

BEVERLEY MINSTER AND BEVERLEY, ST MARY

Beverley, HU17 0DP

N Bar Within, Beverley, HU17 8DL

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1084028	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	643223	Average Weekly Attendance	351.25
Deprivation Indices	Medium ⁰¹	No. of Residents in Parish	20,500
Footprint (m ²)	3489 (very big)	Annual Visitors	80,000
Building Period	Medieval	Website	http://beverleyminster.org.uk/

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1162693	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	643227	Average Weekly Attendance	172.5
Deprivation Indices	Low ⁰²	No. of Residents in Parish	5,000
Footprint (m ²)	1552 (very big)	Annual Visitors	25,000
Building Period	Norman	Website	https://stmarysbeverley.org/



Beverley Minster Exterior



Beverley St Mary Exterior

⁰¹ Statistics based on the Government's 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation. For Church of England ecclesiastical parish statistics, please see <http://www2.cuf.org.uk/poverty-lookup-tool>

⁰² Ibid.

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Beverley boasts two Major Parish Churches.
- St Mary's was founded in the twelfth century.
- Beverley Minster was founded in the eighth century.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Beverley Minster is one of the finest Gothic buildings in Europe, while St Mary's is regarded as one of the finest examples of a late medieval church.
- St Mary's is thought of as the 'town's church'. Its quality demonstrates the generosity of the town's trading and mercantile community over 400 years.
- Beverley Minster is long-established as a site of pilgrimage and has had a strong influence in the region.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- St Mary's has a repair costs of over £5 million (£6 million including the organ).
- Beverley Minster has repair costs of over £8 million.
- Both churches are expected to operate as places of pilgrimage and tourism and as centres for wide-reaching community activity in addition to parochial ministry.



Beverley Minster Interior



Beverley St Mary East Window

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Beverley boasts two fine churches, one at either end of the picturesque town. Beverley Minster is huge, imposing and among the finest Gothic structures in Europe. It is an icon of Beverley and the East Riding of Yorkshire, with a profile that extends across the country and beyond. St Mary's is lesser known, but equally fine in execution. It is often mistaken for the Minster by visitors to Beverley who are unaware that the town is home to two Major Parish Churches. Historically, a rivalry between St Mary's, the 'town's church' and the establishment's Minster has been played out through different approaches to ministry and purpose.

The challenges facing each church are different, but there is commonality. Building repairs are among both churches' principal anxieties, with St Mary's having to meet urgent repair costs of over £5 million plus £1 million to rebuild the organ and the Minster has repair costs of over £8 million. To avoid competing for the same, limited sources of grant aid, St Mary's and the Minster have begun working more closely together, eschewing historic rivalry in favour of collaboration and forging a future of mutual support that will also have a significant benefit to the town of Beverley. This is likely to be the first time two parishes in one town have developed such a project and approached funders jointly.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDINGS⁰³

“The history and heritage of these buildings, and how we communicate this, is bound up with our mission”⁰⁴

BEVERLEY MINSTER

The site of Beverley Minster has been home to a place of worship for approximately 1,300 years. It is widely accepted that it derived its pre-Conquest influence from association with Bishop John of Beverley (also previously bishop of Hexham and York) and is the site of Inderawuda, where, according to Bede, John founded a monastery on his retirement in c.700. This was completed in 731. Pilgrimage to John of Beverley's tomb, which is thought to have remained in its original position at the east end of the nave since his burial in 721, undoubtedly contributed to the Minster's accrual of both wealth and power, and facilitated successive building campaigns which continued until the fifteenth century.

The Minster's re-foundation as a collegiate church of secular canons is commonly attributed to King Aethelstan in the early tenth century, although some scholars consider its establishment to be the result of a gradual process of endowment, retrospectively assigned to Aethelstan for the prestige of royal patronage. Although little is known of this late Saxon church, it is clear that Archbishop Cynesige (1051-1060) was responsible for the addition of a stone tower to the existing church which received a new presbytery and gilded ceiling between 1060-1069 under Archbishop Eadred.

There is no written record of building work in the Norman period, although chevron-decorated masonry of c.1120-1160 reused in the nave triforium, and excavated twelfth-century buttresses beneath those of the present nave, indicate a substantial Romanesque structure. It can be assumed that this was the building seriously damaged by the fire of 1188, recorded by Roger of Howden. The fall of the central tower catalysed the complete rebuilding of the church, and the building which followed, with its double transepts and rectilinear footprint, has survived to the present day.

A new shrine for St John was commissioned in 1298, and it was completed in 1309, a year after the high altar was consecrated. The workmen of the fourteenth century replaced the Norman nave with a structure that, despite being under construction almost a century later than its eastern counterpart, is in architectural unity with that existing work.

⁰³ The 'History' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

⁰⁴ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher (incumbent of Beverley Minster) and Revd Becky Lumley (incumbent of St Mary's)

As a result of the Reformation, the college of secular canons was dissolved alongside any remaining religious guilds and chantries in 1547, and the Minster and associated buildings were granted to Sir Michael Stanhope. It became a parish church and by 1552 was reported to be in a state of decay; the town of Beverley itself was also in decline. At the end of the seventeenth century the Medieval central tower had developed serious signs of structural stress. There followed a substantial restorative building campaign in the early eighteenth century led by Nicholas Hawksmoor and implemented by William Thornton. Many of the Georgian alterations, however, did not survive the next century.

The increased wealth allowed the Minster to instigate significant programmes of work in the nineteenth century, primarily concerned with aesthetic and liturgical considerations. Re-ordering in the 1820s under Thomas Rickman was followed by restoration in the 1860s and 1870s by George Gilbert Scott.

The arrival of the railway in Beverley and the opening of the line to Hull in 1846 transformed trade in the town and resulted in the development of industries including shipbuilding, ironworking, engineering and tanning. Expansion of these industries, and development of the racecourse, resulted in revival of the town and allowed investment in both the Minster and St Mary's.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES – BEVERLEY MINSTER

- Bishop John of York, later St John of Beverley, founded a monastery on his retirement in c.700 at the site of Inderawuda. This may be apocryphal.
- The Minster is re-founded as a collegiate church of secular canons in the early tenth century.
- A new stone tower was added to the existing church, which also received a new presbytery and gilded ceiling between 1060 and 1069.
- The church is severely damaged by fire in 1188 and extensively re-built.
- A new shrine of St John of Beverley is completed in 1309.
- The college of secular canons is dissolved in 1547 and the church rapidly falls into a state of disrepair.
- In 1664 the relics of St John are re-discovered and re-interred.
- A substantial programme of repair is carried out in the eighteenth century, overseen by Nicholas Hawksmoor.
- George Gilbert Scott undertakes a programme of restoration in the 1860s and 1870s.

ST MARY'S

The development of St Mary's is a product and symbol of the wealth of the residents and guilds of Beverley in the Medieval period. The church, begun in 1120, steadily grew in popularity amongst the town's trade guilds and mercantile class, resulting in 400 years of almost continuous addition. The north-east transept chapel was built c.1280. The hidden Priest's Rooms were built above St Michael's chapel c.1320s. They are a Medieval time capsule of items discarded there over the centuries from 1330s onwards.

St Mary's was substantially rebuilt in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, spanning the Decorated and Perpendicular styles. This included the construction of clerestories in 1380 which almost doubled the church's height, giving the building additional grandeur.

In the fourteenth century the level of the town was raised to try and avoid water and streams damaging property. This left St Mary's, and in particular the west door, at the same level as the original town with steps down into the building. When the porch was built at the beginning of the fifteenth century it was at the new level of the town.

The tower was rebuilt after its partial collapse in 1520, which also necessitated extensive rebuilding of the nave. The church was restored and the magnificent bosses and the stops to the hood-moulds of the nave were carved to represent the men and women who paid for the work.

The town remained wealthy until the end of fifteenth century when the wool trade moved to the west of England. It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that wealth returned and eloquent brick houses were built, surrounding the church. Beverley became a fashionable town and people came for the races, the assemblies, the theatre and concerts.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES – ST MARY'S

- St Mary's is founded in 1120.
- The north-east transept chapel is constructed in c.1280.
- The Priest's Rooms were built above St Michael's chapel c.1320s-1340s.
- The tower and nave are rebuilt in 1520 following the collapse of the tower.
- 1530 saw St Mary's complete.
- Nineteenth-century prosperity saw investment in the restoration of St Mary's, carried out by A.W.N and E.W Pugin in the 1840s-1850s and by George Gilbert Scott in the 1860s.
- Later restorations were carried out by Temple Moore, George Pace and John Bilson, among others.

The changing economic situation in the town benefitted St Mary's as well as the Minster and the main nineteenth-century restorations were carried out in the 1840s-50s by A.W.N and E.W Pugin, and in 1864-7 by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Later campaigns of work were carried out at St Mary's by architects including Temple Moore, George Pace and John Bilson.



The Percy Canopy at Beverley Minster. Credit Mervyn King

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Beverley Minster's interior is as grand and arresting as one may expect from one of the most significant and important parish churches in the north of England.

St Mary's has a less publicly-minded aesthetic than Beverley Minster, but is no less impressive. Fine craftsmanship and a range of historically significant fixtures and fittings reward the observant visitor.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within both churches are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

BEVERLEY MINSTER⁰⁵

Misericords

Beverley Minster has 68 misericord seats, the largest number of any church in the country. Carved in 1520, they are most probably the work of the Ripon School of Carvers and represent the final flowering of skilled Medieval woodcarving.

Organ

The organ is by John Snetzler from 1769. It was rebuilt and restored by William Hill & Sons in 1884 and by Hill, Norman and Beard in 1962–1963.

Organ screen Carvings

The nineteenth-century organ screen of carved oak at the entrance to the chancel was designed by George Gilbert Scott and was carved by James Edward Elwell of Beverley.

Percy Canopy

Built between 1340 and 1349, the Percy Canopy portrays the concern of the tomb owner for the fate of the soul after death. The exact identity of the person commemorated is uncertain. The most likely candidate is Eleanor, daughter of Richard Fitz Alan, earl of Arundel, and widow of Henry Percy, first Lord of Alnwick who died in 1314. The canopy is believed to be the work of five highly skilled early fourteenth-century masons and represents the finest stone carving example of the time.

Frith Stool

Anglo Saxon stone seat known as 'Frith Stool'. Anyone wanting to claim sanctuary from the law could do so in Beverley as it was a designated 'Sanctuary town'. It is traditionally held that judgement would then be made from the Frith Stool. Only two other Frith Stools are thought to still be in existence; one at Hexham Abbey in Northumberland and another at Sprotborough, St Mary's in Doncaster.

Stained Glass

Stained glass of the Perpendicular east window is one of the major examples of Medieval glass-painting in the north of England. The original glazing scheme is connected by association with John Thornton of Coventry, famed for York Minster's east window. It was re-ordered in the nineteenth century.

Medieval Minstrel Carvings

There are over 70 carvings of musicians in the nave. Carved in wood and stone and depicting around 20 different instruments, it is believed to be the largest collection of its type in the world. Many carvings at lower levels were damaged by iconoclasts and have been restored but those at a higher level have survived intact.

⁰⁵ The majority of this section of the case study is indebted to: <http://beverleyminster.org.uk/visit-us-2/new-artwork-2004/> and Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY⁰⁶

Medieval Woodwork

Medieval woodwork from the original rood screen, parcloze screen and rood loft which are stored in the Priest's rooms. The 28 misericords in the chancel are fine examples of the wood carvings of the Ripon carvers dating from 1445.

The Ceiling of Kings

The chancel ceiling, dated 1445, includes the Kings of England from Eggbert in 827 to Henry VI, who died in 1471. Each is set in a gold panel surrounded by scarlet ribs and gilded bosses. The style, dress and facial features are all remarkably similar. Overall, the church contains a collection of 625 ceiling bosses, including St. John, Athelstan, evangelic symbols, monograms of the Virgin, musicians, demons, Adam and Eve, and in many instances beautifully foliated designs.



Ceiling boss at St Mary's © St Mary's PCC

The Pilgrim Hare

The Pilgrim Hare dating to c.1330's on the side of St Mary's sacristy door and overlooking St Michael's Chapel may be the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit. The scalloped shell carved on the rabbit's wallet indicates pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela: St Mary's was an important starting point for Medieval pilgrims making that journey to Spain.

Minstrels' Pillar

The minstrels' pillar includes five carved and painted minstrels dating from the 1520s. They are the Medieval Waites; musicians who performed at civic events and played music as they sang out the hours as part of their duties as the night watch. This is one of only two contemporary illustrations of them; the other being a drawing from the third quarter of the 17th century which is now in the Pepysian Library in Magdalen College, Cambridge.

West Window

The great west window was designed by A.W.N Pugin.

Portion of Corporation Pew

A remaining part of two pews that once stood at each end of the north aisle of the nave. The beautifully carved and undercut lettering recounts the disaster which befell the church in 1520, when the tower collapsed.

⁰⁶ This section of the case study is indebted to: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – BEVERLEY MINSTER⁰⁷

“There has been a worshipping Christian community at Beverley for at least 1300 years, since the foundation of St John of Beverley’s original monastery. The Minster, also a parish church, has had a wider role for a millennium, and is still today a place of pilgrimage for visitors from across the world.”⁰⁸

Beverley Minster is among the most significant Gothic churches in Europe.

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Beverley Minster chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Beverley Minster, located at the south of the town, makes an exceptional contribution to the local environment, and visually dominates most approaches to Beverley, giving it a significant regional presence.

The churchyard and the precinct of the Minster provide the immediate context of the building. To the south of the Minster is Hall Garth, of exceptional national interest as recognised by its protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and of potential interest as an attractive space providing views of the Minster from the south. The precinct area, originally the location of the Minster’s associated collegiate buildings and later prebendal houses, contains some buildings of historic interest, with Medieval origins.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The architectural quality of Beverley Minster is of exceptional international interest. Built to its original thirteenth-century design, the Minster remains an architectural entity with little accretion or loss, making it exceptionally significant internationally for its art-historical and architectural value. The double transept plan gives the Minster its quintessential ‘English’ profile, shared with the cathedrals of Canterbury, Lincoln, Salisbury and Worcester. The highest standards of architectural design at Beverley Minster strengthen its claim to cathedral-quality craftsmanship.

The fabric of the north transept provides evidence for the innovation of the early eighteenth-century restoration, which is of exceptional national interest not only for the preservation of the Minster, but for its place in the history of technology and engineering. The restoration is also exceptionally significant both regionally and nationally for its association with the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor; and of local importance for the historical connection of the Minster to the locality.

The east-end and the west-front are considered superlative examples of their respective periods of Gothic architecture and are of exceptional national and exceptional international interest respectively. The west-front in particular is considered a triumph of Perpendicular design, which, before the removal of its imagery, would have constituted one of the most extensive programmes of sculpture in the country.

Considered as an ensemble, the fourteenth-century Percy Canopy, reredos and sedilia are of exceptional international interest for their art-historical value. Regarded as one of the finest Decorated funerary monuments made in Northern Europe in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, the Percy canopy is remarkable for the survival of its full programme of canopy sculpture and the richness and versatility of its carving. The screen which supported the lost shrine of St John is thought to be of the same workshop, and equals the canopy in the superlative execution of its carving.

The stained glass of the Perpendicular east window is of exceptional significance as one of the major examples of Medieval glass-painting in the north of England. The original glazing schemes, connected by association with John Thornton of Coventry, who designed York Minster’s east window, were reordered in the nineteenth century. This could be considered of negative historical significance for the understanding of the Medieval schemes; however, the window’s successful rearrangement is of some interest as evidence of Victorian restoration practices.

The misericords of c.1520, produced by a distinctive northern school of carvers are of exceptional interest as a representative body of late Medieval iconography and as a source for the understanding of late Tudor culture, particularly within the context of the North of England.

⁰⁷ This section of the case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

⁰⁸ Quote from ‘Message from the Vicars and PCCs’ in: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

⁰⁹ Survey result

HISTORIC INTEREST

The Minster, arguably the reason for the Beverley's existence, historic fame and trading success, has been instrumental in defining the urban characteristic of the town, and its importance is evident in the granting of historic privileges and rights of sanctuary within a mile radius of the church. The Minster's constitutional arrangement as a prebendal college and its status as one of three collegiate Minster churches in the Diocese of York confers upon it exceptional national significance for its contribution to the understanding of the pre-Reformational structure of the Northern Church

St John of Beverley was the Bishop of Hexham and then of York, and founded a monastery on the site where Beverley Minster stands. Bishop John died in 721 and his body was buried in a chapel of the Saxon church. He was canonised in 1037 and the present church was built around his tomb. The relics of St John, as an important national saint, bestow upon the Minster the exceptional associative significance of royal veneration, centuries of pilgrimage and the historical attribution of military success.

A key figure in the turbulence of the Reformation was John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. He was born in Beverley and educated at Beverley Grammar School, then attached to the Minster.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The historic and archaeological significance of the churchyard itself is considerable and of local relevance with the potential to reveal major new findings which could transform the understanding of the Minster. Anglo-Saxon burials in the churchyard, excavated south of the present nave, provide crucial evidence for the location and orientation of previous church structures, whilst the archaeology of the north east churchyard contains the foundations of the lost thirteenth-century chapter-house. The churchyard monuments themselves are of some local interest as a source for local and family historians.

Masons' and carpenters' marks on the fabric are of archaeological value and have considerable local interest alongside the potential to reveal more through their ongoing study. Graffiti, both abundant and diverse within the Minster, is of some interest as a tool for understanding social engagement with the building, and is potentially of greater significance for its association with pilgrimage and trade. The 'frith stool' is of exceptional significance as the oldest tangible part of the Minster's history, able to testify to centuries of the Minster's evolution, whilst its rarity as a historical object makes it of considerable interest.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Beverley Minster is of exceptional interest as a symbol of local and regional identity and inspires a sense of connection within the community of Beverley and, more broadly, the East Riding.

The diversity of Beverley Minster's historic use is reflected through its current role as a centre for spirituality, music and tourism, giving it exceptional interest in its continuity and connection with the past. It has exceptional regional significance as a leading visitor attraction with potential to exploit this role further. Simultaneously, it is of considerable significance for its distinctive sense of intimacy, its non-commercial atmosphere and its un-cluttered appearance.

The building, rich in stories and tradition, is able to illuminate the lives of those connected to the Minster in the past through its architecture, monuments and artefacts. In this sense it is an inexhaustible building with great potential significance to connect people with objects and with collective local or national narratives. Beverley Minster is used as a venue for secular events alongside its role as an active place of worship, and the popularity of the building for cultural activity demonstrates the interdependence between Minster, town and wider region.

The present, secular uses of the Minster afford it a historic cultural continuity and considerable regional significance as a venue able to accommodate cultural needs. The size and spatial flexibility of the building enables its simultaneous religious and secular use, and facilitates the meeting and interaction of different communities.

One of the great pilgrimage churches of England, often acting as a local cathedral, in the Diocese of York and also fulfilling the role of parish church serving the surrounding area, Beverley Minster bears witness to over 1,300 years of occupation and worship, and is a symbol of civic identity and source of civic pride.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – ST MARY’S BEVERLEY ¹⁰

“The church of St Mary was from the beginning fully integrated into the life of the community, as the parish church of the town.”¹¹

St Mary’s is not only a significant, Grade I listed building, it enjoys the adopted status of being the ‘town’s church’¹²

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, St Mary’s chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.¹³

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St. Mary’s church is of considerable interest as a landmark visual feature in the town of Beverley, and part of the Beverley Conservation Area. Mary’s is visible from almost every point in the town centre of Beverley, from which its particular landscape value arises. Its physical presence dominates and frames the historic town, which, together with the Minster, contributes greatly to the identity of Beverley and its tourist trade. Connecting these churches with the town in between is of major importance if this significance is to be retained and enhanced.

St Mary’s lies at the corner of North Bar Within and Hengate. It stands in the south-west corner of the large churchyard; the north-eastern part is partly taken up by the modern church hall building erected in 1994. St Mary’s and its churchyard sit within the urban fabric with Georgian and early Victorian houses lining the south side of Hengate. To the east is a small garden with the town’s war memorials. The Beverley Arms Hotel, opposite the church across North Bar Within, is another handsome Georgian building with an impressive portico. Traffic is generally not heavy coming through the North Bar, though Hengate is often congested, and there is a sharp and sometimes busy crossing at the junction to Hengate, making access for visitors to the church difficult at those times.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

St Mary’s is a well-preserved example of a prosperous Medieval urban church whose plan form and standing structure provide a palimpsest through which the principles of Gothic design, and the changing demands of Medieval and post-Medieval liturgy, can be understood. These qualities have been preserved and enhanced by major restorations from the country’s leading nineteenth-century architects.

The church’s exceptionally high design value is a product of its age and the quality of its craftsmanship. The evidence it provides for the evolution of ecclesiastical architecture demonstrates a distinctive break from Beverley Minster in ecclesiastical design.

