

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, STAPLEFORD

Community Consultation: Vision for Buildings



Sustaining and developing a wonderful building

Enabling inclusion, access and participation

Protecting the environment

Ensuring a successful future

Summary

St Andrew's Church is the only church in our growing village. It is a beautiful building in a lovely setting. We want to look after it and develop it to satisfy the village's changing needs. The church will continue to be a focus for Christian worship and celebration.

More than that we want it be accessible and inclusive, suitable for events already organised by the church for the community e.g. our growing groups for toddlers (Little Fishes), seniors (JOY), and to encourage participation from people across the village e.g. for music and other community events. We also want to transform the sustainability of the building and to ensure that it fulfils its potential for Stapleford in decades to come.

Working with renowned local firm Archangel Architects, the PCC (church council) has developed a plan that encompasses:

- Replastering the ceiling in the nave to prevent further plaster falls.
- A new heating system, based on chandelier infrared heaters, to provide comfort, controllability and reliability, and to substantially reduce carbon emissions.
- Better lighting to show off the historic beauty of the building and make it easier for people to see and participate. It will be more sustainable, increase flexibility and simplify maintenance.
- Segmenting the space within the church to suit to smaller meetings.
- Chairs, instead of pews, in the nave (main space in the church) to give greater comfort, safety and flexibility.
- Retaining the beautiful and comfortable pews in the chancel (east end of the church) to make connections to the history of the building.
- New facilities to provide refreshments to welcome people.
- A level-access floor throughout to make it much easier for people in wheelchairs, or people who are unsteady on their feet, to gain access to all parts of the building.
- A fully-accessible toilet in the vestry to make the building more pleasant and accessible.
- Moving the font to near the main door of the church to make it easier for the families and friends of people being baptised to participate in the service.
- Glass doors to open the view into the church and make it easier and safer to enter the building.

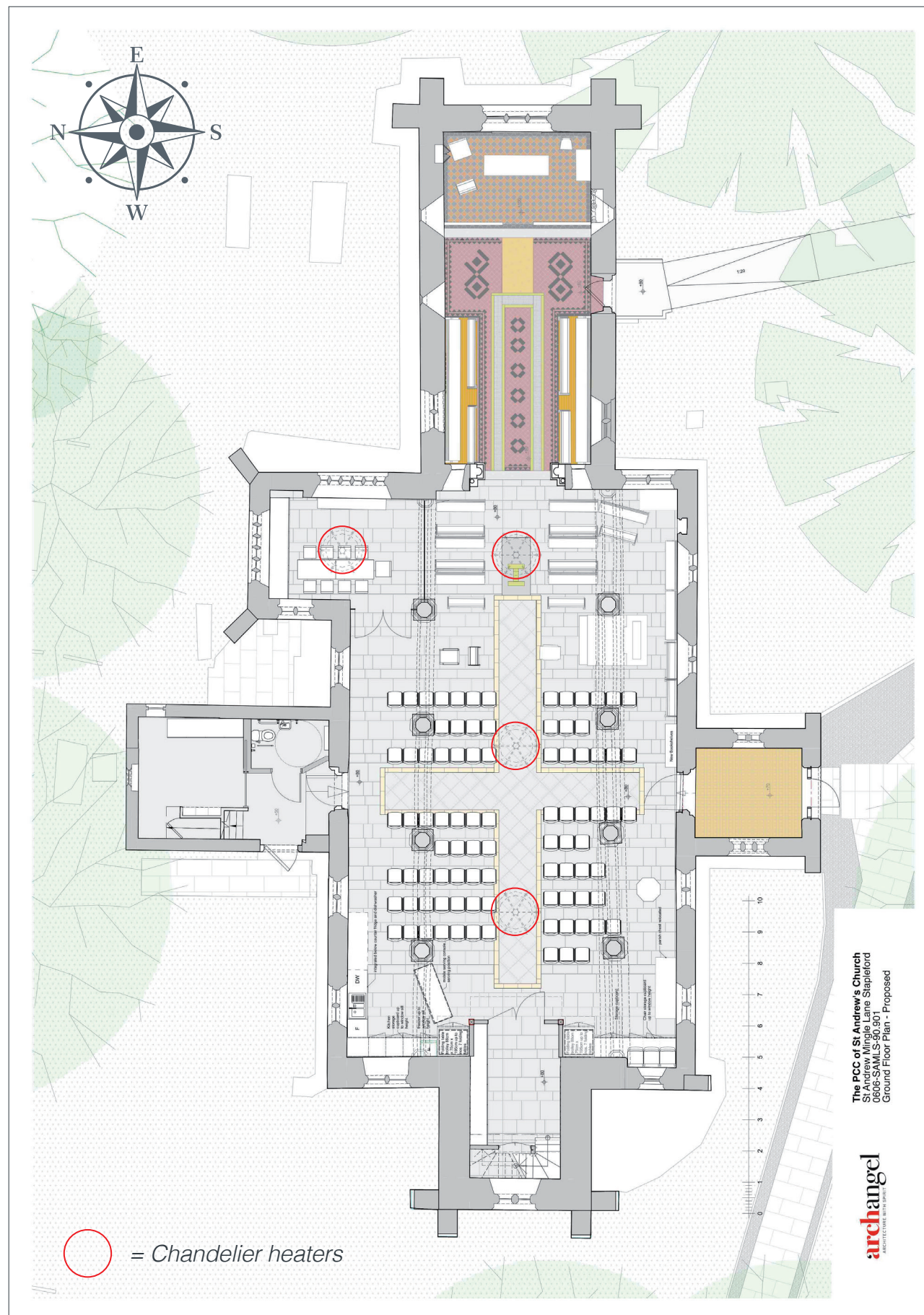
Our aim is that future generations will look back at the changes we make now and be glad that they were well done.

