

At almost 800 years old the Grade II* listed, St Mary's Church Hook is the oldest building in Hook, Goole and the surrounding area.

Recent research has brought up the possibility that it may have significant, unique, extant Saxon origins.

But the building is **in need of restoration**:

- to regular use by a wide group of people and as a vital centre for church and community life (as it was for 750 years of its existence).
- of the roof, stones and windows, parts of which are worn out and need some major work to prevent the building deteriorating rapidly.

Those working to achieve this restoration have identified that in recent years the national funding landscape has changed from 'funding to maintain heritage', to 'only funding the maintenance of heritage which is impacting positively on a wide group of people'.

(See: Futurekraf Community Survey Report, The Taylor Review 2017 p35.8; current NHLF funding schemes and the Church of England's / Diocese of Sheffield's increasing reluctance to solely maintain traditional church in historic churches.)

This means that without well managed, increased church and community use of the building it is impossible to access considerable funds needed to tackle urgent restoration work.

But the building is unsuitable for such increased use because it's current fixtures and fittings were installed in 1844 when the needs of the community were different.



Church full of 1844 poor quality pine pews creates inflexible, one use space.



Illustration of how the church and manor house may have looked in 1304 when the Lord of the Manor of Hook was High Sheriff of Yorkshire

The overarching need is then: for a comprehensive project which resolves the problems with restoration and ongoing maintenance. Within this:

The primary need is to make the church fit for purpose for 21st Century use. This will enable the building to be restored to wider usage by the church and community and regain an importance in the life of a many of all ages. As a result it will have an increased positive impact on the lives of many, funding will be possible and long term maintenance plausible - as those who benefit from using the building will provide / work to provide the resources to support it's ongoing upkeep throughout this century. *(As the Taylor report envisages)*

But the secondary need is to ensure that as usage increases the necessary restoration of the fabric is not lost sight of but achieved swiftly so that the ongoing use into the 21st Century is not interrupted..

And an interconnected need is to secure proposed activities which will indeed grow and develop to the point where the building is restored to great significance in the life of many and therefore the ongoing funding is forthcoming to oversee and maintain the building and activities in it.



Illustration of how the church may have looked in Medieval Times with Nave used daily by the community and Sanctuary kept 'holy'.

Needs for Fabric restoration.

- **A clear, timed plan** as to when and how various items of fabric restoration are to be achieved. This should be informed by further investigations and specific reports which provide the necessary additional information to the QI, DAC advice and other already received reports.
- **A funding strategy** to achieve these repairs based on consultation with potential funders and ongoing 'business plan'.

Interconnected needs

- **Activity and budgeted business plan** projected in one, five and ten year segments and supported by letters of support from potential users.



The Church 'Full to Bursting' for School Services

Needs for proposed future uses - identified from community consultation, events and correspondence - include further storage, better parking and access, more separate rooms, better link to school and moated site.

Needs for 21st Century use

General needs - Modern Facilities – It is self evident but also confirmed by our research into other church restorations, observation of community spaces; information supplied by user groups; Taylor Review (p20.2) our experience of contemporary & traditional worship & Diocesan strategy documents that the following modern facilities are required by 21st Century users:

- **Accessible Toilet(s),**
- **Refreshment making and washing up facilities,**
- **DDA appropriate alterations and designs,**
- **Flexible space / flexible seating / tables** – different user groups need different layouts for their activities. Too much rigidity will preclude some users (as is currently the case).
- **Neat storage,**
- **Adequate Fire Escapes,**
- **Decent lighting,**
- **Efficient heating,**
- **Effective AV**

These further specific needs for current uses of St Mary's have been identified. (they will also benefit proposed increased users):

- **Preservation, of further research into and interpretation of significant heritage.** We are aiming to restore that which is significant to significance. In order to do so further research into the possible Saxon past, wall paintings, history of the stained glass, unique Poskitt Oak Memorial board, Jacobean table and chair and Tudor chair is needed. This needs then to be followed by improved interpretation of these so that maximum benefit is gained from this heritage and support given to its ongoing care.
- **maximum capacity** for some funerals and for school services the current building can be full to bursting. To accommodate this is vital as these people represent the expanded user groups we need to attract, therefore any intervention must be space efficient.
- **Bats** We love our bats and environmental issues, There is a need for the restoration to be ecologically sensitive.

Major needs which affect possible solutions to specific needs.