The 1325-1345 addition of St Michael’s chapel, the Sacristy and the Priest’s room is of exceptional interest as an example of the work of Richard and Ivo de Raughton, derived wholly from its unique design and aesthetic values. This work, of the highest quality, is believed to have been used as a model for later work at York Minster and therefore may be of considerable significance, though this is subject to further investigation. The key interest of this scheme is its revolutionary stone vaulting, and uniquely traceried windows, the forms of which create a consistent overall aesthetic reflective of St Mary’s unique position in the episcopal firmament of Beverley. Portions of carved stone from the Easter sepulchre and other internal monuments, stored in the Priest’s room, are of considerable significance for their quality and associations. One particular stone, adorned with graffiti and a mason’s mark, is believed to be the work of Richard and Ivo de Raughton. There are also panels from the original Ceiling of Kings in gold leaf on oak depicting Edward III and Henry VI (dated 1445).

¹⁰ This section of the case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

¹¹ Quote from ‘Message from the Vicars and PCCs’ in: Elders, J, ‘The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan’, 2015

¹² Survey result

¹³ Survey result

The principal architects involved in the restorations of St Marys' in the nineteenth century were AWN and EW Pugin and George Gilbert Scott.

The principal architects involved in the restorations of St Marys' in the nineteenth century were AWN and EW Pugin and George Gilbert Scott.

The restoration campaigns of the two Pugins during the nineteenth century are of considerable regional and, potentially, subsequent to further study, national interest, for their exquisite craftsmanship and skill in execution.

The significance of these particular schemes arises from their highly sympathetic approach to the Medieval fabric, enhancing the west window, the south transept, and much of the interior, without detracting from its Medieval character. Fully understanding these schemes, as well as the other nineteenth and twentieth-century campaigns of GG Scott, J Oldrid Scott, Temple Moore, Leslie Moore, George Pace and John Bilson have great potential and are of major importance if this significance is to be enhanced.

One particular feature worth noting is the Pilgrim Hare or Lewis Carroll Rabbit flanking the door to the sacristy. Believed to have been the inspiration for the fictional character, this piece of carving is of exceptional interest for its potential literary association.

The painted ceiling of the chancel, originally built in 1445, and sympathetically restored under William Padgett in 1863, is of exceptional art historical interest as a unique scheme of paintings. Two of the panels, removed during the nineteenth-century restoration, are of exceptional interest, not only for their aesthetic value, but also their evidential value for understanding the original scheme. The extensive suite of additional ceiling paintings in the porch, the nave, the chapel of Holy Trinity, the tower and the aisles are of considerable significance for their design value alone; however, their aesthetic value contributes greatly to the general aesthetic and identity of the church.

Medieval woodwork from the original rood screen, parclose screen and rood loft which are stored in the Priest's room are of exceptional interest as architectural relics of the Medieval church. The collection of 625 ceiling bosses throughout the church are of exceptional significance and have great potential for further study. The 28 misericords in the chancel are of exceptional interest as an example not only of the fine wood carving of the Ripon carvers, but also characteristically represent the typological development of the wild man misericord in English art in the wider context.

A Maiden's Garland on display in the Priest's room and dating to 1680 is of exceptional significance as the oldest surviving example in the country. St Mary's nineteenth-century weather-vane, allegedly designed by AWN Pugin before his death in 1852, and completed by his son EW Pugin in the second half of the nineteenth century, is of considerable interest for its associations and design value. The great west window, designed by AWN Pugin, is of considerable significance for its design, aesthetic and architectural interest. Finally, the three-light window to the north of St Michael's chapel contains the only piece of Medieval glass in the church and is therefore of considerable interest in its own right.

HISTORIC INTEREST

St. Mary's has stood as a beacon of continuous Christian mission for over 996 years.

The archaeological evidence for the development of the site, from its humble twelfth-century origins to the church we see today, has considerable historical significance and potential in connecting visitors with the history of the site's long relationship with Christianity. As a centre for Christian worship for over 800 years, the church is a highly important illustration of past attitudes to Christianity, past Christian practices and changing approaches to religious architecture.

Its long and often complex architectural history reveals not only the evolving Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular fashions of the time, but also the institutional value of St Mary's as the 'town's' church, a building divided from its mother house, the Minster. A special part of this historical interest is the strength of its ties with the town's mercantile history, which find physical expression in many of the chapels in the church, and to which the church owes its great size. Although the patrons of this church are not celebrated, the mercantile community are collectively significant in their own right. It can therefore be argued that much of St. Mary's historical significance derives from the continuity of community value of the 'town's church'.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

St Mary's has considerable significance deriving from its archaeological value. Despite some changes, fabric replacement and restoration, much of the fifteenth-century fabric remains. In 2004, the removal of the existing staircase revealed locally significant evidence for an earlier stair, presumably contemporary with the construction of the south aisle wall of the nave in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries.

In 1993, substantial fourteenth-century limestone wall foundations and a number of pad-stones, together with associated hearths and mortar/clay floors, of some interest, were observed and recorded in the Northern graveyard of the church.

The full extent of St. Mary's archaeological interest has not yet been realised because so much of the church has not yet been investigated. Such study has great archaeological potential to bring about a better understanding of the original twelfth-century structure.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Just as St. Mary's is a place of collective faith, religious worship and experience, it is also one of considerable communal significance as a centre for mission, community outreach and cultural heritage tourism. Its considerable communal significance springs from its value to the community, providing concert and festival venues, community services and exhibitions at a local level, acting as a focus for community life in Beverley. Its communal significance is also derived from its amenity value, and its active and sustained use by worshippers, residents and tourists, providing religious services, civic services beyond the worshipping congregation and cultural heritage tourism. Having maintained its capacity as the 'town's church', a large part of this communal significance derives from the continuity of this role throughout its long, varied history.



A service in Beverley Minster Credit Mervyn King

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDINGS' SIGNIFICANCE

'These two huge and significant churches have helped Beverley to punch way above its weight as a town. Interestingly, the local community often describe the Minster as grand and St Mary's as beautiful.'¹⁴

Beverley Minster is an iconic building that can be viewed as the symbol of Beverley. It dominates views of the town for miles around. When in the town, however, it is not so readily visible and it is St Mary's that comes to the fore. It is interesting that both churches are used as symbols of the local press and both serve to represent the town. The churches are situated at either end of Beverley and each church has its own identity and ministry, distinct from the other but joined in a shared faith and missional determination. The prospect of two major parish churches, each occupying a geographically opposite sphere of a modestly-sized historic market town and adjoined by the principal street that runs through it, inevitably leads to not-unfounded perceptions of entrenched rivalry, both from within and without.

Historically, the relationship between the Minster and St Mary's has waxed and waned, partly as a reflection of national events or regional power and wealth and partly because of local personalities and politics. To understand the significance of the present shared efforts to engage with the challenges of repair, development, mission and ministry it is important to understand and respect the heritage of both buildings. It is also necessary to acknowledge the differences between their ecclesiastical, liturgical, community and cultural roles. In each case the respective buildings make distinctive contributions to the ethos, opportunities and challenges of the current environment.

Both churches are recognisable on a local, regional, national and even on international level but the Minster tends to have a greater reach whereas St Mary's has a profile that has greater impact locally. There is a universal recognition that Beverley would not be the town it is today if these churches had not been built. The extensive ministry of both churches is arguably facilitated by the beauty of both the buildings.

The Minster has an historic function as a site of pilgrimage, now closely connected to tourism. The combination of architectural and spiritual aesthetics and integrity gives the Minster agency to 'alter and change people's lives'.¹⁵ St Mary's has always focussed primarily on the spiritual and social experience of the townspeople, rather than travellers. Today the distinction is not so clear cut as tourism is important to all Major Parish Churches and universal expectations can be challenging.

Visitors to Beverley who enter the town, particularly from the north, sometimes find themselves at St Mary's and then leave St Mary's believing they have visited the Minster, having not realised that the town boasts two substantial and significant churches. (See 'Welcoming visitors' for further insight).

It is arguable that the two churches' respective titles as shorthand for degrees of 'importance'. 'Minster' implies a high status and a wide reach; 'St Mary's' is more parochial. For the Minster, which is larger than many cathedrals (and has a profile equal to some cathedrals), its perceived status can distort perceptions about its resilience. It is deprived of the resources available to these recognised group of mother churches (guaranteed clergy that are paid for by the central Church of England, for example), yet bears the expectation that it will fulfil the role of a cathedral, and most of what that entails. Both St Mary's and the Minster, have, however, used their respective titles to communicate succinctly the differing scope and nature of their ministries.

¹⁴ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher and Revd Becky Lumley

¹⁵ Quote from Revd. Jeremy Fletcher

This is clearly a misunderstanding in respect of both sites and many local people will have only some idea of how either building is funded or its ministry sustained. Whilst the Minster benefits from the Beverley Old Fund it still needs to raise funding to fill the gap between the income from that and the actual costs of repairing and maintaining an enormous building. It also, like St Mary's, faces costs of parish share, management of the building and delivering parochial ministry. (See Finance, below.)

There are shared issues relating to archaeology, in that any changes to either building would require archaeological evaluation. There is, however, a great deal of research evidence for the Minster and comparatively little post-nineteenth century analysis for St Mary's. Similarly, both buildings are vulnerable to heritage crime, including vandalism, metal theft and anti-social behaviour, but St Mary's tends to experience more problems of this sort.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Beverley Minster and St Mary's both consider the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Beverley Minster and St Mary's with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁶

¹⁶ Survey result

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The historic rivalry is deep, but everyone is working hard to keep everything together.”¹⁷

St Mary's is served by the incumbent and four churchwardens due to an historical anomaly (the usual number is two). St Mary's also employs a part-time administrator, a freelance cleaner and has a director of music and assistant director of music (paid nominally). The PCC has assumed the responsibility of its Medieval guild member forebears, as it now has oversight over the fabric of the building and the curtilage.¹⁸ The incumbent oversees everything that goes on at the church. She occupies a leadership role and delegates responsibilities. She is felt by the churchwardens to be very supportive, particularly as she gives people the freedom to develop within their roles.

The PCC oversees various sub-committees, including a fabric committee. All committees and groups operate under Terms of Reference. The PCC is supported by a separately constituted Friends group, which raises money for various projects. It is not confined to building-related projects but, rather, is involved in all aspects of church life. The PCC employs two part-time administrators and a freelance consultant as a grants manager. Volunteer welcomers, who are managed by St Mary's non-stipendiary, part-time curate, keep the church open every day.

The fact that most people involved in managing the church building are volunteers can be problematic. This is because there is a lot of pressure on people's time and continued participation cannot be guaranteed. This is particularly the case with welcomers. If they decide to stop volunteering the church cannot be opened and people have an expectation that a church of the size of St Mary's will be open every day. In order to increase St Mary's sustainability, it is felt that paid staff are required to keep the church open and to help visitors understand the building. This will not only relieve the pressure on volunteers, but would also free up the PCC to develop its mission work.

Beverley Minster has two full-time clergy, a non-stipendiary curate, three volunteer lay readers and a number of retired clergy. It is served by five churchwardens. The Minster parish also includes three 'daughter' churches, and is associated with the Parish of Routh, where the Minster's incumbent is priest in charge. The current incumbent is also rural dean of the Beverley Deanery and Chair of the Greater Churches Network.¹⁹

The Minster is managed by a traditional PCC governance structure. The PCC has various sub-committees:

- **Finance:** advises on financial matters and gives detailed scrutiny to financial affairs.
- **Mission Action:** advises on mission in the parish and beyond, including the distribution of financial support.
- **Plant and Facilities:** advises on property issues, manages and maintains PCC property.
- **Worship:** advises the Minister and the PCC about worship within the Minster.
- **Minster Youth and Children:** oversees all aspects of Youth and Children's Ministry.
- **Enterprise:** has an overview of all income generation, and "outward facing" parts of the Minster's life.
- **Staffing:** reviews the terms and conditions under which staff are employed and advises on staffing issues.²⁰

¹⁷ Quote from Revd Jeremy Fletcher and Revd Becky Lumley

¹⁸ Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

The PCC employs two youth and children's ministers, three virgers²¹, a shop manager, a director of music, an assistant organist, three secretarial and reception staff, and an accountant. Most roles are part-time.

The PCC is supported financially by the long-established Beverley Old Fund. The relationship between the PCC and the Old Fund is regulated by a 'memorandum of understanding', which is renewed annually. The Friends of Beverley Minster contribute to projects that enhance the church building and improve the welcome for visitors. Over 100 people currently volunteer at the Minster, helping across many areas of parish life, including both financial support and invaluable help in fundraising activity, manning reception in the Parish Centre (for which the PCC is also responsible), stewarding at events and other mission-related activities.²²

In 2015 the Minster and St Mary's formally constituted a Joint Board, chaired by the Archdeacon of the East Riding, to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project to secure and develop the material, spiritual and missional future of both churches. This constructive and forward-looking proposal respects the particular historic qualities and heritage of both parishes whilst seeking to unite in all that they have in common. It will enhance the sustainability of both buildings without diminishing the important and distinctive ways each church serves Beverley and the wider community.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Number of members on PCC	32
Number of clergy	1 Incumbent 1 non-stipendiary Curate 1 House for duty
Number of paid staff	16
Number of volunteers	100+
Number of sub-committees	9

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Number of members on PCC	23
Number of clergy	1 Incumbent 1 non-stipendiary Curate
Number of paid staff	1 Split between an administrator and musical staff
Number of volunteers	100+
Number of sub-committees	9



Beverley Minster choir. © Mervyn King

²¹ Beverley Minster employs the term 'virger', rather than the more common 'verger'. 'Virger' derives from the virge or rod with which the Virger carries out his or her duties.

²² Ibid

FINANCES

“In 2011 it became apparent that at the current level of deficit, [Beverley Minster] PCC’s reserves would be exhausted by 2017...Substantial legacies received in 2013 have had a positive impact on the Minster’s reserves, and so it was felt safe and appropriate to continue a high level of support to the Diocese and to other charities, even though this results in a continued budget deficit. Consequently, the budget for 2014 adopted by the PCC was for a deficit of almost £137,000, to be covered from reserves.”²³ – Beverley Minster

“The overall result for the General Unrestricted Fund was a surplus of £34,980. Total receipts in this [year] were £144,457... this was an increase on the previous year of about 20%. Total expenditure for the unrestricted fund was £109,477...Also planned giving has shown an excellent increase of nearly 15% on the previous year rising to £52,606. The Parish Freewill Offering of £65,000 was paid in full to the Diocese.”²⁴ – St Mary’s

Beverley Minster PCC sets a budget annually, which the finance committee reviews six times per annum. The Minster’s budget and income and expenditure are fairly stable; however, the PCC runs a structural deficit, relying on legacies to break even. It is the policy of the PCC to maintain unrestricted general funds at a level which equates to three months general operating expenses plus one extra month’s salaries. The reserves policy was amended in 2015 to include an additional £50,000 capital reserve.²⁵ It holds c.£300,000 in disposable reserves and expects to run a deficit of £85,910 in 2016. Total funds as of 31 December 2015 stood at £1,892,930; up from £1,783,841 in 2014.

The PCC received £85,500 in bequests and c.£20,000 in donations in 2015; however, income from catering, concerts and the Minster shop was down on 2014. The 2015 wedding fair, Prince’s Trust dinner, festival of food and drink and the Christmas tree festival all showed financial success. The Beverley Old Fund provides an annual fund of £250,000 for repairs and employs the church architect, surveyor and three maintenance workers. While the fund finances relatively routine repair and maintenance works, it cannot fund major projects of the order currently required. This means that securing external grant aid income is vital.

The Friends of Beverley Minster help to fund various projects. The Friends, for example, donated 50% of the total cost of replacing the old chairs in the Minster (total cost of £95,218) and contributed to the upgrade the Minster’s sound system (cost of £18,893). The PCC manages endowment funds, which include bequests from Cecil Bainton (deceased), CH Barringer (deceased) and CML Walker (deceased), and the Naylor Fabric Fund of Tickton Church.²⁶ Recent grants received by the PCC include c.£45,000 for stained glass window repairs.

The PCC’s annual insurance premium is £27,070 for the building (approx. 70% cover) and £1,876 for the contents. The Beverley Old Fund contributes 50% of the insurance cost. Utilities are purchased through brokers. The PCC made charitable donations of £9,964 in 2015 and, because of the receipt of a generous legacy, increased its voluntary contribution to the Diocese of York to £175,000, up from £148,000 in 2014. Total staffing costs for 2015 stood at £176,087²⁷

St Mary’s PCC sets an annual budget, which is reviewed regularly, and administers a restricted fabric fund and a designated fabric fund. It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on the unrestricted fund, invested or on deposit, to provide interest income to the General Fund as current income from all other sources does not meet the expenditure required to pay for the general running of the church. It is also PCC policy to maintain a balance in the Restoration Fund, Organ Fund, Tower Bell Fund and the Parish Hall Management Fund to pay for essential work on the maintenance of the fabric of the church, organ, tower bells and parish hall.²⁸ St Mary’s PCC accounts for 2015 show a surplus of £34,980. The increased surplus was mainly due to a legacy and an un-used budget for a youth worker. After accounting for gains on investment assets the General Fund balance, as of 31st December 2015, the PCC had a surplus of £77, 808. The balance of all PCC Funds as of 31st December 2015 stood at £994,427, an increase of £111,235 on the year.

23 Ibid

24 St Mary’s PCC, ‘Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

25 Beverley Minster PCC, ‘Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 St Mary’s PCC, ‘Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015’

The PCC's voluntary contribution of £65,000 was paid in full to the Diocese of York.²⁹ Its charitable giving totalled £8,520 in 2015. Church running costs totalled £13,339 and staffing costs stood at £9,065. Planned giving income shows an increase of nearly 15% on 2012, rising to £52,606; legacy income totalled £37,461 (thanks largely to a single substantial bequest; 2014s legacy income totalled £5,929 by comparison). Hire of the parish hall for which the PCC also has responsibility, raised £13,519 in 2015, which was an increase of 20% on 2014. The PCC did, however, carry out repairs to the hall at a cost of £9,607 in 2015, following repairs which totalled £16,889 in 2014. Hiring out the church generated an income of £5,201 and sales from the church bookstall made £4,238.

The PCC also manages a range of endowments, some of which can be used for the general running of the church, whilst others are restricted to the Restoration Fund and Organ Fund. The 'Save St Mary's Restoration Appeal' has been running for over 18 months and has raised approximately £85,517. Church repair costs in 2015 totalled £22,538 while routine maintenance cost £7,834.³⁰ The PCC has recently received grants from the Roof Repair Fund for drainage works with a value of c.£100,000 and a c.£100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Our Heritage' stream for repair work to a pinnacle, plus an additional £4,500 grant for stone repairs from another source.

The obvious difference between Beverley Minster and St Mary's finances is to be found in staffing costs, with the Minster's being far higher for a much more substantial staff that in turn generates greater capacity.

The Minster benefits from the annual financial contribution of the Beverley Old Fund toward fabric maintenance and repair costs but operates a substantial structural deficit, resulting in the expectation that reserves will be exhausted by 2017. The PCC feels it does not have enough financial capacity to cover the large scale and urgent work required on the building. It does, however, run a total budgetary surplus. This is partly because it cannot risk going into deficit by employing staff. It does, however, run a total budgetary surplus. This is partly because it cannot risk going into deficit by employing staff. The PCC considers that it would be cost ineffective and unwise to use up resources on piecemeal work.

St Mary's has shown some fundraising capabilities with the success of several grants but these are one-off awards. However, grant funding cannot be guaranteed.

Beverley Minster's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate building repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.³¹

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Beverley Minster's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Not specified in QI but estimated at c.£8m
Urgent QI cost	Not specified
Annual maintenance cost	£250,000
Parish share/voluntary contribution cost	£175,000
Insurance cost	£28,946
Utilities cost	Not specified
Major project cost (annual or five-yearly)	Over £250,000
Annual donations income	£105,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£24,528
Events/church hall income	£160,396
Other income i.e. land/interest	N/A
Services fees	N/A
Individual project income	£295,000

²⁹ The voluntary contribution of Beverley and St Mary's PCCs to the Diocese of York, when combined, equates to more than the contribution of some deaneries.