Working with Quantity Surveyors CB3, we have costed this work. Including VAT and the Architect's fees, the work will cost approximately £1.1M.

The rest of this document explains the proposed changes. The draft Statement of Significance (available at www.standrewstapleford.org/visionproject) explains the church's architectural, historical and cultural importance.

The PCC (church council) is keen to hear your views about the plans as members of Stapleford community.

Plan view of proposals



Context and purpose

Stapleford has a population of about 1975 (2021 Census). Many people in our community have never, or rarely, been to church. However many people in our community recognise the value of the church to the village.

Our community is expanding, recently through a major sheltered housing development and care home. We anticipate significant house building within the next decade. We want to be ready to serve our new neighbours.

The layout of the church building is constraining us in providing services that our community welcomes, e.g. Little Fishes, JOY and Messy/Forest Church. The Johnson Hall is too small for many of the groups that meet there regularly, but the current layout of the church building makes it unsuitable to serve their needs.

The plan described below is designed to:

- sustain and develop a wonderful building
- enable inclusion, access and participation
- protect the environment
- ensure a successful future

Nave ceiling plaster

Ceiling plaster in the nave has fallen several times over the last few years and presents a significant danger to people. Temporary netting has provided protection but the plaster needs to be repaired wholesale to provide a long term solution.

We plan to replace the nave ceiling plaster with similar plaster to that which is already there. Other ceiling solutions risk damaging the rest of the building and are inconsistent with a listed building.

Heating

The church is committed to getting as close to net zero carbon emissions as it can. The current gas fired boiler is very old and unreliable and is close to being unrepairable.

We looked at the pattern of usage of the church building. It is used mainly on Sundays, typically for two or three services for a total of 90 people, and lightly during the week for music, prayer and concerts. (The Johnson Hall, 200m down the road, is used fairly intensively for small events for many community groups.) We aim to use the church building more with the planned changes, and to encourage participation from people across the village e.g. for music and other community events. It will still be relatively lightly used.