- **Heritage / Beauty / Aesthetic** — as a dearly loved, highly significant to the local community and church, Grade II* listed building there is an overarching need to ensure that all work is done to a fitting standard and style. The atmosphere of the building should continue to be 'uplifting' and build appropriately on the past whilst preserving, enhancing and protecting significant heritage.
- **Flexibility** — Current needs dictate some of the way the building is, but as a major piece of work which aims to open up use they and any suggested interventions must not preclude uses which might easily develop in the near or mid term future and which might be significant in serving the community or church needs which develop. Therefore we need good flexibility.
We note the various interesting ideas which have been put forward in the feasibility process and want to ensure that we can arrange the church in different orientations and formats for some of these creative, potentially life-giving suggested possible uses.
- **Value for Money / Do-Ability** — If the church is to be restored and activities develop here, this needs to be done quickly as the heritage is at risk and the current users are predominantly ageing and will over time have less and less ability to 'rescue' the church. Thus an overly large fund raising effort is likely to be fruitless and create backward rather than forward momentum. Therefore the proposed works need to be balanced against cost and set up in do-able stages which create ongoing momentum toward completion.
- **Safety / Uncluttered** — All elements of the design have to be as much as we can identify safe for all possible uses and achieve the highest possible level of DDA compatibility, as the law requires and as we value all users equally and want them to be able to use all our facilities easily and well.
- **Clear Pleasing Signage** — The often 'afterthought' printed labels and signs put up later in an unattractive way need to be avoided by thinking through and incorporating good signage and flexible signage solutions.

Specific needs

- **Maximum Capacity** — as noted there are current, very important occasions for community and church (funerals, schools services) when the building is full to bursting some of which are only possible by means of labour-some 'temporary' arrangements such as temporary removal of the front pews or temporary sound feeds outside. Enabling these to continue necessitates that the restoration be achieved with minimum impact on maximum capacity and in ways which improve the practicality and speed of set up for these and other larger events. Risk assessments for maximum capacity events have identified that additional easy to use exits would be beneficial to fire escape issues and to ease of use of the building we think this is a necessary improvement.
- **Simplicity and Ease Of Use** — Ease of use is the balance against which flexibility must be weighed for if it is difficult for user groups to set up for their activities they will most likely cease to use or not use the venue. This is particularly true for regular events and 'short' activities. For example usual capacity for Sunday morning baptism services of which we have 35 a year or so is between 70-100 persons, they happen shortly after our church service. The usual set up of the 'flexible' space needs to be such that these two types of service can happen quickly well and easily without 'wearing out' the volunteers who set up / put away for either.
- **Accessible Toilet(s)** – an outside toilet, down a path, as present, does not function well, is not good for safeguarding and is not welcoming. It is quite clear then the toilet(s) need to be inside the building. Toilet noise is problematic to worship and events like concerts. It is therefore necessary for toilet(s) to be aurally separated from the Nave.

Specific needs - continued

- **Refreshment Making and Washing Up Facilities** — Whilst there is a need for these at almost all current activities and most projected activities, the need is not for full catering capacity, apart from on some 'unique' occasions when outside caterers could be used to supply this. So to serve the church and the groups who use it what is needed is neat safe ways to provide hot and cold drinks and distribute them to participants and then easily clean up. Issues like good waste management (for example - not having plastic bags hung on cupboard hooks or over chairs to gather 'disposables' in) need to be incorporated into the design as well as ensuring that enough volunteers are easily able to hand out or clear up. This may best be achieved by 'separate' serving facilities to 'washing up space'.
- **DDA Appropriate Alterations and Designs** — DDA guidance clearly looks to accommodate all with disabilities and doesn't just refer to those with access or hearing issues. There is a need to help those who are visually impaired and have other 'disabilities' which are sometimes overlooked, for example our current choir vestry door is not sufficiently in contrast to its door frame to be suitable as a disabled toilet entrance. However there are times when the 'needs' of disabled users are overemphasised against the needs of others i.e. the use of unattractive yellow on blue writing for all signage or computer visuals or overloud sound systems which aim too much to help the hard of hearing but are off putting to those who can hear. The right compromises need to be identified carefully to ensure that DDA compatibility works for all users.
- **Flexible Space / Flexible Seating / Tables** — versatile, easily stored, attractive, hard wearing, easy to move chairs and tables will provide for the greatest number of activities and layouts of the building for different user groups and provide good long term, value for money usability.
- **Neat Storage** — given the limited size of the building, the need for maximum capacity on some occasions and the desire for beauty, creative and careful solutions to storage are needed. A proper assessment of current storage needs and future possibilities has shown that sufficient storage for regular activities is possible in the church, but additional storage in a separate building in the church yard will be necessary in the future.
- **Decent Lighting** — This is not only important for ease of use but to ensure good communication. The current lighting whilst not being overly attractive is generally of a good level and efficient with led bulbs. There is however a need for some 'accent' lighting to help with communication.
- **Efficient Heating** — A full heating specification addresses this area.
- **Effective AV** — A full AV specification addresses this area.
- **Ecology** — Not only is there a need to care for our planet but there are also specific environmental needs in regard to bats and trees with TPOs at St Mary's and in the churchyard
- **Archeology** — The usual archeological investigations are of course necessary, but there are also additional investigations into the possible Saxon heritage and into other heritage which will help ensure the significant parts of the received heritage are properly cared for and enhanced.