³⁰ St Mary's PCC, 'Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

³¹ Survey result

St Mary's highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate building repairs will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.³²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Mary's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

ST MARY'S

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£5 million
Urgent QI cost	£5 million
Annual maintenance cost	£30,372 – paid, further annual investment is almost certainly required
Parish share cost/ voluntary contribution cost	£65,000
Insurance cost	£19,500
Utilities cost	£1,000
Major project cost (2015)	£200,000

Annual donations income	£52,606
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£28,611
Events/church hall income	£18,720
Other income i.e. land/ interest	£22,470
Services fees	N/A
Individual project income	c.£290,000

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Beverley Minster's income does not meet expenditure. On the other hand, St Mary's income does meet expenditure.³³

³² Survey result

³³ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Beverley Minster receives £250,000 per annum from the Beverley Old Fund, which facilitates an ongoing programme of systematic maintenance and repair, carried out by specialist craftspeople (two lead workers and a stone mason) directly employed by the Old Fund. Of most immediate concern to the PCC is the condition of the roof and some of the stained glass windows. The estimated total cost of these repairs is £6.4 million, but other plans for improved lighting and accessibility will bring the cost up to almost £8 million. A working group of representatives of the PCC, the Old Fund and the Friends has been set up to drive the project forward. As well as these essential repairs, there are a number of other improvements in sustainability, interpretation and accessibility which could be realized should the appeal raise more than the £8 million needed.³⁴ Beverley Minster's QI also identifies urgent works the length and breadth of the Minster.³⁵

St Mary's PCC does not benefit from the support of the Beverley Old Fund, although it does have a more modest Warden's Fund. This means St Mary's has to rely principally on appeals and grant applications to fund works as and when they become urgent. After many years of carrying out piecemeal repairs St Mary's now requires extensive and substantial urgent repairs, particularly to stonework, across the building.³⁶ These have a value of over £5 million.

The 'Save St Mary's Restoration Appeal' has been set up and a freelance grants manager has been engaged to begin the process of tackling what is clearly a challenging undertaking. The project also includes adaptations to St Mary's, such as the installation of WCs and improvements to physical access. Within the last 18 months just under £200,000 of grant funding has enabled a complete overhaul of the drainage system and for urgent work to be undertaken on a high level pinnacle.

Both Beverley Minster and St Mary's must employ the services of a Quantity Surveyor, who establishes costs for works included in each church's QI.

"The churches need a new joint vision, and new facilities and uses, to make them truly fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. Change is in the best interests of the church congregations and all who use the buildings, facilitating visual, aural, physical and other means of access to the church."³⁷

It has been apparent for some time that a considerable amount of money needs to be spent on re-roofing the Minster, repairing Great East and Great West stained glass windows and replacing the chairs in the Minster.³⁸ These repairs are deemed to be essential. In addition, there are a number of other areas, such as re-lighting that are considered highly desirable. The essential repairs have been estimated at £6.7 million, with possibly a further £3-4 million on the aspirational items. At the same time, St. Mary's need to spend £5m on essential repairs. Rather than compete for the same funds, our two great churches decided to work together with the theme of two great churches, one town story.³⁹

In 2015 Beverley Minster and St Mary's embarked upon a joint project that aims to carry out extensive repairs and adaptations to both buildings and create a refreshed and expanded visitor offer in Beverley. This resulted in a shared joint vision under the banner 'Two Churches, One Town Story'. This project was catalysed by both PCCs not wishing to compete for HLF grants, with success for one almost inevitably resulting in the failure of the other. A joint Conservation Management Plan (CMP) compiled by the Church Buildings Council (CBC) in 2015 was among the first practical steps taken. It is a comprehensive document that has and will continue to influence the development of the project into the future.

³⁴ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

³⁵ Carden & Godfrey, 'The Minster Church of St John, Beverley, East Yorkshire: Quinquennial Survey, October 2015'

³⁶ Sherriff, D, 'The Parish Church of St Mary, Beverley: Report on Quinquennial Inspection 2013'

³⁷ Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

³⁸ Chairs were replaced with financial assistance from the Friends of Beverley Minster in 2015, who provided £45,000 of the £90,000 total cost

³⁹ Beverley Minster; 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

The working method of the joint-working group is yet to be fully determined; however, discussions hitherto have done much to frame the principles of the project, which will include, but not be limited to:

- Equitable board management
- Shared resources where possible and appropriate
- Shared expertise
- Shared volunteer base
- Joint fulfilment of pastoral roles

The objectives of the project, thus far determined include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the good repair and long-term maintenance of both churches
- The appointment of specialists to work across both sites
- The appointment of a project manager
- A culture of employed staff delivering practical outcomes, freeing PCCs and clergy to focus on mission and ministry
- The formulation of a joint, widely beneficial ministry for Beverley and its visitors which will contribute to economic growth locally and combat deprivation

Steps have already been taken to consider how, in the first instance, Beverley Minster and St Mary's can share their financial and infrastructural resources for mutual benefit. The Friends of Beverley Minster have, for example, reserved c.£750,000 to contribute to the joint project.

The potential benefit this project could yield for Beverley Minster, St Mary's and the town of Beverley is exceptionally high. It can do much to dispel notions of rivalry between the two churches, particularly with the public advocacy of each church's incumbent and the drawing together of the missional and volunteer communities. Ecclesiastical hurdles of varying heights will inevitably have to be negotiated; however, the relative autonomy that parish church status confers upon both St Mary's and the Minster can be utilised to its fullest. This will ensure the project is not delayed more than is necessary and also allow time for careful thought, planning and action.

RECENT PROJECTS – BEVERLEY MINSTER

As well as ongoing maintenance and scheduled repair, largely facilitated through the Beverley Old Fund, Beverley Minster's PCC undertakes individual project work as and when the need arises. A glazing report compiled by York Glaziers in 2007 identified the need for significant repairs and conservation work to a number of Beverley Minster's stained glass windows. Repair to these has been undertaken in order of urgency over the last several years, with an average of one window being repaired and conserved per year. As well as works to Beverley Minster's stained glass windows, other project work has included repairs to the organ and fire alarm system.

RECENT PROJECTS – ST MARY'S

St Mary's PCC has carried out work on the church's drainage system, following flooding caused by a water blockage under the Memorial Garden. As a result of theft, part of St Mary's lead roof covering and downpipes are being replaced, aided by a grant from the Roof Repair Fund. St Mary's has also received a grant from the HLF to repair a dangerously unstable pinnacle. The window in the south transept has also been replaced following a collapse around three to four years ago. The precarious state of the window was highlighted in a window report in 2006 and St Mary's latest Quinquennial Inspection (2013). Additionally, St Mary's sound system has been replaced, paid for by the PCC.

CURRENT USE

Both churches play host to a large number of cultural and musical events. The Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival has concerts in both venues. Other Beverley Festivals using the churches include the Chamber Music Festival, Literature Festival, Folk Festival and Food and Drink Festival. The East Riding County Choir and Beverley Chamber Choir base themselves in each church, and a huge range of one off events, concerts and exhibitions take place, ranging from Beer Festivals to Parliamentary Hustings. Most of Beverley's schools hold concerts and events in the two churches, and the East Riding College and Bishop Burton College hold conferences, events and graduations.

St Mary's and the Minster are key foci of the region's civic life, hosting civic services, including the Mayor's service and the County Legal Service. On Remembrance Day a service at the Minster is followed by a march through the town and an act of remembrance at St Mary's. This is a seamless county event.⁴⁰ Arts and cultural activities are seen by both St Mary's and the Minster as a vehicle for spirituality, but each approaches the arts in ways that are particular to and reflective of their respective ministries and mission.

There is an overriding feeling that both St Mary's and the Minster embody a sense of multi-faceted significance, support and inclusively. The local community makes use of both buildings for weddings, funerals and baptisms, as is to be expected. There is a sense, however, in which people now 'book' a wedding venue, rather than automatically go to their parish church. This increased competition is felt to have impacted upon the number of weddings the Minster hosts, partly because, according to anecdotal evidence, Beverley Minster is thought by couples to be too grand for a wedding venue. This can be extrapolated a little and seen as consequence of the diminishing automatic cultural authority of the Church of England.

Both St Mary's and Beverley Minster must work hard to secure congregants (St Mary's congregation is, in fact, growing) and other visitors by constantly assessing and reassessing the uses of the buildings and the ways people access them. St Mary's, for example, is not easily accessible to wheelchair users and has no lavatory facilities. St Mary's PCC has an ambition to install lavatories as soon as possible, having raised c.£85,000 since April 2016 through grants and private giving, which represents more than 60% of the total cost of the project.⁴¹

The joint project will enable both churches to combine the history and significance of their ministries with joint programming and marketing of activities. This has the potential to create a new model for what the Church of England is and does in Beverley. It is an ambition that is not without its challenges, especially with regard to resources. Again, though, the potential benefit is huge and could result in St Mary's and the Minster being used to re-energise tourism in Beverley, which should, in turn, have a positive impact on the local economy.

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Baptisms	61
Funerals	66
Weddings	26

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Baptisms	38
Funerals	43
Weddings	18

Beverley Minster has a range of management documents: maintenance plan, strategic document, conservation plan, and a statement of significance. It has an average number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.⁴²

St Mary's has a range of management documents: Accessibility audit and conservation plan. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.⁴³

⁴⁰ The first two paragraphs of this section of the case study are indebted to and quote heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015

⁴¹ St Mary's church is hired out for a number of community activities, but the lavatories in the hall are located awkwardly in its centre and cannot be used without disturbing people.

⁴² Survey result

⁴³ Survey result

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY REVD BECKY LUMLEY

Lots of people visiting Beverley come to St Mary's thinking it's the Minster. When we politely inform them that, in fact, the Minster is at the other end of the town, they are surprised. Why? Well, it's usually because they can't believe St Mary's isn't the Minster: it's a large, beautiful building that looks important. If people don't know that Beverley has two Major Parish Churches, you can't blame them for thinking St Mary's is the Minster; the church they have heard of! Do accidental visitors stay for a look around? Sometimes, yes, they do, and they love St Mary's. Other times they just head off to the Minster. Some even visit St Mary's and leave still believing it to be the Minster, but that's usually when we haven't been able to share St Mary's story with them.



Nave ceiling at St Mary's © St Mary's PCC

BEVERLEY MINSTER

Civic church (town use):

Remembrance Day Parade Service.
Legal Service.
Chairman of Council's Service.
Mayor's Service.
East Riding Carers' Celebration Service.
Ex Service Associations Services.
Charitable and school carol services.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Average 60,000 visitors per year.
Planned guided tours.
Welcomers staff seven days per week, four hours per day.
Church open 9am to 5pm every day.
Academic and educational visits.
Full-time fully staffed shop.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Nine Lessons and Carols: 1,200 attend (2015).
Choral worship on Thursdays and Sundays.
Morning and Evening Prayer daily.
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (2,500 attendees in 24 hours).
Easter Day (370 attendance, 250 communicants).
All Age Worship monthly.
Informal worship monthly.
Regular Healing services.
School services and 'experience' events termly.

ST MARY'S BEVERLEY

Civic church (town use):

Longest Night Service.
Remembrance Day Service.
Battle of Britain Day.
Civic/Mayoral Service.
Hospice Service.
Butterfly Service.
Fathers' Day Service.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Average 25,000 visitors each year.
Church open 11am to 3pm, Monday to Saturday.
Volunteer church welcomers 11am to 3pm Monday to Saturday.
Planned guided tours throughout the year.
Informal book and postcard shop.
Primary school, high school and university visits.
Annual Open Day.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Scheduled worship on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.
Nine Lessons and Carols Service (508 attendees).
Celebration of Faith Service (398 attendees; the Archbishop of York).
Christingle Services (519 attendees).
Midnight Service (265 attendees).
Christmas Day Service (326 attendees).

WELCOMING VISITORS

Both churches are normally open during the day. At the Minster paid virgers and voluntary welcomers host an estimated 80,000 visitors per year. Welcome leaflets are available in a variety of languages, there is a smartphone app run from the Minster website, and a guide book is provided in English, German and French. There is a feeling that the offer to visitors could be much further enhanced by better interpretive material and specialist guides and tours.

St Mary's welcomes about 25,000 visitors each year but could achieve considerably more. The parish has gone to huge lengths to illustrate the history of the church, with information boards in various places explaining monuments etc. Many of the most interesting items in the PCC's care are, however, only shown on special occasions due to a lack of resources to display them properly. There is potential for this aspect to be improved, building on existing visitor numbers to create a positive impact on the local economy.⁴⁴

The current visitor offer at both churches demonstrates a recognition of the need to provide information about the history and life of the church. Expectations that they will deliver, particularly at Beverley Minster, a cathedral-scale visitor experience can put pressure on financial resources and volunteers. Pressure can manifest itself in the need to open the church buildings regularly, with welcomers on hand to provide information alongside sophisticated displays of interpretation to engage the senses. St Mary's is already working toward enhancing its interpretation and is currently engaged in a project to record and interpret the church's 600 roof bosses. Possibly due to the resources at its disposal, Beverley Minster has historically been more confident and strategic in its approach, mapping visitors from all over the world. For example, the Friends paid for and maintain the Minster's website whereas St Mary's had to rely on the incumbent to build their 'non-professional' website.

A joint publicity campaign, where visitors are informed about and directed toward the 'other' church, no matter which they visit first has been implemented, and there are plans to establish a tour of Beverley, between the two churches, as part of the joint project. Again, the potential for future growth through joint-working is huge and could benefit the town enormously. It can also be used as a mechanism to ensure parity between the infrastructure and good governance of both churches; grow confidence among the churches and wider communities, and address issues whenever and wherever they occur.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beverley Minster PCC, 'Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

Beverley Minster website: <http://beverleyminster.org.uk/visit-us-2/new-artwork-2004/>

Carden & Godfrey, 'The Minster Church of St John, Beverley, East Yorkshire: Quinquennial Survey, October 2015'

Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015. This CMP was written in collaboration with postgraduate students Rosie Adamson and Sam Marsh of the University of York, who worked under the guidance of their tutor, Dr Kate Giles.

Sherriff, D, 'The Parish Church of St Mary, Beverley: Report on Quinquennial Inspection 2013'

St Mary's PCC, 'Annual Report & Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2015'

National Heritage List for England list description www.historicengland.org.uk

⁴⁴ The opening two paragraphs of this section are indebted to and quote heavily from: Elders, J, 'The historic churches of the market town of Beverley: Conservation Management Plan', 2015



ANCIENT PRIORY AND PARISH CHURCH OF ST. GERMANUS (ST GERMAN'S PRIORY)

Quay Road, St Germans, Saltash, PL12 5LY

Diocese	Truro	Settlement Type	Rural
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1140544	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	639285	Average Weekly Attendance	45
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	2,700
Footprint (m ²)	630 (big)	Annual Visitors	8,000
Building Period	Norman	Website	http://www.stgermanspriory.info/



Exterior of St Germanus Priory

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- The oldest ecclesiastical establishment in Cornwall.
- The PCC has recently initiated a new and innovative model of governance for the Priory.
- St Germans Priory lacks running water and facilities.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- St Germans Priory embodies the history of Christianity in Cornwall.
- The church has a multitude of significant fixtures and fittings.
- Setting is attractive but access is restricted because it abuts land owned by the neighbouring Port Eliot estate.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- Implementing and managing a new system of governance to the satisfaction of all involved.
- Ensuring maintenance and repairs to the Priory are carried out, whilst also improving facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensuring the worshipping life of the Priory is enhanced by the change in governance structure.



Interior

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Germans Priory has endured for many hundreds of years. That it has survived is no small tribute to those who have cared for it with great dedication and determination down the centuries. In 2010 with mounting repair and maintenance issues and bills to pay, St Germans Priory's Parochial Church Council (PCC) was finally overwhelmed. It passed a resolution to close the Priory.

What bore all the hallmarks of the end was, however, a beginning. With the support of the Bishop of Cornwall and the Church Buildings Council, the PCC formulated a new model of governance in 2012 that would see it retain responsibility for mission and ministry and transfer the responsibility for managing and maintaining the Priory building to a Trust. After many complex and challenging discussions, a lease, unprecedented

in English canon law, was signed in the spring of 2016 and St Germans Priory turned the page of the next chapter in its long and important history.

The impact this new model of governance will have on the future of the Priory is, as yet, unclear; however, the circumstances that brought it into being have been maturing for some time and could not be left unchecked. The future for St Germans Priory could find itself to be among the most notable in the history of English parish churches.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING⁰³

“There has been a worshipping Christian community at St Germans since at least the ninth, and possibly as early as the fifth century AD, when Constantius of Lyon and the Venerable Bede tell us that St Germanus of Auxerre founded churches during his time in England”⁰⁴

St Germanus of Auxerre was a Gaulish Bishop, reportedly sent to Britain from France in the early fifth century after the Roman military withdrawal to combat Pelagianism.⁰⁵

A Minster may have existed at St Germans from the seventh or eighth century and this is thought to be the site of a church founded c.430 by St Germanus himself, although there is little compelling evidence for this assertion. The ‘Lanaled Pontifical’, a tenth-century manuscript, mentions a site called ‘Lannaled, a famed and universally known place, where the bones of Bishop Germanus are preserved’, which was almost certainly St Germans.

St Germanus is likely to have been a Minster (Monasterium) before the Norman Conquest. The very large historic parish (once the largest in Cornwall) may be a reflection of the previous Minster status, and as the seat of the Bishop. The site of an Episcopal manor house is thought to have been at Cuddenbeak, an area developed for the railway when this came to St Germans. St Germans was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086).

The (perhaps) decayed Minster was refounded for Augustinian canons by Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus between 1161-1184, and this is the earliest accepted date for the fabric of the present St Germans Priory. Along with many churches in the Diocese of Exeter it was ‘consecrated’ in 1261 by Bishop Branescombe during a tour of his diocese near the beginning of his ministry, there is no evidence this ‘consecration’ initiated a building campaign.

St Germans Priory’s thirteenth-century windows and octagon of the north-west tower, for example, may date from before 1261, so it would be more appropriate to accept a lengthy campaign continuing from the 1160s into the thirteenth century and beyond. The south chapel was added in the middle of the fourteenth century, traditionally for the translation of an arm bone of St Germanus in 1358 from Auxerre by Sir Nicholas Tamworth. In the fifteenth century, probably during the office of Bishop Lacey (1420-1450) whose arms appear within the church, the nave and aisle were given Perpendicular windows and parapets and the upper stage of the south-west tower remodelled. The aisle was widened at this time, and the south-west porch added. The priory was dissolved in 1539 and stripped, the remains given or sold to John Champernowne, a Devon squire of the noted dynasty,

becoming what is now Port Eliot house. Remnants of the priory include a well-preserved vaulted Medieval undercroft within the present house and at least part of the ground plan of the north range of the priory. It would appear that the north wall of Port Eliot house preserves the line of the north range along the cloister. The scar of the south cloister walk pent roof can still be seen in the west face of the north tower.

Champernowne’s son Henry sold the estate to John Eliot, a gentleman of St Germans, in 1564. The church was offered to the village, a gift which they were initially not eager to accept because of its sheer size. The original long (55ft) monastic chancel collapsed or was taken down in 1592, perhaps due to lack of need now this was a parish church.

Edward Eliot was made Lord Eliot, 1st Earl of St Germans in 1784, the property is still owned and lived in by the dynasty. The parkland surrounding Port Eliot was landscaped by Humphrey Repton in the 1790s and the house and stables remodelled by Sir John Soane around 1802. The north transept and lobby (later vestry) of St Germans Priory was added for the Eliot family pew in 1803, by which time St Germans had become an estate village.

There was a major restoration of the church in 1888-1894 by the architect James Piers St Aubyn (in partnership with Henry J Wadling) who had an office in Devonport, and had designed nearby Hessenford St Anne in 1871. This work was paid for by the Earl. The floor was dropped some 18 inches, giving even access from outside to the nave but providing a sheer drop from the south porch. Later work (1902-1904) undertaken by St Aubyn (it must have been by his partner Wadling as St Aubyn died in 1895) appears to have been partly funded by Albert Burton, when the walls were scraped and this revealed the remnants of the Norman clerestory and other details.

There was a serious fire in 1966 which gutted the organ chamber and charred the roof, destroying St Germans Priory’s organ. A new one was installed and the roof ceiled and plastered. There have been several campaigns of repair and restoration since, including recent roof repairs, part-funded by Historic England and repairs to the lychgate.

St Germans Priory is now entering a new phase of its ancient life with a new management structure that is currently unique in the Church of England.