We then looked at a wide range of new heating systems including a replacement gas boiler, infrared heaters (overhead and wall-mounted), heat pumps (air source and ground source, with and without underfloor heating), under-pew heating and heated seat cushions.

We plan to replace the boiler and radiators with Herschel Halo infrared chandelier heaters (illustrated below) in the nave and Lady Chapel. The proposed position of the four heaters is shown in the plan view above. We have visited several churches where they have been installed, experienced them in use and talked to the churches about their experience of the chandelier heaters. Their appearance and performance fit the needs of our church well. The infrared heating elements do not visibly glow.



Chandelier heaters will substantially improve the energy efficiency and controllability of the heating system. Infrared heaters heat surfaces and people; the gas boiler heats very large volumes of air, which then rise and exit the building. Although this may not reduce our energy bills, because of the high price of electricity compared to gas, it will substantially reduce our energy consumption. We already purchase our electricity 100% from renewables, and will continue to do so. Moving to electrical heating will allow us to take a major step forwards in our aim to reach net zero carbon.

In the chancel, we plan to use under-pew heaters and a wall mounted infrared heater behind the communion table, not least to preserve the character of the most distinctive and historic part of the building. We will use infrared panel heaters in the upper and lower vestry and toilet.

Lighting

The current lights are poorly designed, inefficient, unreliable, hard to repair and inflexible. Better lighting would show off the historic beauty of the building and make it easier for people to see, read and participate. It would also simplify maintenance.

Herschel Halo heaters include LED up- and down-lighters, but they will be insufficient to light the nave. We plan to install a system of LED lights to accentuate the beauty of the building, improve quality of illumination and light only those sections of the building that are being used. We will also design LED lights for the chancel, in a way that complements the nave lighting. We will update the lighting in the porch, vestry and tower with LED lights.

The interior of the church is made much darker by the presence of large yew trees close to the windows. We are taking advice about whether we can reshape or remove some of these trees so as to maximise natural light entering the building and reduce the carbon footprint of the church.

Segmenting the space

We plan to separate off the Lady Chapel from the nave using glass partition walls and to heat it independently. This will enable separate children's work to take place during services and make it easier to use the Lady Chapel for prayer. We will incorporate built-in storage within the Lady Chapel, e.g. for storing children's craft activities, along the north wall of the Lady Chapel, and new wall-mounted communion table on the east wall to replace the large freestanding table. Entry will be by glazed double doors on the west side.

We also plan to separate off a space under the bell tower for use, e.g. as a crèche, and to provide a staircase for safe access to the ringing chamber (replacing the near-vertical ladder that is currently used for access). We will incorporate full height, built-in storage along the north wall. There will also be storage underneath the staircase. The design of the staircase will be open to allow light to enter from the west window. Entry to the creche area will be by glazed double doors which can be left open when we want to include the area in high-attendance special services.

