will be doing so under the advisement of our Architect, who will be project managing the works.

Our current estimates for the project are in the table below

Refurbishment of Church (Outgoings)	Cost
Building works (inc flooring, toilets, vestry move)	£350,000
Three phase supply	£10,000
Heating	£46,000
Chairs	£58,000
Architect fees	£7,832
Sundries and contingency	£10,000
Total (Prices inclusive of VAT)	£481,832

Contributions so far

We have 77k given towards the project via the St Michaels Church Centre trustees.

There is 125k of accrued monthly gifts by generous donors to the Heart of the Community.

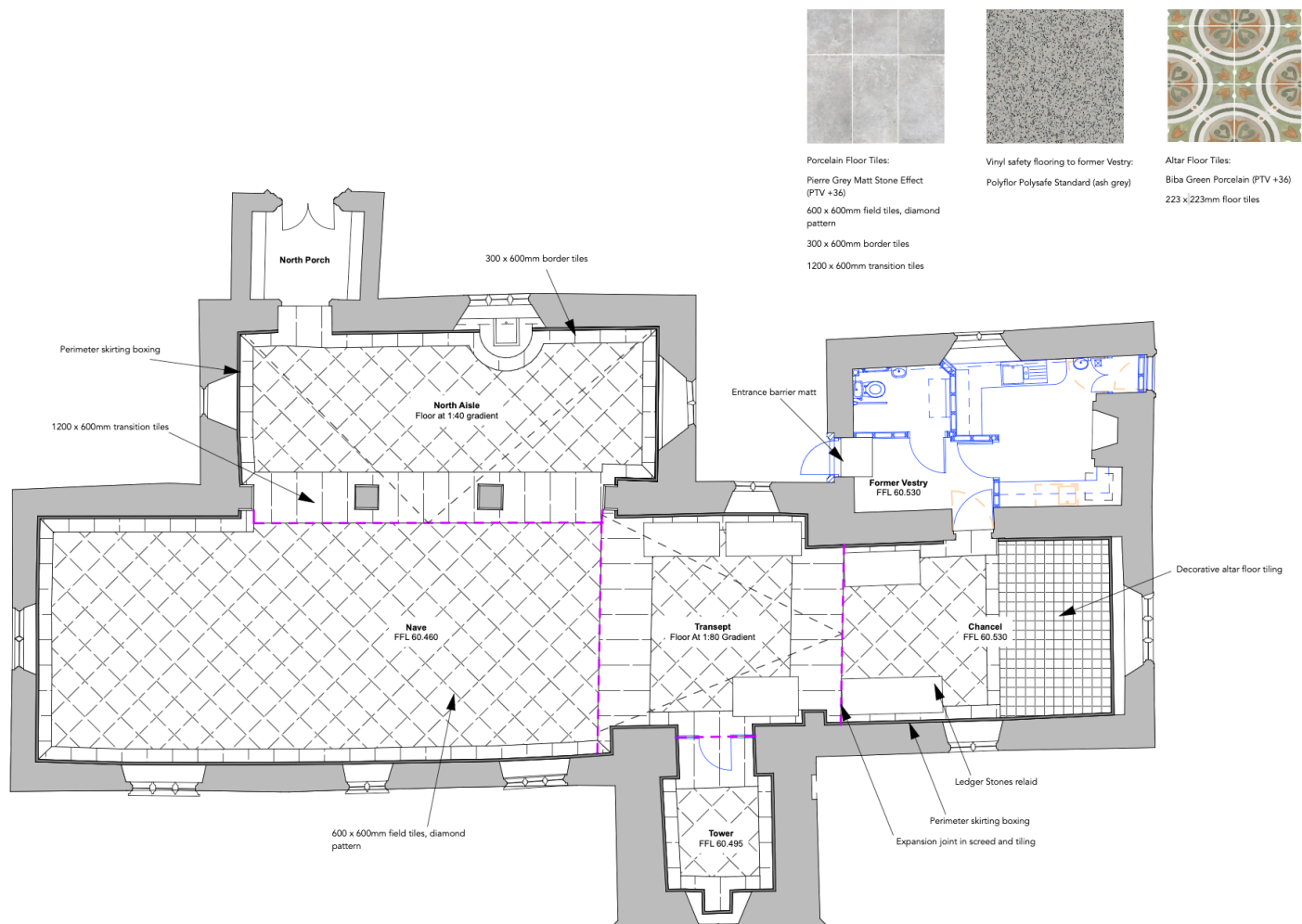
Our recent Gift day has raised, so far, £116,421

We are also applying to a variety of trusts to fund the project.

Refurbishment of Church (Income)	Gifts so far
Donations from HOTC via SMCC	£77,000
Gifts accrued from Monthly donations so far (including gift aid)	£37,658
Gift Day on 18 May	£121,000
Other donations over five years (ongoing donations 20,400k per annum)	£102,000
Tithe to be donated	-£12,000
Grants needed	£156,000
Total income	£481,658

(Currently, we are 156k short of all the funds needed to complete the project-barring Grants received)

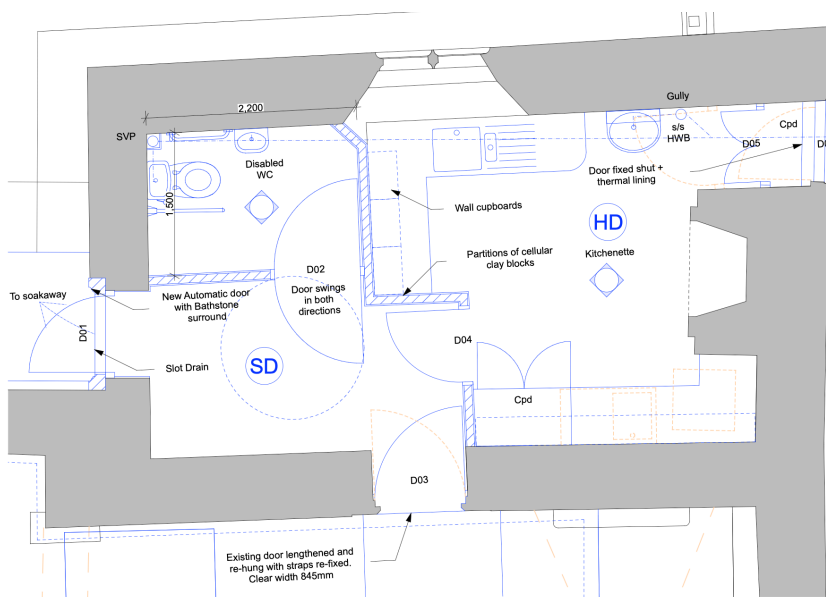
Detailed plan



Chairs



Toilet



Infrared Heating



Nave and Side Aisle



Chancel



Nave



Nave Rear

Floor Tiles



Porcelain Floor Tiles:

Pierre Grey Matt Stone Effect
(PTV +36)

600 x 600mm field tiles, diamond
pattern

300 x 600mm border tiles

1200 x 600mm transition tiles



Vinyl safety flooring to former Vestry:

Polyflor Polysafe Standard (ash grey)



Altar Floor Tiles:

Biba Green Porcelain (PTV +36)

223 x 223mm floor tiles