⁰³ The ‘History of the building’ section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁴ Martin Edwards in: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁵ Pelagianism is associated with the monk Pelagius and centres on the idea that human beings can earn salvation

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **c.420:** St Germans Priory in England. Romano-British church possibly at this location.
- **800s:** Church mentioned as a Minster (Lanaled).
- **c.930:** Conan Bishop of Cornwall has his seat here, from Athelstan.
- **1066-1088:** Norman Conquest; St Germans in the hands of Robert, Count of Mortain, half-brother of the Conqueror at the time of the Domesday survey.
- **1161-1184:** Priory re-founded for Augustinian canons by Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus of Exeter.
- **Thirteenth century:** North tower rebuilt as octagon(?).
- **c.1350-1370:** The chancel is probably rebuilt and lengthened, the south aisle widened with east chapel built to house relics of St Germanus brought from Auxerre by Sir Nicholas Tamworth in 1358. St Germans becomes a place of pilgrimage.
- **1536-1540:** Reformation, Dissolution of the priory, which is given to John Champemowne. Monastic buildings stripped and converted.
- **1592:** Demolition of chancel.
- **Late eighteenth-century:** Reordering and refurnishing of interior with box pews. Landscaping of park by Repton and renovation of Port Eliot by sir John Soane.
- **1802-1804:** North aisle demolished and new Eliot family pew added. Churchyard north of church cleared of burials and landscaped as lawn.
- **1887-1894:** Alterations and restoration by JP St Aubyn. Box pews removed.
- **1902-1904:** Further works including lychgate.
- **1966:** Fire in the organ chamber; then rebuild of organ
- **2000:** Organ and vestry renovated
- **2011:** Repairs of lychgate
- **2012:** Formation of the Priory Trust as a charity and the transfer of legal responsibility



West entrance of St Germans Priory

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS⁰⁶

The interior of St Germans Priory is dark without being foreboding. Its high-quality fixtures and fittings help to convey a sense of its history and grandeur. Contemporary clutter, brought about by a lack of storage space, distracts slightly from the fine interior aesthetics.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Stained glass

The chancel's exceptionally fine east window has stained glass designed by Edward Burne-Jones and manufactured by Morris & Co. The figures in the principal lights were originally designed for Albion Congregational church, Ashton-under-Lyne in 1895 and then re-used at St Germans the following year.

The south chapel's two-tier, six-light window was manufactured by Morris & Co. in 1902, after the deaths of William Morris (d.1896) and Burne-Jones (d.1898). Each light presents a single figure, executed to designs made by Burne-Jones as early as 1869 and as late as 1896. Other Victorian stained glass at St Germans Priory includes examples by Fouracre & Watson and Burlison & Grylls.

Monuments

- A fine Rysbrack monument in the north-west tower base (originally in the south aisle), to Edward Eliot, 1772.
- Marble sarcophagus to Susan Countess of St Germans, 1830.
- Slate tablet with acrostic inscription in Latin to Ionhannes Minister, 1631.
- Marble tablet to Walter Moyle, 1701.
- Pair of marble monuments with broken pediments and pilasters, to John Glanville, 1735 and Elizabeth Glanville, 1748.
- Marble ledger stone to Ann Eliot, 1723.
- Monument by Westmacott, to John, first Earl St Germans, 1823.
- Slate ledger stones to Richard Boger, 1733 and Sarah Nanjulian, 1778. Royal Arms dated 1660 in south aisle.
- Eliot arms in nave.
- Memorial plaque to Sir John Eliot (d.1632); sometimes known as the 'Father of the House [of Parliament].

Bells

Four bells of 1775 by J Pennington; three by Mears & Stainbank of 1913; one by John Warner of 1984.

Clocks and Dials

Fine clock mechanism in the south tower; large eighteenth-century sundial against the base of the north transept, missing its gnomon.

Organ

Original organ built 1896 by Hele & Co, but seriously damaged by fire in 1966. Rebuilt by George Osmond afterwards.

Statuary

An important wooden sculpture of St Anthony of Padua (c.1500); brought from Port Eliot.

Reredos

Oak panelling in the chancel, enclosing a stone frieze depicting the Last Supper. Given 1935 by the Countess of St Germans as a war memorial.

Misericord

A single Medieval misericord. Putatively depicting a local character named Dando, punished for hunting on a Sunday.

Font

A badly damaged font of c.1200 with square bowl, Saltire crosses(?) to the faces; plain columns around central drum, set on a Victorian base

Altar / Communion tables

Altar tables of oak: seventeenth-century in chancel; nineteenth-century Gothic table in Lady Chapel



East window, designed by Edward Burne-Jones and manufactured by Morris & Co. Licence: Nilfanion - Own work - CC BY-SA 3.0 [<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>]

⁰⁶ The 'Fixtures and fittings' section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, 'The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE⁰⁷

“St Germans Priory isn’t just important locally, it’s important to the whole of Cornwall; it’s a symbol of Celtic heritage”⁰⁸

St Germans Priory is Grade I listed and situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty⁰⁹

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Germans is a substantial village set within rolling countryside on the south coast of eastern Cornwall, ten miles within the Cornish border with Devon west of the Tamar. This is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The River Tiddy (a tributary of the Tamar) broadens into an estuary to the east of the village, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The village is bisected by a narrow winding road, dividing it into an historic settlement around the church and snaking down to the Quay, and a later settlement around the railway station. The old village consists of mostly stone-built cottages, a large number of which are listed, including very fine sixteenth-century almshouses (Grade II* listed). St Germans stands at the eastern edge of the historic village, built into the bottom of a steep bank. There is a row of attractive stone houses situated above the church, on the other side of the road. A Grade II listed lychgate, designed by the architect James Piers St Aubyn and built in 1902, provides passage down a winding path to the church of St Germans below.

Port Eliot is a Neo-Classical, Grade I Listed house directly to the north of the church, remodelled by Soane with Gothick detailing which mirrors details of the church, emphasising the historical connection between these two buildings. It still incorporates parts of the Medieval priory of St Germans, including the probable line of the north range opposite the church, with the cloister garden between, now a lawn. Port Eliot is set within a large landscaped park designed by Humphrey Repton. The park is listed Grade I on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The curtilage of Port Eliot’s land means that access is available to the west and south sides of the church only. The north side was a burial ground until the early nineteenth century, when the memorials were removed to create the lawn between the church and house.

Together with the Port Eliot estate and as part of the AONB and SSSI the church in its surroundings is of exceptional ecological significance.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The present St Germans Priory is more than 800 years old in parts, and preserves more original Norman masonry in its powerful and iconic west front than any other Cornish church. The Norman west towers and west porch with doorway and the other components of the western part of the church, are of exceptional architectural interest. The south chapel, a very high quality architectural space which has been compared to contemporary parts of Exeter cathedral, was apparently built in the late 1350s or 1360s to house relics of St Germanus translated from Auxerre brought back by Sir Nicholas Tamworth. It is of exceptional significance as an outstanding example of the Perpendicular style of the mid-fourteenth-century in Cornwall, and of the highest quality, despite later alterations and restorations.

The font is of considerable significance as an example of late twelfth-century carving. The Medieval woodwork within the church, particularly the misericord and sections of the rood screen, is of some art historical significance. The Medieval and seventeenth-century monuments are of exceptional art historical interest. The Rysbrack monument, one of his earliest commissions in England, is of considerable art historical interest. Generally, the eighteenth to twentieth-century wall monuments and ledger slabs are of some art historical interest for the development of funerary art and lettering during this period. The Victorian and later furnishings and fittings are of local significance, with the exception of the Morris & Co. stained windows, which are of considerable artistic interest; although, the east window is suffering from ‘ghosting’ in the face of the figure of St Stephen, which undermines its significance, if only slightly.

⁰⁷ The ‘Significance’ section of this case study is indebted to and quotes heavily from: Elders, J, ‘The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

⁰⁸ Quote from a PCC representative

⁰⁹ Survey results

HISTORIC INTEREST

St Germans Priory is one of the oldest historic parish churches of Cornwall, the site of Christian worship since at least the ninth century and almost certainly earlier. The first named historical figure who can be associated with the place is St Germanus, known mainly through secondary sources such as Bede and the Hagiography written by Constantius of Lyon.

The first recorded Bishops of Cornwall in the early 900s had their seat at St Germans. Bishop Conan is often described as the most notable of these, perhaps appointed as the leading Bishop of Cornwall by King Athelstan around 926 as part of his efforts to create a united England. Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus was responsible for refounding the decayed Minster in the late twelfth century as an Augustinian priory for regular canons (as opposed to secular canons serving the Minster). Sir Nicholas Tamworth made a pilgrimage to Auxerre in the fourteenth century and brought an arm bone back to St Germans, leading to the building of the south chapel as a shrine.

John Soane and Humphrey Repton were two of the leading landscape designers and architects of their time, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The prominent local Victorian architect Piers St Aubyn oversaw the restoration of the church.

The form of St Germans Priory is of exceptional interest for aiding the understanding of the evolution of a Medieval church in terms of its liturgy. The basic plan form, particularly the south chapel built for the veneration of the relics of St Germanus, is also of exceptional interest.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The archaeology and history of this place is complex and not fully understood. There are a number of scattered findspots of flints along the coast and estuary, and Bronze Age barrows are known in the area, though none in the immediate vicinity of St Germans. There has been much landscaping around the church and house but stray finds from all these periods are possible. There is little evidence for Iron Age occupation in the immediate vicinity, some Romano-British material has been found.

The known buried remains of the earliest church phases which lie within the churchyard and settlement are of exceptional interest. The site also holds high potential for the archaeology and history of the Early Medieval period. The churchyard preserves a relatively undisturbed area of below-ground stratigraphy of exceptional interest, due to the possible surviving underground evidence relating to the Saxon church and priory. Although nothing remains of the fabric above ground of the Anglo-Saxon church(es), the probable existence of foundations and underground remains of these on the site, particularly within the church, contributes to its archaeological potential. Excavations in the late nineteenth century at the eastern end of the present church may have found part of a Saxon building in

the form of a rectangular foundation protruding from the current east wall of the chancel (previously the Late Medieval nave), but this is unclear.

The site is of considerable archaeological interest as a burial ground used for at least 900 years, regarding its potential for the study of human remains and burial practice over this long period. The location of burials is unclear, but seems to include areas to the north and west of the church.

A service tunnel with gratings, running east-west near Port Eliot house probably did considerable damage to archaeological remains when it was dug, if any remained following the exhumation of the graves in the area in the early nineteenth century. There is suggestion locally that as well as the service tunnel, a tunnel once existed connecting Port Eliot to the church.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The role of St Germans Priory in the community has changed several times since the construction of the original church, but it has always been closely involved with it. This was from the beginning a high profile foundation, closely bound up with the history of the historic parish and borough of St Germans. The church building belongs very much to the people of St Germans and the surrounding area, not just to the regular worshipping community. Many generations of villagers are buried there, and the monuments inside the church are an eloquent reminder of hundreds of years of community life.

The interest of St Germans Priory reaches beyond its locality into the heart of Cornwall. The perception of it as the county's original cathedral is still strong, and it is also seen, by some, as the embodiment of Celtic heritage. In this sense it is an icon of Cornwall. But it is also an active parish church, providing a place for quiet reflection and cultural enrichment as much as congregational worship. St Germans Priory' is integrated, after historic periods of disquiet, into what is tantamount to a feudal village system, with the Port Eliot estate bordering the church on one side and the historic village on the other. St Germans Priory's new model of governance, with the PCC running missional and ecclesiastical affairs while a Trust assumes full legal responsibility for the church building, could test the local, as well as canonical status quo.

When asked to select one things that makes their building special, St Germans Priory chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.¹⁰

¹⁰ Survey results

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“The Parochial Church Council (PCC) was struggling to keep up with repair work required to maintain the building, let alone make it a warm and welcoming resource for the local community and visitors alike. There was a significant danger that the building would eventually deteriorate to the point that it became a monument unfit for use and seriously impact the local community”¹¹

Attitudes to St Germans Priory have changed significantly over the past several years. For the PCC, c.2010 to 2016 has been at once the lowest and most optimistic of times. There was a strong feeling that the fabric of the building had been deteriorating for over 100 years and the affection in which the local community held the building was not nourishment enough to sustain it without practical application. Fatigued by unrelenting pressure to maintain an ancient, nationally significant parish church and rendered almost destitute by its unforgiving attempts to do so, the PCC passed a resolution to seek formal closure of St Germans Priory.¹² When the notion of St Germans Priory's impending closure became local knowledge, a petition was launched in opposition, gathering a not insignificant number of signatures. Yet, without accompanying offers of substantive assistance, the PCC alone would continue to shoulder what had become less a church and more an “unmanageable burden of degrading stone”.¹³

The Bishop of Truro pledged his support to the PCC in order to stave off redundancy. The Church Buildings Council (CBC), in a demonstration of the national recognition and will to preserve what is both an embodiment of Christian and architectural heritage, offered substantive support from their Regeneration Team through the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Following the retirement of St Germans Priory's then-incumbent, the PCC was to be assisted by a new priest, who arrived in 2012 with substantial experience of working with troubled and troubling parishes. The newly-arrived incumbent was initially taken aback at what he found in St Germans and set about re-considering the future of St Germans Priory as a parish church in close collaboration with the PCC.¹⁴ From this a new vision for St Germans Priory grew; one that was radical, even unprecedented in the

history of the Church of England; a vision that would see the relinquishment of the PCC's control to enable a future for the contemporary church that was consonant with the significance of its history and heritage.

There was acknowledgment that a substantive action plan could only grow from the PCC's desperation to relieve itself of the isolating burden of the building if it were supported by a determined desire to extend the ministry of the church, which was found to be unwavering. Work began in earnest to win the trust and input of the village through proactive dialogue, consultation and the launch of the new vision, which would see the PCC continue responsibility for the worshipping and missional life of the church, whilst a Priory Trust would assume full legal responsibility for the management and maintenance of the church building. The result was a new perception of St Germans Priory as a both community asset, managed by and on behalf of the community, and a renewed church, utilised

by the PCC as a tool for mission. (See 'Organisation and Responsibilities' for further details.)

For the other churches in St Germans Priory's group, often referred to as daughter or sister churches—Hasenford, St Anne; Downderry, St Nicolas; and Tideford St Luke—there was near-palpable relief that the PCC was now free to focus on mission and ministry and be fully engaged in the work of the all group churches. Previously, this had suffered with members' attention being pulled inexorably and interminably toward St Germans Priory's repair issues. This shift in emphasis has also afforded the PCC with time enough to reconsider the missional and community roles of each of the other churches in complement to the future role of St Germans Priory. The PCC now considers itself to manage 'one church in four locations.'



¹¹ www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

¹² PCC representative

¹³ PCC representative

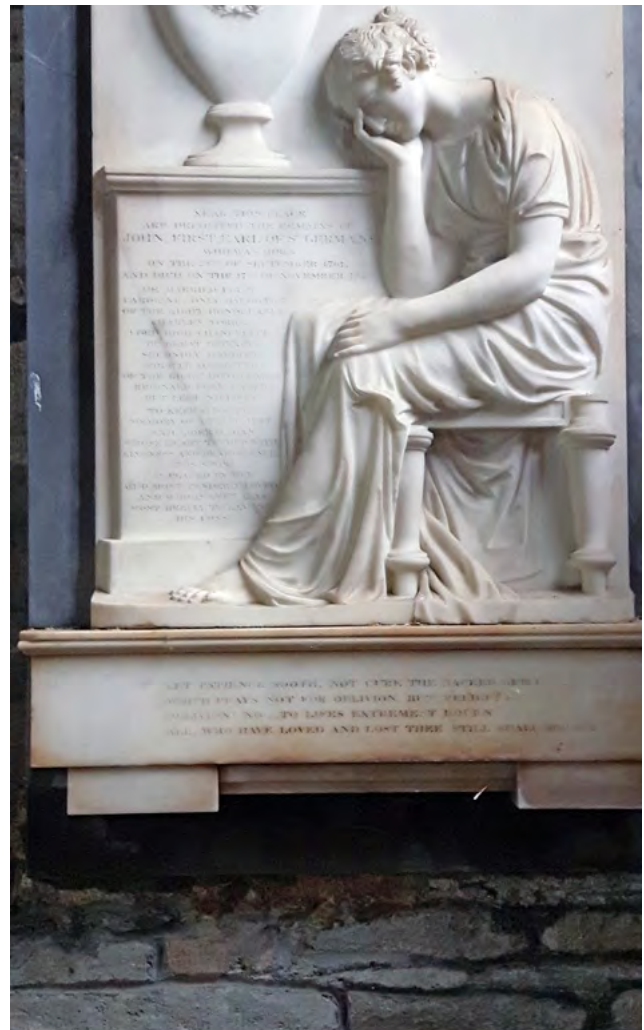
¹⁴ PCC representative

Anxieties, of course, remain. The most affecting being the fear that the new vision, formerly constituted in the spring of 2016, will not be successful. It is too early to make judgements about the likelihood of success or its unwelcome opposite; however, the local community are becoming clearer about what the change in governance means and what they must do to make it work. There is an unequivocal understanding that the building as it is today, with a multitude of repair issues and a lack of basic facilities, is a barrier to change. (See 'Making changes and Doing Repairs' for further details.) There is also a feeling that St Germans Priory is being watched to see how effective the new model of governance is although to date, no other churches are known to have adopted the same model. Pressure to act quickly from exterior organisations has been resisted in favour of a careful approach to substantial change and anxieties about demonstrating that something is happening to avoid local disillusion with perceived inactivity has been mitigated through a number of smaller projects.

Sensitive to people's perceptions of St Germans Priory and its ancient history, a change of titling has already been effected. The church is known as the Ancient Priory and Parish Church of St. Germanus; St Germans Priory or The Priory, for short. This titling is considered to be more inclusive, less foreboding, and communicate that the church offers more than Sunday services.

In a practical context, the size of St Germans Priory makes routine maintenance challenging to the point of overwhelming. This is not aided by the inherited use of space. The Rysbrack monument, for example, whose move to its current location totally impeded access to the north-west tower. Access can now only be obtained via a circumvented route through roof voids.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St Germans Priory considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be both a help and a hindrance.¹⁵



Eighteenth-century monument within the church

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

'You're giving our church away!' That was the fear locally, in some quarters, anyway, when we came up with the idea to split the responsibility for St Germans Priory between the PCC and the community. Of course, it isn't a split; not really. The PCC and the Priory Trust are working together for the good of St Germans Priory, the village and the wider community. In essence, it's a village project – people from the village can help the Trust and the PCC; they can come to services and concerts and contribute to the upkeep of the building. I'm glad to say that everyone is behind the idea now. People can see that the PCC is going to do what it is good at – mission and ministry – and the Trust is going to use all the expertise and experience at its disposal to make sure St Germans Priory doesn't just have a future, ticking along, but that it has a really exciting future, perhaps doing more for more people than we can imagine, even now.

St Germans Priory will always be, first and foremost, a place of worship – it says that in the first clause of the agreement the PCC has with the Priory Trust – but now it's going to be so much more than that. We always tried to do our best to reach as many people as possible, but we just couldn't cope with all the maintenance, the repairs, the bills; that's why we decided we had to close the church. But the closure never happened, and we can see now that is because we were brave and said 'enough is enough'. Now we feel both relief and a real optimism about the future. We would never have managed to get here without all the support we received from the bishop, the CBC, the community. It's been inspiring to see so many people invest in the future of St Germans Priory.



St Antony of Padua

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“Now that the Trust has been formed, the Church building will be called ‘St Germans Priory’. The Trust that will take on the responsibility for making the Priory ‘fit for purpose’, providing heating, lighting and all the facilities you would expect in a modern community building.”¹⁶

The formation of the Priory Trust as a charity in 2012 and the transferral of legal responsibility for the Priory building to the Trust from the PCC has been a lengthy and complex process that has no direct precedent in English canonical law. The PCC and Trust, who worked closely together throughout the process, received substantial support from the Archbishops’ Council, CBC and a range of barristers and legal experts. Difficult decisions about responsibilities and working methods had to be made, but the PCC was prepared for this given it had already made the most difficult decision of all: to close the church. It was sure in its own, collective mind that the new-found optimism about the future and progress toward a new model of governance had only come about because of its will to close St Germans Priory in the first place. The fact that St Germans Priory was now going to remain open gave the PCC confidence in its own ability to compromise and effect positive change. Challenging decisions no longer burdened members with fear.¹⁷

The Priory Trust assumed full responsibility, by lease, for the management, maintenance and development of St Germans Priory building in the spring of 2016. There is, however, one caveat: the PCC has reserved, but not exclusive, right to direct the use of the chancel, which also has 100% liability for its upkeep vested in the Church Commissioners.

The Trust’s board comprises skilled and experienced people from the village and region. It is chaired by the former lay chair of the PCC. Other officer posts include:

- Events organiser – a part-time, paid position funded by civil parish council;
- History officer;
- Development officer;
- Finance officer;
- Publicity officer; and a
- Legal officer

St Germans Priory’s incumbent does not have a role on the Trust’s board due to a determination to keep the Trust secular and so widen its inclusivity to people of other faiths and none. This arrangement also ensures that the incumbent is freed from the management of the building and able to focus on pastoral leadership. St Germans Priory’s churchwarden does, however, occupy the role of designated liaison officer between the PCC and the Trust. The Archdeacon of Cornwall chairs a liaison group, whose protocol for resolving disputes, problems and crises is modelled on that employed by Truro Cathedral, which ensures channels of communication are kept open and any disagreements are arbitrated fairly. The Trust is constituted in such a way as to protect any individual trustee from legal action. Should it ever be deemed that the continuance of the Trust is not in the best interests of St Germans Priory it may only be dissolved through applications to the Charity Commission and Church Commissioners.