Seating

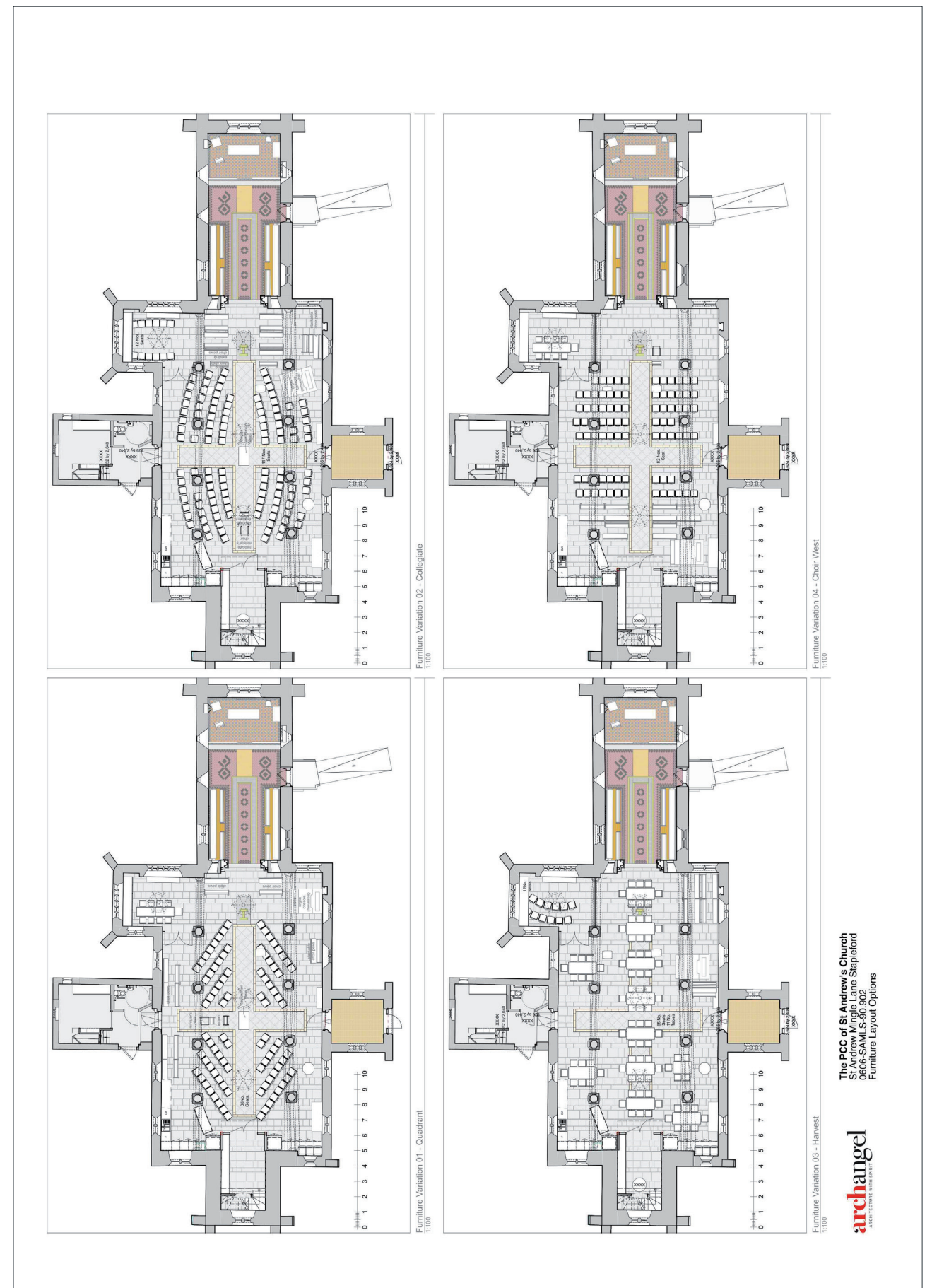
The pews in the nave are dark and very uncomfortable due to their low height and the shape and size of the upright backs. (They date from mid- to late-nineteenth century.) The raised wooden linking rails also present a trip hazard. The pews limit the flexibility of the main church space to enable different styles of service and alternative uses, such as harvest suppers or concerts.



We plan to remove pews from the nave, replacing them with Howe 40/4, Trinity Theo or equivalent chairs with timber back and seat. (Chair samples, with and without arms, are available to see in the church.) They are attractive, robust, manoeuvrable and stackable. The plan overleaf shows examples of how the chairs could be arranged for different events.

We will retain the more architecturally and historically interesting pews in the chancel. We will continue to use the moveable choir pews and stalls, and make a space to store surplus choir furniture in the south aisle of the nave.

Plan view of flexible seating options



Accessibility and welcome

In developing these plans we have thought about ways to improve accessibility: physical, visual, aural and mental.