The PCC and the Trust will share some and support one another in other events held at St Germans Priory and both will share the responsibility for building the visitor profile of the Priory. Both the Trust and the PCC will continue to receive the valued assistance of a number of volunteers, who clean the Priory, open its doors to visitors every day, carry out gardening duties and act as pastoral visitors.

Number of members on PCC	PCC: 12 Trustees: Unclear at the time of writing
Number of clergy	1 full-time priest 2 part-time SSM 3 lay ministers
Number of paid staff (PCC/Trust)	0/1
Number of volunteers	30
Number of sub-committees (PCC/Trust)	0/0

¹⁶ www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

¹⁷ PCC representative

FINANCES

“The Trust will take on the responsibility of paying for the maintenance and repair of the church, plus meeting the cost of utilities and insurance. It is such a relief to the PCC”¹⁸

St Germans Priory’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Parish Share. They anticipate Parish Share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Parish Share is regularly the principal item of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁹

The PCC’s accounts for all four churches in the group, show that in 2015 it had an income of £49,196, expenditure of £56,670 and bank deposits of £43,546 (December 2015), compared with £51,020 in January 2015. Income was largely predicated upon planned giving and other donations (£27,212); fundraising activities (£9,001); and church activities, including occasional offices (£4,230). Investments yielded a relatively negligible £253. Grants to the PCC from external sources totalled £6,500. The PCC’s principal sources of expenditure included parish share / Mission and Ministry Fund (MMF) (£23,000); running costs (£11,908); and repairs (£2,980). The PCC was, as of 1 January 2015, £4,666 in deficit in its payments to the Diocese of Cornwall’s MMF, of which £2,333 was written off by the Diocese.

The PCC operates a restricted bell fund, which held £1,969 in 2015 and a restricted flower fund, which held £667. The PCC’s restricted fund for repairs to St Germans Priory stood at £15,577. This has now been transferred to the discretionary control of the PCC and will be used to make grants to the Priory Trust for use, principally, as match funding for capital works projects. The PCC also loaned the Trust £7,732 (incorporated into the total expenditure for 2015) and will make a ‘transitioning’ payment of £1,000 to the Trust for the first three years of the new model of governance. The Trust has not inherited any debts from the PCC.

Since the spring of 2016 the Priory Trust has assumed responsibility for all costs associated with the fabric of the building, utilities and insurance, which currently covers 85% of re-building costs of St Germans Priory. The PCC will continue to be responsible for all costs associated with worship, such as the purchase of candles, hymn books etc. Income generated by leasing St Germans Priory for concerts, for example, will now be administered by and for the benefit of the Trust.

A fundraising strategy in the form of a stewardship scheme has resulted in a noticeable increase in regular giving to the PCC recently. The PCC acted as signatory to a successful application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, compiled by the Trust on its behalf, receiving £37,600 in 2015. The Trust also secured a modest grant to repair the south porch roof. The PCC has not been in receipt of any other substantial grants since an award by Historic England c.25 years ago to repair fire damage.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Germans Priory’s income does not meet expenditure.²⁰

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St German’s financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015	
Total QI cost	Not specified
Urgent QI cost	Not specified
Annual maintenance cost	£2,182
Parish share cost	£29,135
Building insurance cost	£7,268
Utilities cost	£11,908
Major project cost	c.£55,000
Annual donations income	£27,212
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£252
Events/church hall income	£9,001
Other income i.e. land/interest	£4,320
Services fees	n/a
Major project income	£37,600

²⁰ Survey results

¹⁸ Quote from PCC representative

¹⁹ Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

Other than the urgent repairs to the tower roofs, which were addressed through the award of a Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund grant in 2015, St Germans Priory's latest Quinquennial Inspection (QI), carried out in 2014, enumerates a multitude of essential repairs required in the next ten years. The most salient of these include:²¹

- Innumerable works that should be described as 'routine maintenance', such as the removal of vegetation from stonework and the clearance of drains
- Investigations, such as to an outbreak of rot in the north transept, over the organ
- Wholesale replacement of rainwater goods
- Repairs to parapets
- Repairs to the south porch – underway
- Repointing
- Conservation works

Unfortunately, no estimated costs are provided as part of the QI report.

Full responsibility for carrying out maintenance and repairs is now vested in the Priory Trust, along with responsibility for ensuring all health and safety regulations and policies are enforced. Faculty permission for carrying out repairs can either be made by the Trust or by the Trust via the PCC. The PCC will always be consulted by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), prior to any petition being made.

The Priory Trust has little financial capital and so will be reliant upon successful applications for grant aid in order to meet its obligations to St German Priory. The Trust also has ambitions to improve the infrastructure and interpretation at the Priory, declaring on its website that:

*[it] will take on the responsibility for making the Priory 'fit for purpose', providing heating, lighting and all the facilities you would expect in a modern community building. To do so it will be raising several £Million for a capital works programme.*²²

It will therefore likely apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a substantial sum to facilitate its work in the future; including, the installation of meeting rooms to act as, among other things, a mini conference venue; and possibly a café to complement the local Long Gallery public house / bistro. It was, however, deemed to be necessary to provide rudimentary facilities at St Germans Priory, which currently has

no running water or WC, as soon as possible. To this end the Trust has embarked upon a project to install a composting WC in the Priory, as well as consider what can be done to address significant deficiencies in the heating and lighting systems.

The CMP produced by the CBC for St Germans Priory was the catalyst that led to the formation of the Trust, the essential repair works being carried out and the vision for a sustainable future for St Germans Priory being adopted. It continues to play a central role in the operations of both the PCC and the Priory Trust.²³ There are, as yet, no other management documents used by the PCC or Trust.

Given that the new governance structure at St Germans Priory is in its infancy it is too early to make a judgement as to whether it will result in a sustainable future for the Priory. The PCC had a will to change what was not working. The support it and the Trust have from organisations and individuals from outside and within the Church of England, plus the determination of all parties to secure a future for St Germans Priory augurs well for the condition of the building and the community it serves.

St Germans Priory has a limited range of management documents: conservation plan, and a statement of needs. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁴



St Germans Priory's surface drainage / gully

²¹ Le Page Architects, 'St Germans Priory, Cornwall: Quinquennial Inspection Report', 2014

²² www.stgermanspriory.info/index.php/about/history/

²³ PCC representative

²⁴ Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

In an exercise that was incredibly useful to test the working method of the Priory Trust in conjunction with the PCC, the Trust prepared an application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in 2015 in order to carry out works to St Germans Priory's north and south tower roofs, rainwater goods and stonework. The details of these works were as follows:²⁵

To South Tower:

- Uplift existing lead sheeting and insert timber rolls to high point of roof.
- Reinstate lead sheeting including lead covering to rolls.
- Re-weld any identified defective lead patching.
- Clean out parapet gutter and sumps.
- Remove existing and renewal of painted timber door and frame to tower roof.
- Remove rusty steel fixings to flagpole and replace with stainless steel.

To North Tower:

- Re-boss leadwork to all rolls, drips etc.
- Clean out parapet gutter and sumps.
- Erection of designed securely fenced scaffold tower structure to SE corner of church including within grounds of Port Eliot Estate.
- Removal of existing masonry, leadwork etc to facilitate removal and re-bedding of kneeler stone at the south-east corner.
- Renew leadwork to soakers and flashings associated with kneeler stone works.
- Erection of designed securely fenced scaffold tower structure to parapet at west end of north elevation within grounds of Port Eliot Estate.
- Erection of meshed scaffold protections around perimeter of parapet merlons etc.
- Removal and renewal of isolated coping stones to merlons of north parapet including s/steel pinning.
- Conservation masonry repairs, renewal of masonry and re-pointing to crenellations of parapet to north elevation.
- Isolated slate repairs and renewal of isolated ridge tiles.
- De-vegetate and subsequent isolated spot pointing to south elevation and to south porch and south-east corner of the church.

The Trust's application, which was signed by the PCC as the legal body at the time, secured £37,600 toward a project with a total cost of c.£55,000. The commissioning and management of the work was then handled by the Trust on behalf of the PCC.

The learning experience this provided has informed a working method for the Trust and PCC, and gave trustees an invaluable experience of fundraising for and managing a major capital works project under the supportive auspices of the PCC. The project's successful outcome has given both the PCC and Trust confidence in the future.



Replaced downpipes on the north-west tower © Le Page Architects

²⁵ Hammond, B, 'Conservation Roofing Works and associated Masonry Repairs and Rainwater Goods Replacement at St Germans Priory, St Germans, Saltash' (CDM document)

CURRENT USE

St Germans Priory is an active church, with services held on three Sundays each month but no weekday services. Its model of churchmanship enables the incumbent to explore different ways of facilitating worship, including Messy Church. The number of congregants has notably increased recently. The neighbouring Port Eliot house is a secular wedding venue and conversations are currently underway between St Germans Priory's incumbent and the Port Eliot estate about ways in which the sacred and secular venues can combine their efforts.

St Germans Priory is also a key venue in the nationally-recognised and high-profile Port Eliot festival, which takes place every summer in St Germans. The Priory is the premier music venue for the festival, which attracts between 10,000 and 15,000 people for arts and other cultural performers. Other than participating in the Port Eliot Festival, St Germans Priory hosts occasional music events, promoted by long-time collaborators, art exhibitions and an annual Christmas market. Following the establishment of the Priory Trust, which has responsibility for all the Priory's activities other than worship, an ambition to develop the Priory as a major arts venue in the region is emerging, resulting in a greater contribution to tourism in Cornwall. That is not to say that tourists do not see St Germans Priory as a visitor destination. The Priory often welcomes coach trips from across the UK and Europe, particularly in the summer months when Port Eliot house is open to visitors.

There is no sense that, despite the feudal nature of St Germans society, the Priory is an estate church to Port Eliot. Relations between the estate and the incumbent and PCC are positive and respectful and there is no substantive reason to see this amiable cooperation will cease.²⁶ St Germans Priory is not, however, able to make use of the land in which it is situated for outdoor activities as all land to the north of the church is the property of the estate. Permission has been granted by the estate to cross its land to gain access to the boiler house, which is otherwise inaccessible. Visitors are not able to view the north elevation of the church.

Baptisms	6
Funerals	5
Weddings	6

Civic church (town use):

May Tree Festival

Tourist church (visitor use):

Coach trips

Casual visitors

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Sunday services – three Sundays in the month

Death café

Open conversation sessions

²⁶ PCC representative

WELCOMING VISITORS

St Germans Priory is open every day but unattended. All valuables are therefore locked away during opening hours. There is an acknowledgment that promotion of the Priory should be improved and the Priory Trust will be responsible for managing this. On-site interpretation has already been developed from rudimentary beginnings with the introduction of information boards. This is only the first step in a comprehensive overhaul of interpretation at the Priory, which will include updating a guidebook and the possible introduction of innovative virtual reality-style interventions. Again, the Priory Trust will undertake the management of this.

The Priory Trust is also reviewing Health and Safety policies for the Priory as well as assessing access to the building. Easy access to the Priory's north-west tower is currently blocked by the very significant Rysbrack monument. This cannot be moved without considerable thought and careful planning. If it were to be possible to re-locate it there could be future scope for offering visitors access to this tower. Wheelchair users must use the west door to gain entrance to the Priory, which is not the usual access; this being the south porch. There is scope, however, for making the far grander west entrance the principal entrance to the Priory in future. The path leading down a fairly steep, for people with mobility issues, pathway from the road to the Priory has already been identified as requiring re-surfacing work. There is also the matter of visitors not being able to walk around the whole of St Germans Priory due to its northern elevation occupying Port Eliot land. This has been acknowledged as a matter of fact that must be clearly communicated to visitors in order to avoid either disappointment or accidental trespassing.

The St Germans Priory group of parishes has its own website that hosts information about church matters and the Priory Trust has its own in order to communicate news and other information about its work. A Facebook page is currently managed by St Germans Priory's curate.

It is too early to say how visitors will be welcomed to St Germans Priory in the future, and what facilities will await them when they arrive. What is clear, however, is that the PCC and Trust both recognise the ministry of welcome to be central to the mission and management of the Priory. There is a firm ambition to deliver a high-quality visitor experience at the Priory, whether those visitors are pilgrims from near or far, or tourists wishing to learn and experience something of St Germans history and heritage. A matter for immediate attention should arguably be the 'clutter' in the Priory, particularly around the Rysbrack monument in the north-west tower.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elders, J, 'The Minster, Cathedral And Priory Church Of St Germanus Of Auxerre: Conservation Management Plan, 2012

Hammond, B, 'Conservation Roofing Works and associated Masonry Repairs and Rainwater Goods Replacement at St Germans Priory, St Germans, Saltash' (CDM document)

Le Page Architects, 'St Germans Priory, Cornwall: Quinquennial Inspection Report', 2014

St Germans Priory Trust's website: www.stgermanspriory.info

National Heritage List for England list description www.historicengland.org.uk



Information board



THE MINSTER AND PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT PETER-AT-LEEDS (LEEDS MINSTER)

Kirkgate, Leeds, LS2 7DJ

Diocese	York	Settlement Type	City Centre
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1375046	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	646379	Average Weekly Attendance	75
Deprivation Indices	Medium	No. of Residents in Parish	Not Recorded
Footprint (m ²)	1686	Annual Visitors	7,500
Building Period	Victorian	Website	http://www.leedsminster.org/



Exterior

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

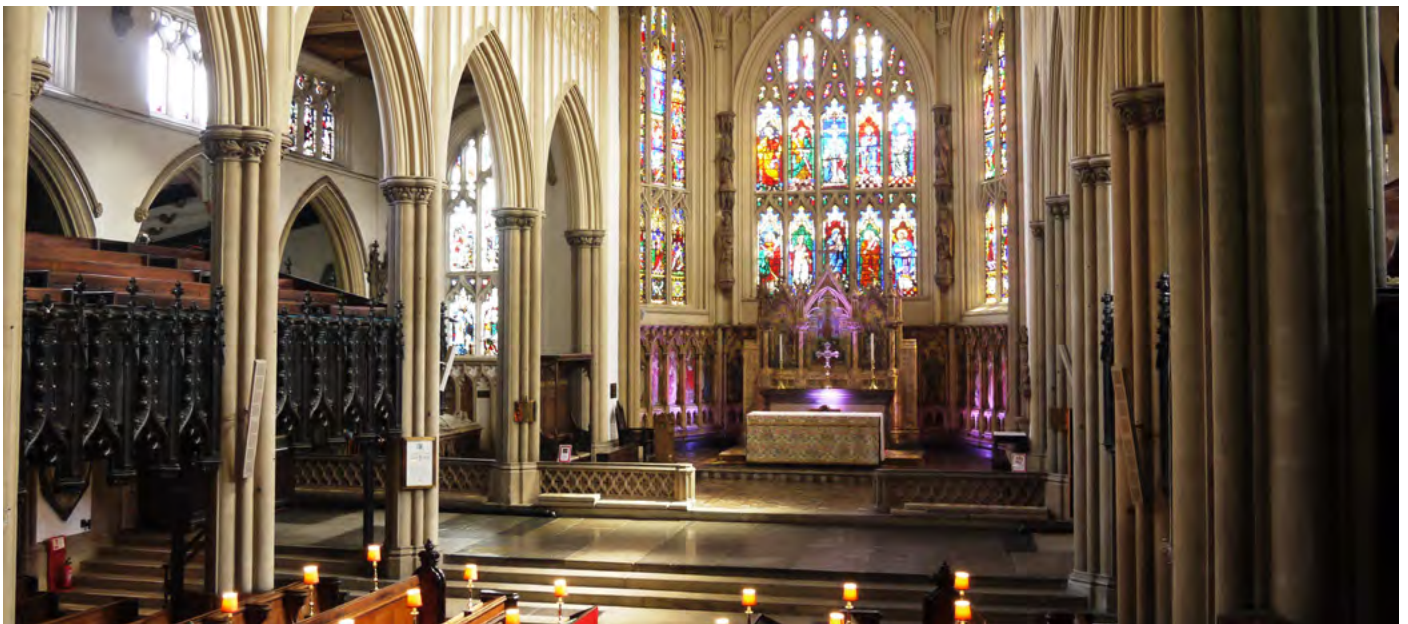
- The first Major Parish Church to be built following St Pauls Cathedral in 1707.
- A unique church of the 1840s representing the radical Church of England revival prior to the Camden Society.
- Impressive interior of imitation materials such as faux-plaster ceilings and imitation wood carvings.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Leeds' largest church and the civic church of the city, larger in size than some cathedrals in the Diocese.
- Unique internal layout with ornate, galleries and ground floor pews.
- Distinct geographical location, cut off from the city centre of Leeds.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- To re-engage with the City of Leeds and become relevant to its people.
- To decide the future of the historic building following a transitional period.
- To re-invigorate the congregation.
- To create an effective system of governance.
- Financial resources.



Interior

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Leeds Minster is the civic church of the City of Leeds and is a unique place of worship with a fascinating history. The last 20 years have seen a social and physical disconnect with the City of Leeds, with reserves dwindling to virtually nothing and with no agreed solutions to increase income. The title of 'Minster' was conferred in 2012 as an attempt to address the entrenched decline. However, this was perceived to have not been managed effectively and is a source of confusion to many people.

The arrival of the recently appointed incumbent has brought the Minster into a transitional period, which has seen many of the previous practices reviewed in anticipation of a bold and vibrant future that matches the vision of the city. Tough decisions have been made to disband the sub-committees and the boys' choir, and to close the café. The current incumbent is working to audit the existing arrangements and to provide options for a more sustainable future use.

The Minster still has a long way to go but the future is looking positive and immediate opportunities relate to securing funding from the Diocese for a director of operations and on the production of a Conservation Management Plan to help understand what makes the Leeds Minster special. The civic status of the church will continue to be promoted as one of its most important roles in order to maintain and increase the mission and ministry of the church throughout the transitional period. The Minster has paid off over £300,000 in parish share arrears and a regeneration project is underway to create commercial and residential income from two buildings the Minster owns. Rebuilding confidence locally and reengaging with visitors will be vital to a sustainable future.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“Leeds Minster ‘occupies an important place in the history of Anglican architecture’ (Wrathmell) and its architect RD Chantrell was described by the Bishop of Ripon as ‘one of the first architects in all the north of England’ (Webster)... Its importance lies in the way in which it conveyed ‘the liturgical dilemma of the Church of England at the very beginning of Victoria’s reign’ (Webster).”⁰³

The Parish Church of St Peter-at-Leeds (Leeds Minster) replaced an earlier Medieval church on the same site, which has been a site of Christian worship since before the Norman Conquest. Evidence for this is within the writings of Bede and is evidenced by the tenth-century cross re-discovered on the site in the nineteenth century. The site was also a major crossing point of the River Aire from at least the seventh century. A church at Leeds was referred to in the Domesday Book in 1086 and is thought to have been re-built by the Normans in the twelfth century.

The vision of the Vicar of Leeds, Dr WF Hook, in the 1840s was for a church that would be for everyone, not just the wealthy few. Plans originally began with alterations to the old church but soon evolved into a full rebuilding due to the perilous condition of the building. Hook employed the local architect RD Chantrell to rebuild the church on the former foundations between 1837 and 1841. It was to be Chantrell’s most important project and one that represents the revival of Anglicanism in Leeds and nationally.

Built in a fourteenth-century Gothic style, the church tower was placed over the north entrance and the nave filled with galleries reused from the old church. The east end introduced the ideas of a new Oxford-inspired Anglicanism. The ideas expressed by Chantrell and Hook were soon overtaken by the radical ideas of the Camden Society, leaving Leeds Parish Church as a rare example of the progression of ideas within the Church of England.

The choir at Leeds Minster was re-founded by Dr Hook in 1841, which went on to become one of the foremost choirs in the country. Internationally acclaimed musicians include the first organist in 1842, Dr Samuel Wesley, Sir Edward Bairstow in 1906 and most recently Dr Simon Lindley. The choir had been established originally in 1815 and was probably the first English parish church to have a surpliced choir since the Reformation.

The east end was altered in 1876 with the addition of magnificent mosaics of the Apostles by Salviati of Venice, and again 12 years later in 1888 when the baptistry was added at the West End of the Church and the reredos was installed behind the altar by GE Street.

In 1974 the City of Leeds Room was created as a refectory to provide refreshments after Sunday and evening services. It expanded its role to a full café for visitors until it was closed in 2015.

The Parish Church of St Peter-at-Leeds was designated Leeds Minster by the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, in September 2012 at the 171st anniversary date of the consecration of the present church building.

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **1837-1841:** The Medieval church was replaced by the new fourteenth-century Gothic Revival building
- **1841:** The choir was re-established
- **1876:** The east end was altered and the mosaics installed
- **1888:** The font and reredos was installed
- **1974:** The City of Leeds Room was constructed as a café
- **2012:** The parish church became a minster

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

The interior of Leeds Minster is significant as a physical embodiment of the evolution of Church of England liturgy. The reuse of the galleries and pulpit from the old church combined with early architectural principles of the new Oxford-inspired Anglicanism is unique.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Tenth-Century Cross

A high-quality example of an Anglo-Scandinavian Cross dating to the tenth century.

The Galleries

Leeds Minster has five galleries, which put seating capacity at over 1,200. They are thought to have come from the old church and are not symmetrical. The galleries include a west gallery, south-west gallery, north-west gallery, north-east gallery and south-east gallery, which continue along the nave and chancel. The galleries have decorated canopies throughout and especially within the chancel. Much of the decoration is plaster painted to imitate stone and wood.

The Sanctuary

The east end of the church was altered in the late nineteenth century to install mosaics in 1878 and the reredos in 1888. The marble arcade with fine mosaic work is by Salviati of Venice and features 12 life-size figures of the apostles. The marble and alabaster reredos is by GE Street and represents Christ in Glory flanked by saints. The central marble and alabaster reredos is by GE Street and represents Christ in Glory flanked by saints. It was made by Thomas Earp and Rust, following cartoons by Clayton and Bell.

The Font

The font dates from 1883 and was designed by William Butterfield. It replaced an earlier font. The font is of different coloured marble and stands on three steps of red, black and white.

Dr Hook Effigy

Dr Hook was the Vicar of Leeds in the 1840s. His effigy is a marble and alabaster memorial designed by GG Scott and GE Street. During his tenure he built some 21 churches and 27 schools in Leeds. He is credited more for his liturgical changes than architectural and many of his buildings have been lost.

The Organ

The present organ was built by Henry Price of Bristol and first installed in the old church in 1714. This instrument was moved to the new church in 1841 and rebuilt by Greenwood Brothers. Repairs and additions were made in 1859 and the German builders Schulze added several further ranks. Abbott and Smith of Leeds reconstructed and enlarged the instrument c.1899. The instrument was rebuilt in 1965 by Wood Wordsworth and restored by Andrew Carter of Wakefield in 1995/1996. The organ has five manuals and 91 stops.

The Bells

The bells, the first peal of thirteen to be cast in England, and the first peal to travel by rail, were made by Mears and Son, London in 1841, replacing an earlier peal of ten. In 1932 John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough re-cast the bells and replaced the bell frame.



Box pews within the upper gallery



Mosaics at the east end



Dr Hook tomb

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

'...hauntingly beautiful.'

'...unusual layout and is beautifully appointed.'

'Go for evensong. A unique experience.'

*'The minster is rather austere to look at from the outside, and it is pretty dark inside too as the wood used is nearly black. However, the stained glass windows and mosaic panels are lovely, as is the carving and the organ.'*⁰⁴

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Leeds Minster is located to the east of Leeds city centre at the lower end of the historic street Kirkgate. The church is situated on the north bank of the River Aire and cut off from the rest of the city to the north by a busy road and the railway viaduct. The city centre loop to the east is also a major physical barrier.

Despite these barriers, the church is only five to ten minute walk from the city centre and has the potential to capture wide visitor audiences. The church is also visually prominent within the city. The church dominates views from the elevated railway line for trains from York and Newcastle and long-distance views along Kirkgate are significant.

The geographical parish of Leeds Minster is in the bottom 600 in the country on the Indices of Deprivation and has socio-economic problems. Leeds Minster has the potential to capitalise on its Victorian architecture, which is being used across Leeds to stimulate development and provide a link to the prosperous industrial past of the city.



Separation from the city centre by the elevated railway line

04 TripAdvisor 2016

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

When asked to select one things that makes their building special, Leeds Minster chose its history. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose history.⁰⁵

Leeds Minster is highly significant for its artistic and architectural interest. The architecture of Leeds Minster embodies Dr Hook's concept of a 'standing sermon', with a highly visible pulpit (from the old church) and no chancel screen. The high altar reflects the principles of the Oxford Movement and the position and prominence of the pulpit affirms the strong preaching emphasis of the Reformed tradition.

The internal character of the Minster is dominated by the heavy, black galleries, which create low, cramped spaces beneath them. This is in contrast with the soaring verticality of the chancel space. When it was built, the Minster was described in the local press as 'one of the finest, if not the finest [churches] in the kingdom'.

HISTORIC INTEREST

Leeds Minster has historic interest for its Gothic Revival architecture and the radical liturgical ordering, representing an early example of the new Anglicanism of the 1840s. These ideas would soon be overtaken by the radical ideas of the Camden Society, leaving the Minster as a rare example of the progression of ideas within the Church of England. The church has been considered a significant milestone of church architecture but more research is required into the uniqueness of the building nationally.

Associations with Dr Hook and the architect Chantrell are significant. Leeds Minster was Chantrell's most important project among many, resulting in a church of national importance. Locally it represented the revival of Anglicanism in Leeds, but also conveyed the liturgical dilemma of the Church of England at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign.



Chorister graffiti on the stalls in the quire

05 Survey results

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Leeds Minster is thought to be located on an ancient site of Christian worship and as such has high archaeological interest. There is evidence of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon worship but also connections to Northumbria, based on the writings of the Venerable Bede. A tenth-century church cross was found beneath the church when it was rebuilt in the 1840s, which can now be seen inside the Minster. It is possible that the foundations of the older Medieval church were incorporated into the nineteenth-century building and internal fabric and fittings was reused, for example the timber and plaster galleries.

The churchyard surrounding the Minster is historic and likely to hold much archaeological interest. A lack of investigations increases this potential for us to learn more about past human activity on the site. The churchyard is in the care of Leeds City Council.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Dr Hook constructed Leeds Minster in the 1840s as a place of worship for everyone. Since then, the building has been central to the Church of England worshipping life of Leeds, firstly as the spiritual heart of the rapidly growing industrial town and now as the civic church of a bold, visionary city.

Community interest has been reduced in the twenty-first century due to a geographical disconnect between the church and city that has been growing over the last two decades. There is much scope to improve relations and put the Minster back at the heart of the city.



Interpretation at Leeds Minster

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“The church building is a glory; it is an amazing space – but it is also impractical for worship and community use. Its historic internal layout does not allow it to serve the bold, vibrant vision of the City of Leeds”⁰⁶

Leeds Minster takes on the role of the civic church for the City of Leeds and is tantamount to Leeds' Church of England cathedral. The city is the third largest in the country and has a bold vision to become the 'best city in the UK' by 2030. While the scale and significance of Leeds Minster is befitting this ambition and helps to achieve its civic role through events and large services, there is a perception within the city that the traditional Victorian architecture of the building does not conform with its forward-thinking values. The incumbent is concerned that unless there is a radical change in perceptions, Leeds Minster will have no place in the future of the city.

The church is 1686m² in footprint but is situated towards the edge of the city centre. A railway viaduct, busy main road and the River Aire surround the site, disconnecting the church from its geographical parish and the wider city. The Minster is effectively cut-off from the benefits visitors to Leeds might bring and the majority of support comes from the economically deprived, and relatively isolated parish, although redevelopment is now beginning to move outwards from the city centre. Anti-social behaviour and heritage crime that is often associated with an inner-city parish are problems for Leeds Minster. During recent building works, ledger stones that had been temporarily taken-up were stolen and the unsupervised spaces of the upper galleries are at risk of anti-social behaviour such as rough sleeping and substance abuse.

The historic, architectural and artistic interest of the building is seen by the PCC as one of its biggest barriers to development. The radical early Victorian liturgical plan of the building required the nave and aisles to be filled with seating, all facing different directions, but at some distance from the sanctuary. The seating is currently unusable for modern liturgy and precludes many other uses. The upper galleries on the other hand are useful as they provide additional seating and may allow the spaces beneath them to be zoned in the future.

The nature of the historic materials used in the original construction also has an impact on maintenance of the building now. The church was hastily built over a four-year period at low cost, making use of cheaper materials such as plaster painted to replicate stonework, and sawdust/plaster moulded to represent carved woodwork. These materials bring with them a unique set of problems when it comes to their conservation.

While there is an assumption within the city that Leeds Minster will always act in its civic capacity beyond its geographical parish, carrying out the functions often provided by a cathedral, there are few resources available to support this role.

The honorific Minster status was conferred upon the church in 2012 in an attempt to address culturally entrenched decline, largely without consultation with the wider city as to what that might mean or who it might benefit. No plan was put in place to make use of the new title and even the signage within the city continued to say 'Leeds Parish Church'. This has led to much confusion within the city as to what the church is, and how it serves the community.

The Minster also holds responsibilities for other buildings within the city, such as Holy Trinity Leeds, from which the modern shopping development, Trinity Leeds, takes its name. The incumbent also has additional responsibilities – from being ex-officio trustee or Chair of ten charities, to Chair of Leeds Faiths Forum and member of the Bishop's area staff team.

The financial burden of maintaining a building of this scale and significance is illustrated in the need to fully insure the Minster up to the full amount for rebuilding, which is £43 million.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Leeds Minster considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places the Minster with an overwhelming majority (82%) of other Major Parish Churches.⁰⁷

⁰⁶ Canon Sam Corley, 2016

⁰⁷ Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“Establishing effective governance, compliance and administration processes across the parish, as well as developing a clear and realistic strategic plan for the next ten years must be a priority.”⁰⁸

The PCC of Leeds Minster has responsibility for the care of the church. Until the arrival of the new incumbent in late 2015 (who was recruited specifically to deal with the major issues facing Leeds Minster), the church had continued under a traditional PCC system of governance. The Minster had two parish wardens and eight churchwardens (historically one for each of the wards of the city).

For some time, within the wider Diocese there had been recognition that governance at the Minster was not effective and that a lack of accountability was detrimental to the continuing operations of the Minster. Historic circumstances, dating back to the 1990s had led to a culture whereby mismanagement was often accepted as the norm and a continuation of traditions cumulated, reaching an unsustainable position by 2015.

A solution to deal with a church of this scale and significance was not easily reached, partly due to a lack of adequate resources or capacity to support the Minster. Although the Diocese employs a support officer for the parishes, helping the Minster is likely to be a full-time job.

Issues with the previous governance of the Minster included a lack of safeguarding policy, inadequate and out of date contracts and no terms of reference. Historically, little thought had been given to the specialist skills and professional expertise required of a PCC member. Even a lack of administrative support and accountability has meant basic tasks, such as the correct detail being entered into a Faculty application, were not completed. Volunteers were able to welcome visitors to the church, but did not have the specialist management, business, fundraising, marketing and development skills needed to develop a long-term sustainable use that would make the church relevant in the twenty-first century.

Additionally, those tasked with maintaining and caring for the historic structure did not have the skills needed to fulfil the role for a building of this scale and significance. Many volunteers in the past were well-intentioned but had carried out inappropriate repairs, such as gaffe taping-down loose sanctuary mosaics and using modern cleaning chemicals on Medieval brasses.

Leeds Minster has now entered a more positive transitional phase, which has seen the incumbent disband the majority of the sub-committees in late 2015, including the Minster Council, pending a reorganisation of governance. The café was also shut down, due to a lack of customers and a poor hygiene rating, and the boys' choir was disbanded due to a lack of choristers. Both the choir and the café will be reviewed and revived in the future and a more effective system of governance put in place, which will allow experienced individuals from the wider community to be co-opted.

The next 12 months will be a period of assessment, allowing the incumbent to audit the situation, take stock and produce options for a more sustainable future. The short-term goal of the incumbent is to approach the Diocese for funding to employ a full-time director of operations for the Minster.

Number of members on PCC	12
Number of clergy	5 (1.5 of whom are paid)
Number of paid staff	1.6
Number of volunteers	25
Number of sub-committees	1

FINANCES

“Concerns about the finances of the parish persist. A review of the financial records demonstrates that for over two decades the parish has been relying on reserves in order to support the annual, regular costs of mission and ministry. This was always an unsustainable decision and now that reserves have reached a critically low level, the questions and decisions that have been ignored or delayed have to be faced with both realism and urgency... The bedrock of our parish finances remains the regular giving of members of our congregation. This is invaluable and much appreciated.”⁰⁹

Leeds Minster’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been payroll. They anticipate adaptations and additions will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Payroll is the third highest item of expenditure for most Major Parish Churches.¹⁰

For the past two decades, Leeds Minster has run at a deficit each year and relying on its reserves to cover the shortfall. This has led to the current situation where the church now has only £1,750 left in unrestricted reserves and is close to bankruptcy. The new incumbent recognises that this was unsustainable and steps are now being taken to help generate income in the long-term.

In 2014 a Development Plan was produced in partnership with a university stating that £150,000 could be raised a year through the parish offering city businesses spirituality, mindfulness and chaplaincy services. This was not adopted and is now considered to be unrealistic. The main income for the Minster for 2016 onwards will come from commercial and residential lets totalling of £40,000, following redevelopment of the parish hall buildings.

Until 2015, the church had an accumulated parish share deficit of over a quarter of a million. A grant for £310,000 from the Friends of the Music of Leeds Minster was secured to pay off this debt, leaving the deficit at £94,300. The Minster is unable to meet their obligations in full in 2016, with the expectation that they will only be able to pay £6,000 this year. Parish share within the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales is compulsory but changes are being made to how it is calculated. The new method, based on the number of clergy, the ability to pay and regular attendance, will work in Leeds Minster’s favour. No parish would also be asked for more than 80% of its unrestricted income.¹¹

Leeds Minster recognises parish share as being a significant responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly. Parish share is seen as being of equal importance to the responsibility to repair and care for the historic building. The incumbent noted that the financial support system in place for cathedrals (which often perform similar functions and are of a similar scale and significance to Major Parish Churches), are simply not available to Leeds Minster.

Leeds Minster employs a full-time verger, a part-time master of music and a sub-organist, and an education officer, totalling 1.6 full-time posts. An application to the Diocese for a capital grant would allow the Minster to provide additional administrative support and employ a director of operations.

The civic status of Leeds Minster also has an impact on finances as there is an expectation for the church to provide a venue for the city, often for free or at cost only. This is accepted with good grace by the Minster as it helps build-up new relationships. The church charges £400 to charities for Christmas carol services, which covers the verger’s time, but not the incumbent’s. The Minster does not currently have a system in place for hiring out the building as a venue, partly due to the current transitional arrangements, and partly due to the inflexible layout of the interior.

⁰⁹ Leeds Minster Annual Report, 2015

¹⁰ Survey results

¹¹ <http://www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org/content/safeguarding-fairtrade-parish-share-and-branding-debated-synod>

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Leeds Minster's income does not meet expenditure.¹²

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Leeds Minster financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	Not recorded
Urgent QI cost	Not recorded
Annual maintenance cost	£11,400 spent on repairs and maintenance
Parish share cost	£310,000 arrears paid off (deficit of £94,300)
Building insurance cost	£15,700 (insured for full rebuilding to £43 million)
Utilities cost	£40,000
Major project cost	No recent projects

Annual donations income	£80,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£62,000
Events/church hall income	£16,500
Other income i.e. land/interest	£13,500 car parking; £15,700 café; £7,000 telecoms mast
Services fees	£12,500
Major project income	None

¹² Survey results

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“A significant challenge for the Minster Church of St Peter-at-Leeds is how it can connect and engage with the dynamic and vibrant City it seeks to serve. Too often its weaknesses and fragility means it has been irrelevant to, or at odds with, a City that is confident about its future and eager to become Capital of Culture by 2023 and ‘Best City’ by 2030.”¹³

Leeds Minster is currently in a transitional phase, which has seen the dismantling of the existing PCC sub-committee structure in order to put in place a more effective method of governance. The Minster has reached the end of its financial reserves and no major capital projects, building repairs or development projects within the Minster have been attempted, although a project to create commercial and residential space in two adjacent buildings is underway.

£11,500 was spent on repairs and maintenance at Leeds Minster in 2015. The most recent Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was carried out in 2015 and identified the need for urgent and comprehensive internal and external repairs to its tower, including the bell and clock chambers and rainwater disposal system. Repairs are also required to the south-east aisle roof, Lady Chapel roof and rainwater goods. The total cost of all outstanding repairs is estimated at c.£250,000.

Maintenance at Leeds Minster is reactionary and there is no overall plan in place. Volunteers and the verger are relied on although they lack the required specialist conservation skills. The Minster does not turn to their architect for ad hoc conservation advice.

In order to address the repair defects, an application to the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund was made by Leeds Minster in February 2016 but was ultimately unsuccessful. The Minster has not approached the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to date as the grant programmes are considered to be too resource heavy for the current capacity of the church. The lack of project management resources has been a determining factor in this decision.

Despite the challenges, there is now a sense of relief within the parish that the issues have been identified and are now being tackled. Following a comprehensive audit of the state of the Minster, a selection of options will be provided in order to stimulate discussion on a sustainable future. At the furthest extreme, one option may be to close the building and move elsewhere, in the interim or as a permanent solution.

The aim is for Leeds Minster to become a principle church of the Leeds Episcopal Area within the Diocese. This would be achieved by re-engaging with the city, deciding on the future of the physical building and by re-invigorating the congregation. The short-term goal is to come up with a realistic and supported option to move forward. The key to sustainability at Leeds Minster will be the ability to bring new uses to the building, which are currently restricted by the internal arrangements. The removal of ground floor pews is considered by the incumbent to be crucial to make worship effective and to accommodate any new uses.

The area around the Minster is being redeveloped with major retailers establishing outlets in the parish. This is an opportunity for the church to re-establish connections with the city and will be further enhanced by the redevelopment of the two church-owned buildings for commercial and residential use.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) that is currently being produced for Leeds Minster by the Church Buildings Council (CBC) is considered central to this process. Understanding the significance of the church will allow a consensus to be reached on its capacity for change. This would allow the Minster to look at their priorities and what would be best for the city. Resolution of key questions, such as whether the building is unique in England, is required in order to reframe the debate and to stimulate discussion at all levels. The long-term goal is likely to be a large HLF project for comprehensive re-ordering.

Leeds Minster has no management documents in place. This is unusual when compared with other Major Parish Churches.¹⁴

13 Leeds Minster Annual Report, 2015

14 Survey results

RECENT PROJECT

Leeds Minster has begun a key development in the last 12 months, redeveloping two buildings owned by the parish behind the Minster to create 12 flats, and ground floor commercial office space. One flat will become refurbished accommodation for the Head Verger. The two buildings were previously used as a parish hall and clergy housing but had become increasingly dilapidated and underused.

Negotiations over the works had been in progress for around ten years prior to the works starting in 2016. The flats will be sold on 150 year leases, making a small ground rent for the PCC. The commercial space will generate £40,000 to £45,000 a year.



Commercial development of buildings belonging to the PCC.

CURRENT USE

“Although in many ways a local parish church, Leeds Minster has a much more comprehensive role in service the wider city of Leeds. This role is to a large degree manifested through the hosting of civic and other large-scale services and events, and through the open door policy by which visitors and tourists are encouraged to find Leeds Minster to be a place of friendly welcome and an oasis of peace in a busy city centre.”¹⁵

During the transitional phase for the Minster in 2016, the uses of the building will be audited and recommendations made. Leeds Minster currently considers itself to be the civic church for the City of Leeds and strives to have a presence in a community wider than its geographical reach. The reorganisation of the new Diocese (Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales) is considered to be an opportunity for the Minster to become a principle church of the Diocese and to look beyond its immediate parish to its wider role within the third largest city in the country.

The sacred choral music tradition is important at Leeds Minster but until recently choristers have been recruited from a single school, which has led to a decline in interest. The choristers have been disbanded and focus has been put onto strengthening the adult choir until a new relationship with a wider network of schools can be established. The majority of services at Leeds Minster are sung rather than said.

Baptisms	22
Funerals	9
Weddings	11

Civic church (town use):

- Charity events and services
- Remembrance day and other memorial or commemorative services

Tourist church (visitor use):

- Occasional tours
- Organ concerts
- Choral concerts

Parish church (traditional parish use):

- Holy Communion
- Choral Eucharist
- Choral Evensong
- Compline
- Flower festival
- Harvest festival

¹⁵ Statement of Significance 2014

WELCOMING VISITORS

“It is an important part of our work that the church is open each day and that there are members and representatives of our church around during opening times in order to meet and welcome visitors.”¹⁶

Leeds Minster does not command the high tourist figures seen at some Major Parish Churches, particularly those located within existing tourist cities or those with monastic origins. The geographical disconnect with the city centre of Leeds also has an impact on passing footfall and visitor numbers.

Leeds Minster currently has a limited offering to visitors, with no guidebook and only sporadic tours. Individual items within the church are highlighted for visitors with A4 interpretation sheets scattered around the building. There is no consistency in the information provided and many are now out-dated. There is an ambition to provide more interpretation, particularly to illustrate the connection between the church and the city.