Flooring

At present there is a step down from the porch into the church, and then steps up into the vestry (where the toilet is) and chancel. We considered retaining the existing flooring and installing ramps to improve accessibility into the nave, into the vestry and into the chancel. This would be cheaper than levelling the whole nave floor, but would look messy, require substantial renovation after moving the pews, and limit our ability to use the space flexibly.

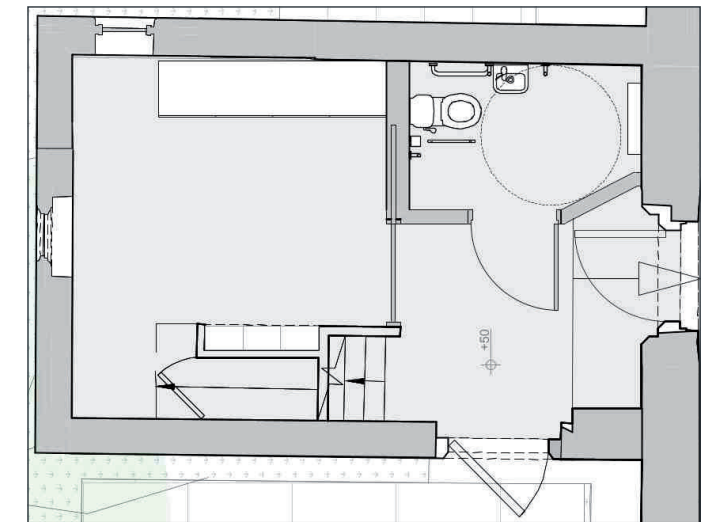


We plan to use natural materials that are compatible with the ancient building whenever possible, e.g. locally sourced limestone for the floor. The photo of All Saints, Harston show what a floor like this can look like.

We will not change the chancel floor. To provide visual and historic links to the current nave floor, and visual continuity with the chancel floor, we plan to use some of the old floor tiles from the nave within the new floor, e.g. around the edges of the nave or to mark out walkways within the nave. We will take advice from the flooring company about a suitable stone colour. Ideally this will brighten the nave and be compatible with the chancel.

Toilet

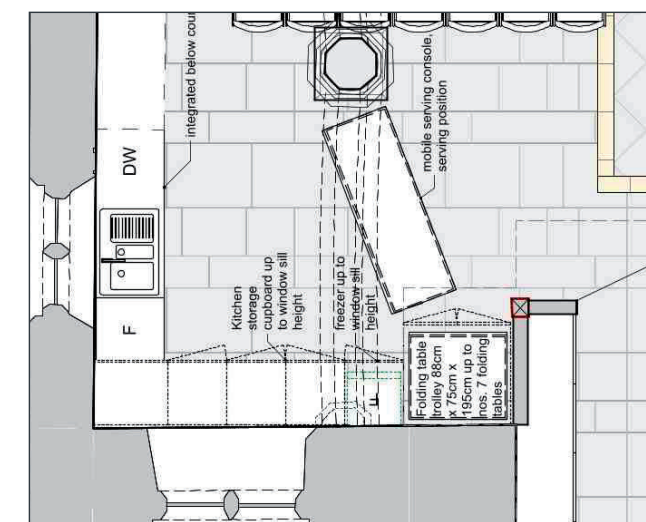
We will install a fully accessible toilet in the vestry to make the building more pleasant and usable. The design of the accessible toilet satisfies the relevant regulations and retains space within the vestry for the choir to robe. The toilet includes a baby-changing unit.



The lower vestry incorporates full height wardrobes for storing choir robes. We will remove the current, very cramped toilet in the north east corner of the lower vestry and the cramped, dilapidated sink and cupboard area on the north wall.

Refreshments

Current arrangements for serving refreshments do not work well. The kitchen facilities are in the vestry and are very basic. To serve tea and coffee to the congregation we have to set up



tables in the cramped space at the rear of the church, and go through the church with hot urns. At the west end of the north wall, we will create a kitchen area – incorporating an integrated sink, fridge and dishwasher that will be disguised, using a folding top, when not in use – and a mobile serving console that can be used for refreshments. The mobile console will be stored against the north wall when not in use.