The entrance to the church is on the south side, next to the busy main road, underneath the tower. This is considered to be foreboding, particularly due to the heavy doors, which the incumbent would like to replace with a more welcoming glazed entrance.

The Minster had a dedicated café space but this was recently closed down as it was underused and was given a low hygiene rating. Three social enterprises have tried and failed to make the café successful, which is thought to be due to the lack of footfall. Volunteers have recently reopened the café on a limited scale serving hot drinks.

Physical access into the church is reasonable but more could be done.



Tenth-century cross, gallery, organ and stackable stage

16 Statement of Need, 2014

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Leeds Minster, Statement of Need, 2014

Leeds Minster, Statement of Significance 2014

Leeds Minster Annual Report, 2015

National Heritage List for England list description
www.historicengland.org.uk



View of the nave from the west gallery

SPARKBROOK, ST AGATHA

Stratford Road, Sparkbrook B11 1AD

Diocese	Birmingham	Settlement Type	Inner City
Grade	I	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1210221	Heritage at Risk 2015	N/A
Church Heritage Record No.	602111	Average Weekly Attendance	47.5
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	4,486
Footprint (m ²)	1116 (very big)	Annual Visitors	1,000
Building Period	Victorian	Website	http://www.saintagathas.org.uk/



Birmingham, St Agatha - exterior: © Copyright John Salmon and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4016502>

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- St Agatha's is arguably the architect WH Bidlake's finest achievement in ecclesiastical design.
- The church has an established culture of Anglo-Catholic worship that is reflected in its fixture and fittings.
- St Agatha's has experienced a number of destructive incidents which have necessitated substantial re-building of elements of the church.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- The tower is c.36m tall and dominates the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham.
- St Agatha's tower clock holds great importance for the local community.
- The quality of St Agatha's stone dressings and external sculptural work is very high.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- St Agatha's is located in a predominantly Muslim area and relies on gathered congregations from outside the parish.
- Financial pressures are high leading to inertia and anxiety.
- There is a fear that substantial repair needs will lead to a building that is unsustainable.



Birmingham, St Agatha – Interior: © Copyright John Salmon and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4016527>

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St Agatha's, consecrated in 1901 and arguably the architect WH Bidlake's masterpiece, is situated in the heavily urbanised Sparkbrook ward of Birmingham. Its tall tower is dominant in the townscape and a symbol for the continued presence of the Church of England in an area that has seen substantial social, economic and religious changes from the latter part of the twentieth century up to the present day.

Interestingly, St Agatha's church tower fulfils an important function for Sparkbrook's predominantly Muslim population by bearing the clock by which many residents know when to pray.

St Agatha's has, in the relatively recent past, found itself to be rather isolated from the Diocese of Birmingham and its local community. Since a period of reflection brought about by an interregnum, which preceded the appointment of a new incumbent who both reflects and leads the Parochial Church Council's (PCC's) mission, the PCC has begun a journey back to greater engagement, the benefits of which are now beginning to emerge.

Notwithstanding the major, grant-funded repairs to the church tower in 2004, the PCC has yet to develop an effective strategy for managing the church building. However, it does possess the dedication necessary to develop such a strategy should it be able to build vital capacity and resources, perhaps by broadening the use of St Agatha's by making it available to other Christian denominations.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“The finest parish church in Birmingham”⁰³

Following the sale and demolition of Christ Church, New Street, in the heart of Birmingham city centre in 1899 to make way for commercial development, a replacement church was erected in the then-affluent outer suburb of Sparkbrook.

St Agatha's was built between 1899 and 1901 using funds from the sale of Christ Church and is arguably the finest achievement of WH Bidlake (1861-1938). The local, well-regarded builder John Bowen (1844-1926) was responsible for its construction. Bidlake, who won a competition to design St Agatha's that was judged by Sir Arthur Blomfield, was a leading proponent of the Arts and Crafts style in Birmingham and held the post of Director of the School of Architecture at Birmingham School of Art from 1919 until 1924.

St Agatha's is representative of a more Gothic-influenced style Bidlake employed in the design of a number of churches in the city, which included Small Heath, St Oswald (1893) and Sparkbrook, Emmanuel church (1900), which was a chapel of ease to St Agatha's until it was assigned its own parish in 1928. St Agatha's particular aesthetic can be described as a Perpendicular style freely reinterpreted in an Arts and Crafts idiom.

St Agatha's, whose liturgical orientation is in reverse to its geographic orientation (possibly the result of a desire to keep the east end at a distance from what has always been a busy arterial road), comprises a sanctuary, which occupies the whole of the chancel; a nave of six bays with brick piers and timber tunnel-vault roof; a clerestory; and north and south aisles. It was constructed using red and blue brick with stone dressings for the exterior and unusually proportioned

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- St Agatha's was built between 1899 and 1901
- The east end was destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1940
- The nave roof was completely destroyed by fire in 1959, but was rebuilt to Bidlake's original design

Staffordshire buff bricks of a yellow-grey hue for the interior. Bidlake employed Hollington stone for its arches and mouldings and Bath stone for the dressings. St Agatha's dominant feature is the one which also dominates its immediate environment: its 120ft (36.6m) high tower. It was built higher than originally intended thanks to the acquisition of additional funds.

St Agatha's history is a story of destruction and rebuilding. Its east end, including the east window, was destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1940, resulting in a restoration that is evident through the use of bricks of a slightly different tone. The entire nave roof was lost in a fire in 1959 and reconstructed to Bidlake's original design by Laurence Williams of Wood Kendrick & Williams (completed 1961).

St Agatha's fell victim to the destructive power of nature on 28 July 2005 when it was damaged by the Birmingham Tornado. It did not, however, experience the severe damage meted out to the adjoining Ladypool Primary School, which lost its distinctive Martin & Chamberlain tower.

Major restoration work took place from 2002–2005, which included the stabilisation of the tower. Following this, St Agatha's was officially reopened in January 2005 by HRH Prince Edward and the Countess of Wessex.



The liturgical east end, showing the differently coloured bricks used in the rebuilding following bomb damage during WWII

03 Quote attributed to John Betjeman

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

St Agatha's vast interior is bright and airy. Its single stained glass window draws the eye to the east end. Statuary can be found throughout.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

The Tower Clock

The tower clock is by Gillett & Johnston (1900) and designed to strike the hours. It was fitted with an electric winding mechanism in 1984. It strikes on the church's only bell, which was cast by Rudhall of Gloucester in 1813 for Christ Church, New Street. The tower bears gilded clock faces on its north and south sides.

The Organ

The organ was installed by Nicholson's of Malvern in 1960 and incorporates parts of the original organ which survived the Luftwaffe bombing of 1940 and the fire of 1959 and parts from a Harrison Organ from Oundle School.

The East Window

The large east window was designed and executed by LC Evetts in 1961. It replaced the east window destroyed by the bombing of 1940 and depicts scenes from the Book of Revelation.

Statuary

This includes:

- A statue of Our Lady of Walsingham (installed 1978), carved in the eponymous Norfolk village.
- A statue of St. Agatha (1930 and dedicated in 1931). It was restored in 1961 and 1977.
- A statue of St Joseph is a restored, antique, hand carved image from Bavaria (dedicated in 1991).
- A Statue of the Virgin and child (1922)
- A large crucifix is located in the north aisle and a third, which survived the 1940 bombing, is mounted in the Sanctuary.

The Font

The marble font, set on a Doric column and dating to 1865, and its surrounding wooden panelling, which dresses the Baptistery at the west end of St Agatha's, was brought from Christ Church, New Street.

The Foundation Stone

The foundation stone of Christ Church, dated 1805, is set in the south wall of the Baptistery.

The Pulpit

The only substantial surviving ecclesiastical furnishing from Bidlake's original conception.

Exterior sculpture

- Above the south door, a tympanum in sculptural relief presents St. Agatha, bound and consumed by flames in the presence of her persecutor, Quintilianus. Another tympanum above the north door show St Agatha receiving comfort from an appearance by St Peter. Each Tympanum is boarded by seraphim in relief.
- Above the west window, within a canopied niche, angels of justice and pity can be seen flanking the figure of Christ in Majesty.
- A large crucifix is from the now-demolished parish church of St Jude, Hill Street is located on the exterior of the building, above the tower's west entrance. It was relocated from St Jude's to its present position in 1971.



Tympanum showing St Agatha before Quintilianus

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“In an age of smartphones, it’s heartening that the local population seems to rely on and value St Agatha’s tower clock. It’s as if the clock keeps ‘community time’.”⁰⁴

St Agatha’s is one of relatively few Grade I listed buildings in Birmingham⁰⁵

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

St Agatha’s is located on the busy Stratford Road in the south-east, inner-city area of Sparkbrook, Birmingham. It dominates its urban setting and is easily the tallest and most recognisable building in the area. The loss of the adjacent Ladypool School’s Martin and Chamberlain tower and spire (1885) as a consequence of the destruction visited upon it by the Birmingham Tornado of 2005, has had a significant impact upon the setting of St Agatha’s.

Although never in competition with St Agatha’s huge, turreted tower, Ladypool School’s tower and spire provided a visual juxtaposition of differing approaches to the neo-Gothic aesthetic. The loss of the Ladypool tower currently leaves St Agatha’s Gothic to dominate its environs without question or complement.

Preliminary plans for a new mosque, to be located c.300m from the church and complete with a tower almost as tall as St Agatha’s, have been put forward by the local Muslim community. The consultation process instigated by the proposal will no doubt facilitate further discussion and judgement regarding the townscape value of St Agatha’s tower.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

As Birmingham architect WH Bidlake’s putative masterpiece and one of a limited number of Grade I listed buildings in the city, St Agatha’s has high local and national importance.

Bidlake’s overall design owes a debt to the developmental work of GG Scott and GF Bodley, as well as JD Sedding but displays a free interpretation of the Gothic aesthetic that is Bidlake’s own. Sir Arthur Blomfield selected Bidlake to build St Agatha’s from a competitive field that also included Temple Moore, John Douglas and Mervyn Macartney,⁰⁶ demonstrating the confidence of Bidlake’s conception.

The tower, for example, demands the eye’s attention, not only for its scale, but also for the quality of its design – arguably rather theatrical – and execution. Of particular note are its octagonal corner turrets, their upper stages composed of polychromatic brickwork surmounted by pinnacles with decorative, wrought iron finials.

The quality of St Agatha’s monochrome exterior sculpture is very high. Its narratives and/or symbolism are succinct with the deployment of three principal figures on each tympanum and a canopied Christ above the west entrance, flanked by angels. It is a direct, unencumbered aesthetic; all were executed to the designs of WH Bidlake. There are signs of discolouring caused by pollution, which detracts a little from the quality of their execution.

The largely polychromatic interior sculpture is not, if taken as a body, of a comparative quality to the exterior. It is significant, however, as an example of what could be described as ‘repository art’, which reflects and communicates the long-established Anglo-Catholic theology and liturgy at the heart of St Agatha’s worshipping life.

The East Window is a fine example of its type, imbued with additional significance as it is the only stained glass window in the church.

The organ benefits from St Agatha’s reportedly excellent acoustics. It is thought by the PCC to be such an asset that discussions about its care often supersede similar discussions about the maintenance of the church building.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The Sparke family lived in the geographic area during the Middle Ages, as did a stream or brook; it is, however, unclear as to which gave its name to the other. In the nineteenth century the brook was channelled and used, in part, for one of a multitude of canals that would make Birmingham an economic powerhouse, leading to a population explosion.

The remnants of the small stream still flow through the city alongside The Ackers site off Golden Hillock Road. Much of Sparkbrook, which was a relatively affluent suburb in the nineteenth century, suffered considerable bomb damage during WWII, necessitating a programme of rapid re-building in the 1950s.

Remnants of Christ Church, such as the font, foundation stone and bell, are a reminder of the church that was demolished in 1899 so that St Agatha’s may be built. That St Agatha’s was built in the suburbs of the city, some distance from the city centre location of the church whose ministry it assumed, gives an indication of the changing population distribution of Birmingham in the closing years of the nineteenth century, especially when it is noted that Christ Church was demolished to make way for shops and offices.

⁰⁴ Quote from a PCC representative

⁰⁵ Survey results

⁰⁶ Pevsner, N (ed. Forster, A) ‘Pevsner Architectural Guides : City Guides : Birmingham’ Yale, 2005

Social changes are also reflected in the architecture, decoration, theology and liturgy of St Agatha's: it was originally designed for a predominantly Evangelical congregation with the shift to the High Anglicanism of today coming about as Sparkbrook became more working class. Fr Rosenthal (incumbent 1918-1938), was arguably among the greatest influences on St Agatha's inter-war Anglo-Catholicism.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

An archaeological assessment carried out in November 2015 by the Diocese of Birmingham recorded that the site had 'no known archaeological potential'.⁰⁷

COMMUNITY INTEREST

*Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath are adjacent suburbs, about two miles from the centre of Birmingham. Their fortunes have changed over the decades with demographic shifts and changes of use of buildings. The 2011 Census recorded a population of 4,100, of whom 70% described themselves as Muslim, 26% as Christian, having no religion or having no declared Faith, and the balance as having some other World Faith. The Muslim population is predominantly of Pakistani origin; most are second-generation or third-generation British citizens. There is severe social deprivation, though the "balti belt" restaurants provide some employment. Social mobility is largely limited to the younger residents. The housing is mostly late Victorian terraces, and many contain extended family networks. Some 50% of the population is under the age of 20, but there are few facilities for youth, and many of the women are restricted to their households. A parish audit in 2001 drew attention to the lack of provision for youth, and prompted the creation of the Boxing Club at St Agatha's and the Children's Centre at St Barnabas.*⁰⁸

The experience of living in Sparkbrook can be characterised as one of unemployment, failing businesses and consequent deprivation. The predominantly Muslim local population seems to value St Agatha's tower and clock highly but there is a temptation to regard St Agatha's a Christian vestige in an area that has changed radically – economically, ethnically, socially and religiously – since the church was built. St Agatha's appeal to Catholics within the Church of England communion draws a gathered congregation of worshippers from outside the Sparkbrook area, however, resulting in its community extending beyond the parish boundary.

St Agatha's church hall is leased by the Birmingham City Club for Young People, which provides a boxing facility and is an important centre for multi-culturalism in Sparkbrook.



St Agatha's tower with the clock that is so important to the local community

⁰⁷ <http://cofebirmingham.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/SPARKBROOK.pdf>

⁰⁸ www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf, p.3

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“We tend not to talk about the church building very much at PCC meetings; we probably talk about building the congregation more often.”⁰⁹

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) values the church building very highly, predominantly for liturgical reasons. The PCC and its incumbent's preferred liturgy incorporates processions during the patronal festival, which can attract up to 200 worshippers, and the feast days of Corpus Christi and Christ the King, which would not be possible if St Agatha's were not as large. The PCC considers the cathedral-scale of the building to appeal to those worshippers who favour anonymity within a welcoming environment.

The scale of St Agatha's makes high level maintenance tasks very difficult to carry out, so they often get put off. Surveying the gutters, for example, can only be done at distance, from the tower; cleaning them out is impossible without scaffolding. The bricks used in St Agatha's construction are of unusual proportions (long and thin). The PCC does not know if they are still manufactured. If they are not, any future repairs to St Agatha's brickwork could be compromised, which is a source of worry to the PCC.

The local, predominantly Muslim community values the church because the clock lets them know when it is time to pray. Occasionally, some younger, usually male Muslims will enter the church and be curious about some of the fixtures and fittings. Because the local schools teach mostly Muslim pupils, St Agatha's is not used extensively as a learning resource but is accepted as a convenient host venue for local children's arts projects. School-aged children's reactions to the building tend to be overwhelmingly positive.¹⁰

St Agatha is situated within a deprived community and the neighborhood experiences acts of extreme violence, such as drive-by shootings, which the PCC is anxious to develop a response to as part of its mission. The tympanum depicting St Agatha with St Peter has recently been damaged in what appears to be an act of vandalism using an air rifle and three years ago lead was stolen from the vestry roof. This was witnessed by staff at the neighbouring supermarket, who called the police.

The perpetrators were not apprehended immediately but were caught the following day when they returned to St Agatha's and their activities were reported to the police, this time by boxers training in St Agatha's church hall. The PCC has taken the decision not to install security cameras as it is buoyed by the apparent support it has received from the local community with regard to the lead theft.

Perceptions of the possible threat of extremism within Birmingham, and Sparkbrook in particular, is something that the PCC has not been able to ignore. The PCC aims to write a 'response to terrorism' policy in the near future.

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', St Agatha's considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a Help. This places St Agatha's with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹¹

⁰⁹ Quote from PCC representative

¹⁰ PCC representative

¹¹ Survey results

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The interregnum made us stronger; we were able to reassess what kind of pastoral leadership we wanted, which helped us to grow in confidence.”¹²

The PCC is legally responsible for St Agatha’s and another church, St Barnabas, which is located in a residential quarter of Birmingham, on the Ladypool Road. The former separate parishes of St Agatha’s and St Barnabas’ became a United Parish, retaining the two parish churches, in 1990. The PCC delegates most aspects of parish business to each church’s respective Group,¹³ which oversees day-to-day operations. Each Group comprises a churchwarden, a treasurer, volunteer members, and has its own finances, from which it makes its own Common Fund (Parish Share) contributions. The church is under the patronage of the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda.¹⁴ The PCC receives pastoral care from the Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

A period of interregnum, which ended with the arrival of St Agatha’s new incumbent in March 2016, is felt to have made the PCC stronger. It presented the PCC with the opportunity to reassess what sort of pastoral leadership it and St Agatha’s Group needed. One result of this period of reflection was a closer working relationship with the administrative Diocese of Birmingham, which has led the PCC and Group to feel less isolated. Partly because of the confidence and culture of self-reliance fostered during the period of interregnum, St Agatha’s PCC and Group have a desire to be less reliant on the goodwill of volunteers; although, a great deal of work is done to encourage people to support the church.

The PCC and Group would like, at the very least, to employ members of staff to open the church to visitors every day and employ a verger. There is not, however, the financial capacity to pay anyone other than a part-time director of music/organist. The former volunteer building co-ordinator converted to Roman Catholicism several years ago and has not been replaced, which has resulted in St Agatha’s incumbent, treasurer and churchwarden organising and administering any works to the church building, with occasional support from the church architect, who is a descendent of WH Bidlake, St Agatha’s architect.

Maintenance is carried out, when the need is identified, by a group of around six people that take collective responsibility for the care of the church without assigning individual responsibilities. St Agatha’s does not have a Fabric committee or Friends group to support work on the church building. There is, however, a desire to form a Friends group in the future with express objective of encouraging inclusivity within the local and wider communities. A social committee organises events and activities on behalf of the PCC and a youth and education group looks after the interest of young worshippers.

Capacity is a salient issue at St Agatha’s. Time must, however, be given to the new incumbent and rejuvenated PCC and Group to develop a vision for the church that is anchored by the mission and pastoral work that is already done dedicatedly and with notable success. A strategy to address skills gaps is emerging, which has the potential to yield positive results, particularly with regard to the fair distribution of responsibilities and the implementation of a regular maintenance schedule, which could be extracted from recommendations in the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) report.

Number of members on PCC	16
Number of clergy	0 (incumbent is house for duty)
Number of paid staff	1 (organist)
Number of volunteers	20
Number of sub-committees	1 (social committee)

¹² Quote from a PCC representative

¹³ ‘Group’ is the term used in: www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf

¹⁴ For more information about Forward in Faith and The Society, please see: www.forwardinfaith.com/aboutus.php

FINANCES

“We are quite concerned about our investments, which we rely on just to get by, in the economic environment after Brexit. Not knowing what will happen is causing a lot of anxiety. Our congregation is small so donations can’t be relied upon to increase, and the local community won’t support the building financially.”¹⁵

St Agatha’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been Parish Share. They anticipate adaptations and additions to the building will be the biggest expenditure in the future.¹⁶

St Agatha’s Group’s income is limited to a small number of sources:¹⁷ voluntary donations (£25,470, of which £6,412 was reclaimed tax, £9,342 was through an envelope scheme and £683 was donated through plate giving, and the remainder was offered through other donations). Activities for generating funds (£6,334, of which £6,078 was generated by leasing the church hall and £256 was through other fundraising); investments (£1,810); and income resulting from charitable activities (£338). The total income over the whole of 2015 was £33,945, which compares with a total expenditure of £35,116. St Agatha’s Group has £57,829 in reserves, which is down from £59,042 in 2014.

All expenses are paid out of the Group’s account, with no funds restricted for particular purposes. Regular items of expenditure are managed as prudently as possible. The Group’s Common Fund contribution (parish share), which it is committed to paying in full year-on-year, has been reduced from c.£12,000 in 2015 to c.£8,000 in 2016 because St Agatha’s incumbent was engaged on a ‘house for duty’ basis. All utilities except oil, for example, are arranged by a broker to ensure the Group is in receipt of the best deal available.