We have also designed built-in storage on the west wall 'full height' (up to window sill level) at the back of the church, either side of the tower, including areas for storage of folding Gopak tables and unused stacks of chairs on mobile trolleys. We will move the parish chest from the west wall to the south wall, creating space by moving book shelves further east (now positioned next to the main door).

The designs of the storage areas, kitchen facility and serving console will use high quality woodwork, consistent with the quality of the building.

Doors

We plan to replace the current outer glass doors in the porch with new glass doors that remove the risk of injury caused by the current door closure mechanism. We will ensure that the new designs provide a good air seal to avoid unnecessary thermal loss. We plan to re-use the David Peace glass inscription in the current door, potentially in glass screens in the space beneath the organ loft.

We also plan to replace the wooden doors from the porch to the nave with glass doors to make the church more inviting and open.

Font

We plan to move the font to near the main door of the church, close to its historic position before the Victorian restoration, which will make it easier for the families and friends of people being baptised to participate in the service. The current location of the font, below the organ, is cramped.

Costs

These costs were estimated by Quantity Surveyor CB3 (Feb 2026).

Task	Total (£)
Works to existing vestry to form accessible WC	23,000
Works to the west end to form creche and new staircase to bell ringing floor	28,800
Built in storage and kitchenette facility	28,800
Flooring to nave, including removal of pews	151,300
New doors to porch	14,400
Glazed screen and door to Lady Chapel / children's work	36,900
Replaster central nave ceiling	88,000
Internal lighting & audio visual system	87,500
Infrared heaters	69,200
Other scope items to be agreed	14,500
Preliminaries assuming all works are completed in a single phase	143,800
Contingency	106,400
Sub-total	792,600
VAT (20%)	158,500
Archangel Architect fees (10%)	95,100
Total	1,046,200

This total excludes the cost of chairs, for example:

- **Theo:** 90 chairs @ £280 each; 10 chairs with arms @ £340 each = £28,600 excluding delivery and installation.
- **Howe 40/4:** 90 chairs @ £305 each; 10 chairs with arms @ £401 each = £31,500 excluding delivery and installation.

Example fund raising

Target total: £1,080,000. For example, this could be made up from donations of:

300 x £100	100 x £500	20 x £5,000	10 x £50,000	2 x £200,000
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Next steps and feedback

Please give feedback, **by the end of October**, ideally using the Google form on the church website (www.standrewstapleford.org/visionproject).

Alternatively:

- fill out the form overleaf and return it to the box in the church porch or post it to **Verger’s Cottage, 1 Gog Magog Way, Stapleford, Cambridge CB22 5BQ**
- send an e-mail to **admin@standrewstapleford.org**

We will take all feedback carefully into account in finalising our plans.

Once the PCC has reviewed all of the feedback from the congregation and community, we will update the plans for St Andrew’s, seek approval to proceed from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Ely and start fund raising.

Feedback form

The PCC (church council) is keen to hear your views about the proposed plans as members of the Stapleford community.

Name	
Questions	Feedback
(1) How do you feel about the proposed changes, taken together? Please tick:	☐ Strongly supportive ☐ Reasonably supportive ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat concerned ☐ Very concerned
(2) We may only be able to proceed with some of the proposed changes. Which parts of the proposed plans do you see as most important? Why?	
(3) Which parts of the proposed changes give you concern? Why?	
(4) What could we do instead to make the church building more suited to Stapleford’s needs in decades to come?	
(5) Are you interested in helping to fund the proposed changes or to help raise funds? Please tick:	☐ Interested ☐ Not interested ☐ Prefer not to say
(6) Do you want to be kept up to date with the progress of the project at St Andrew’s? If so, what email address may we use to contact you?	
(7) What other comments do you want to make?	

Please continue overleaf if you need extra space. Thank you.

Notes / extra space for comments