The Diocese of Birmingham meets the cost of commissioning the QI but the lack of a dedicated fabric fund, coupled with the absence of a coherent maintenance plan, means expenditure on the building is inevitably reactive. Occasional grants, some of which have been substantial, have aided urgent fabric repairs in the past, such as a c.£1 million grant from the HLF in 2004 to fund urgent repairs on the church tower. An insurance claim covered the cost of replacing lead stolen from the vestry roof in 2013.

Income from the church hall has been secured through the implementation of a long-term lease, which the Diocese of Birmingham helped to arrange and is linked to a price index. The lease was necessitated by a funding application to Sport England and made by the boxing club that rents the hall, which will see the building extended and facilities improved to widen use, particularly by female members. St Agatha’s Group has hired the church to other Christian denominations in the past, generating £1,945 in 2014; however, no rental income was generated in 2015.

St Agatha’s Group is without a fundraising strategy but would like to attract legacies (it has not received many legacies over the past c.12 years); however, it is unsure of how to go about this. The Group feels it cannot increase congregational giving as people consistently donate to the church very generously.

Again, St Agatha’s inaction is not a result of disaffection or indolence, but a lack of capacity. The Group lacks the skills necessary to devise and implement a fundraising strategy and so relies on the generosity of its congregation and the single substantial asset it has, namely the church hall, to generate income, largely because this approach does not take up the attention of Group members whose time is already scarce. St Barnabas’ Group members, however, have a proven track record of raising grant aid and St Agatha’s Group could find that a joint fundraising plan, devised and implemented at PCC level, could yield positive results for both churches. The PCC is committed to completing as much work recommended by the QI as can be afforded.

¹⁵ Quote from PCC representative

¹⁶ Survey result

¹⁷ All figures are for January 2015 to December 2015 unless otherwise stated.

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, St Agatha's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁸

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of St Agatha's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£39,300
Urgent QI cost	£14,600
Annual maintenance cost	£338 (amount paid in 2015)
Parish share cost	£8,000
Building insurance cost	£6,121
Utilities cost	£4,011
Major project cost	An estimated £300,000 for largely desirable works to St Agatha's electrics; re-pointing and the installation of fully accessible facilities

Annual donations income	£25,470
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£0
Events/church hall income	£6,334
Other income i.e. land/interest	£2,141
Services fees	£0
Individual project income	£0



Virgin and child (1922); an example of St Agatha's 'repository art'

¹⁸ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

“In general, the church is weathered and has numerous areas where intervention is required. Unfortunately, no ladder access was possible onto the aisle and transept flat roofs and it is suspected that there may be items of concern which would be discovered here. Other roofs have isolated slipped slates, etc. Rainwater goods need to be overhauled and redecorated. External masonry has eroded pointing and some decayed stone dressings, and window surrounds are poor. Internally the church is well cared for, but water ingress is damaging some finishes. Fire precautions need to be urgently reviewed.”¹⁹

St Agatha's most recent QI, carried out in 2014, was the church's first in 14 years. This was principally because St Agatha's PCC and Group was largely disengaged from the Diocese of Birmingham and also became disconnected from statutory processes. This has changed dramatically over the period of interregnum and with the arrival of the current incumbent.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) has recently been very supportive of the PCC and Group, especially with regard to negotiating planning permission for the extension of St Agatha's church hall, thus helping to secure a long-term income from this resource. Similarly, Historic England were also helpful in this regard. These supportive relationships have been of great comfort to the PCC and Group following a number of years of relative isolation.

There still persists among members of the PCC and Group, however, an anxiety about being unable to address repair issues through a lack of capacity and resources. Gutter clearance, for example, has been recognised as being of the utmost importance, but because the design of the building puts this beyond the physical and financial capabilities of Group members, it is not carried out. Furthermore, the QI report has not been referred to following the Group's receipt of it because of its overwhelming content. Incapacitation as a result of anxiety has extended to the urgent review of fire precautions not being carried out.

Other than the major work to the church tower in 2004, the vestry roof was replaced following a lead theft in 2013, funded by an insurance claim, followed by a complete internal redecoration funded by the Group. The Group is, however, adamant that it cannot afford to carry out any more work without substantial grant aid, including work to the church's electrical system, which is now showing signs of age. There is, however, a firm desire to install fully accessible kitchen and WC facilities, for which St Agatha's architect is currently preparing preliminary drawings.

The local community is respectful of St Agatha's work and have not lodged any formal objections to proposed works.

Neither the PCC nor St Agatha's Group have a formal mission statement, business plan or conservation plan. There is a sense that both the PCC and Group are focussed on the worship of the church and the management of the church building is considered to be an overwhelming, costly and confusing undertaking.

Whilst the installation of facilities will undeniably enhance the mission potential of St Agatha's, a hierarchy of priorities, if considered objectively, would almost certainly place greater importance on establishing a routine of regular maintenance and other obligations, such as fire safety. Greater support is evidently required in order to militate against threats to the future sustainability of the PCC and the buildings in its care.

St Agatha's has a no management documents other than a QI. It has a low number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.²⁰

¹⁹ Rodney Melville and Partners, 'Church of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook, Quinquennial Inspection Report January 2014, Version v.1 26.01.14', p.1

²⁰ Survey result

RECENT PROJECT

The last major repair project to be carried out at St Agatha's was the urgent works to the church tower, which took place in 2004 at a cost of c.£1 million. The whole tower was scaffolded; structural repairs were carried out; the entire tower was repointed; the roof was water-proofed and pigeon-deterrent apparatus was introduced. Because of the increased vulnerability to the tower as a result of the scaffolding the insurance premium increased considerably.

The project achieved what it set out to achieve inasmuch as the structure of the tower was secured, local people had a sense of pride in the achievement and it attracted the attention of royalty – Prince Edward re-opened the church upon the project's completion.

The project's legacy was not, however, carefully thought through. Little thought was given to how the tower would be maintained and little was done to share professional expertise and experience, so when the tower roof began leaking several years ago, nobody on the PCC knew why. It transpired that pigeons had breached the tower's defences and filled the gutters with guano. Because the gutters could not easily be inspected, this went unnoticed until the consequent water ingress was unmissable. The pigeons were disposed of and a valuable lesson was learnt.²¹

21 PCC representative

CURRENT USE

As well as observing a number of Christian feast days, St Agatha's provides one Sunday service and a service on Tuesdays. St Agatha's offers contemporary (post-Conciliar) catholic worship, with high standards of reverence in the liturgy, but an informal and friendly welcome to all comers. The clergy are supported by a dedicated and inclusive team of servers with strong leadership. There is emphasis on Sunday High Mass, but a devoted following for weekday Low Masses.²²

St Agatha's took part in a c.£500,000 community arts project entitled 'My Route'²³ in 2014 to 2015. This project reportedly created quite a buzz around Sparkbrook, appearing in the local press and on television. St Agatha's even featured on the cover of the accompanying publication. Due to capacity issues, however, and the time commitment and effort the project asked of St Agatha's Group, the potential for creating a legacy of the project at St Agatha's was unable to be realised beyond having a copy of the project's publication on display.

St Agatha's participates in the annual Heritage Open Days, held every September, where organ recitals exhibitions and tours of the church are offered, often by local Muslim residents. Usually, around 50 people come to the church over the duration of the event. St Agatha's principal focus is, however, on mission-driven activities. These include supporting charitable work in Zimbabwe and running a soup kitchen in partnership with Birmingham's 4* Regency Hotel. The Group feels, however, that the continuance of the soup kitchen is predicated upon the acquisition of new kitchen facilities.

Because Sparkbrook has traditionally been a place of settlement for people coming to the UK, the PCC and Group have identified scope for the future use of St Agatha's by Orthodox Christians as well as other denominations, which could prove to be a boon not only for income, but also help to secure the future sustainability of the church through the growth of the worshipping community.

Baptisms	2
Funerals	3
Weddings	1

²² www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf, p.6

²³ <http://myroute.org.uk/about-my-route/>

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

A few months ago the tower clock stopped and I hadn't realised. It was brought to my attention by a note that had been stuffed through the church gates. It read something like 'I missed my Friday prayers last week and it's your fault.' I was a little taken aback but thought I'd better get the clock going again. After I'd fixed it I texted the mobile number that had been included on the note, just to let the person who'd written it know I'd done something about the issue, and received a very nice message of thanks in return. It's quite strange, actually, these days, when everyone has a smartphone and they carry time around in their pockets, how important the church clock is to people. When I wind the clock forward or back, people stand and watch; I've even been asked to pose for a selfie with a group of local lads, holding up the clock key!²⁴

None.

Anglo Catholic History Society and architectural societies often visit the church.

The annual Heritage Open Days are hosted by St Agatha's.

Two services take place on Sundays; one on Tuesdays, plus on major festivals and feast days.

²⁴ Quote from a PCC representative

WELCOMING VISITORS

St Agatha's is open by appointment outside scheduled worship. A website offers information about the history of the church and its current mission and worshipping life. An online visitors' book had to be removed from St Agatha's website after a number of abusive comments were left.

The PCC and Group have an ambition to install a fully accessible WC as the current facility is not suitable for wheelchair users. The church building is accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility issues via a ramp. There is no published interpretation available to visitors other than a photocopied information sheet.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

National Heritage List for England list description www.historicengland.org.uk

Pevsner, N (ed. Forster, A) 'Pevsner Architectural Guides: City Guides: Birmingham' Yale, 2005

Rodney Melville and Partners, 'Church of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook, Quinquennial Inspection Report, January 2014, Version v.1 26.01.14'

St Agatha's Parish Plan: www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/uploads/Parish_Profile_St_Agatha_Sparkbrook_and_St_Barnabas_Balsall_Heath_with_accounts_2.pdf

Website of the Diocese of Birmingham: <http://cofebirmingham.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/SPARKBROOK.pdf>

Website of the 'My Route' project: <http://myroute.org.uk/about-my-route/>



St Agatha's roof, which was rebuilt to Bidlake's original design following a fire in 1959

THE MINSTER CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS (GREAT YARMOUTH MINSTER)

Church Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1NE

Diocese	Norwich	Settlement Type	Separate Town
Grade	II*	Scheduled Monument	No
National Heritage List Entry No.	1096813	Heritage at Risk 2015	Yes (Poor)
Church Heritage Record No.	626045	Average Weekly Attendance	120
Deprivation Indices	High	No. of Residents in Parish	27,130
Footprint (m ²)	2752 (very big)	Annual Visitors	6,000
Building Period	Medieval (rebuilt twentieth century)	Website	http://www.gtyarmouthminster.org/



View of the south elevation of Great Yarmouth Minster

OUTLINE SUMMARY

KEY FACTS

- Great Yarmouth Minster was originally a guild church and priory founded in the twelfth century.
- The church was virtually destroyed by fire in WWII but restored to its Medieval interior by Dykes Bower in the mid-twentieth century.
- A key part of Yarmouth's strong Medieval heritage as a thriving trading town.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- One of the top three largest parish churches in the country with wide north and south aisles, bigger than the central nave.
- One of two parish churches in the diocese with a hybrid role including elements of both church and cathedral.
- Serves a large coastal area with high levels of social and economic deprivation.

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES

- To continue to fulfil its role as a civic church.
- Financial resources.
- To develop activities, such as musical ministry, that will create a sustainable future.



View of the interior looking east

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Great Yarmouth Minster plays an important pastoral and cultural role in an area of high social and economic deprivation. In many ways it acts like a cathedral for the region. The Diocese is supportive, reducing its parish share and providing it with a strong team ministry in order to provide users with civic, parish and visitor facilities and functions. As part of its civic function, the Minster hosts many events, arts festivals and musical activities.

The Minster is supported by the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, part of an enthusiastic and competent network (although with some skills gaps) which works with the church. However, income does not meet expenditure and reserves are dwindling, for which no solution has been agreed. While no formal plan is in place, the Minster's initial aims for the future are to engage

with heritage tourists, to improve offering through musical and educational purposes and to upgrade the building's heating and facilities.

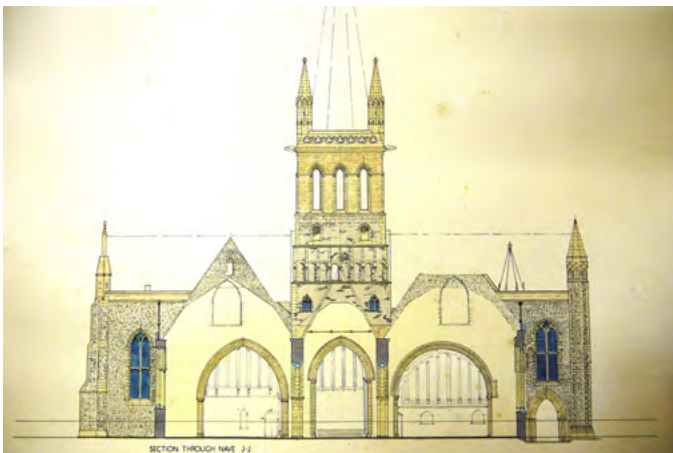
The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is hopeful for the future but questions whether it has the capacity and resources and drive to pull the Minster out of its reserves. Plans for the future reordering of the building have been on hold in the short-term due to the imminent retirement of the current incumbent. Future regeneration will require a reliable income, increased capacity and a coherent plan, not only for repairs, but for future reordering, facilities, activities and use. Much depends on the extent to which the new incumbent will provide the necessary leadership and energy.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

“The general effect [of the interior] is spacious and impressive, but puzzling. The interior is evidently Gothic, of c.1190 to the late thirteenth century, but except for parts of the west end and the reredos, hardly a stone is from before 1957... the inevitable comparison has been made with the tremendous work at Coventry Cathedral. A building of about the same size, but the comparison ends there.”⁰³

The church at Great Yarmouth was founded in 1101 as a priory church. It formed part of a programme of works undertaken by Bishop Herbert de Losinga as penance for purchasing ecclesiastical offices for himself and his family (the sin of simony). Recent repairs have revealed Norman stonework in the tower of the church. However, the building was substantially altered in the following centuries. In 1330-1338 the west front was built with grand towers and pinnacles. Work progressed slowly due to the plague. The unusually wide aisles date from a rebuilding in the thirteenth century and appear to have been originally intended to house chapels of the different guilds operating in the prosperous Medieval town of Great Yarmouth. There were between 19 and 23 of these chapels in the Medieval period. The south porch was added in the fourteenth century.

The priory was dissolved at the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Most of its buildings were demolished, but the church became the parish church of the town. In 1649, the church was divided into three, according to the liturgical and theological divisions of the time. Brick walls, two feet thick, were inserted in the arches north of the nave, on the east side of the transepts and the east side of the tower. The episcopal church continued to use the south aisle (Anglican). The chancel was adapted as a church house and used by the Independents (Puritan), and the north aisle was used by the Presbyterians of the town.



Section through the nave from the original 1950s drawings for rebuilding following the war

⁰³ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

The church remained divided until its restoration in the mid-nineteenth century. The north aisle was restored in 1847 by JH Hakewill. The east end was rebuilt in 1813 by PH Wyatt. JP Seddon undertook a major restoration of the church in 1859-1864 which included taking down the internal brick walls, extending the east end and repairing the tower.

The inside of the church was destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1942, leaving only the tower and walls standing. After the War, it was decided to rebuild the church as it had been. The restoration was undertaken by Stephen Dykes Bower from 1957 and the church was re-consecrated in 1961. Dykes Bower was allowed £315,000 for the work, a quarter of the amount allocated to Coventry Cathedral after the Second World War. The architectural historian Pevsner wrote that 'given the paucity of the funding, what Dykes Bower produced is a competent, if not particularly imaginative reworking of the existing building with much more open space than before.'⁰⁴ He described the large, open spaces as 'clean and functional if not spectacular' and complained that the problem with the concept is the fact that so large a space needs to be filled with plenty of furnishings, which they did not have.⁰⁵

The church was designated a Minster in 2011 by the diocese for 'possessing great historical and architectural significance as well as a contemporary mission and ministry stretching beyond parish boundaries.'⁰⁶

KEY DATES OF FOUNDATION AND BUILDING PHASES

- **1101:** Priory founded by Herbert de Losinga.
- **Thirteenth century:** Rebuilding including widening of north and south aisles.
- **Fourteenth century:** South porch.
- **1859-1864:** Restoration by JP Seddon.
- **1957-1961:** Rebuilding by Dykes Bower.

⁰⁴ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

⁰⁵ Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

⁰⁶ Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, October, 2011.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

The interior of Great Yarmouth Minster is characterised by the wide open spaces created in the 1950s. The Minster feels both ancient and modern at the same time. Fixtures and fittings can be modern replacements (the organ) and ancient items reused from other locations (the font). All are high-quality.

A selection of the significant fixtures and fittings within the church are described below. Not all fixtures and fittings have been included and exclusion from this list does not imply a lack of significance.

Organ

William Hill organ, built 1876, brought to the church after the destruction of the interior including the organ. The ornate Dykes-Bower casing holds a Grade II certificate from the British Institute of Organ Studies.

Pews and Pulpit

The church is filled with simple light-stained nave pews, which are moveable and were obtained from St George's Church, Yarmouth. The panelled pulpit is 1714 and also came from St George's Church.



View of the font, west entrance and font cover

Font and Cover

Norman octagonal font with a 12-sided bowl with waterleaf decoration from St Peter, Highway, Wiltshire, brought here following the reconstruction. The font is of considerable interest as an example of late twelfth-century carving.

Stained Glass

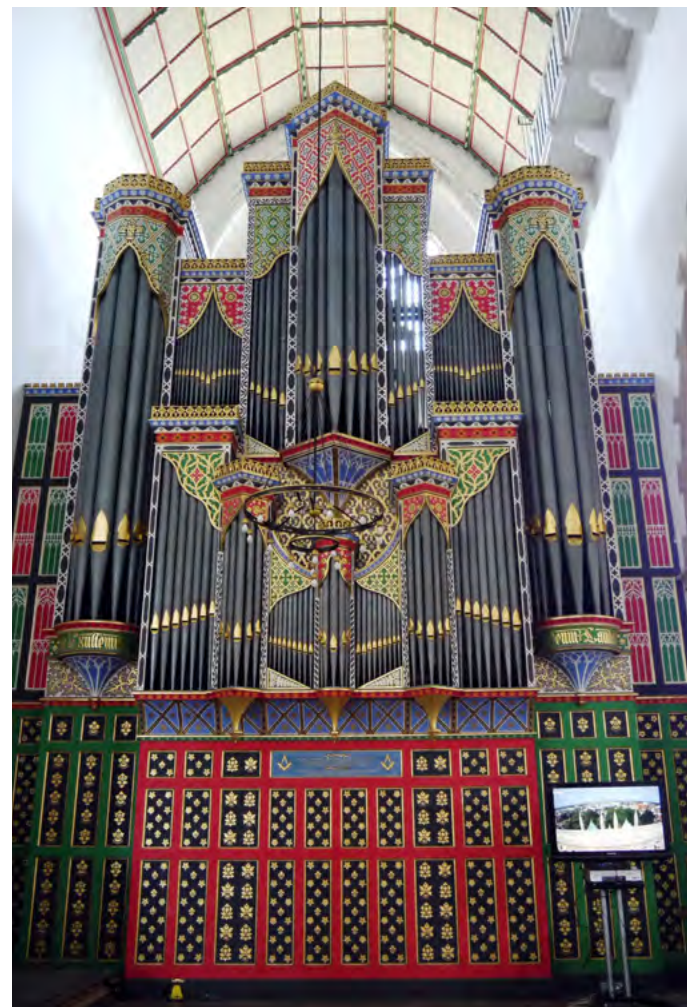
Fragments of fourteenth-century glass in the rector's vestry. Stained glass by Brian Thomson was installed in the 1960s.

Monuments

Several salvaged ledger stones, some dating to the seventeenth century, in the north aisle. A few rescued mural monuments are on the walls of the south aisle and the south transept.

Bells

The church tower has a ring of 12 bells, plus one re-cast after the bombing and manufactured by Whitechapel Foundry in 1960. As well as the church's bell ringing team they are regularly rung by visiting bands of ringers.



Organ in the north transept

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

“There can be no doubt that Great Yarmouth Minster is one of the Major Parish Churches of England. The challenge of maintaining such a large historic building as a place of worship and community resource is enormous. Although much has already been achieved, work is still needed to make the building fit for purpose in the twenty-first century, particularly to the interior.”⁰⁷

When asked to select one thing that makes their building special, Great Yarmouth Minster chose its architecture. 30% of Major Parish Churches also chose architecture.⁰⁸

SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE

Great Yarmouth is an historic town and civil parish located on a thin spit of land between the North Sea to the east and the River Yare to the west. The town was a prosperous Medieval port and retains one of the best preserved town walls in England, as well as several listed buildings and sites of historic interest. The fishing and tourism industries on which the town has traditionally relied have declined. Much of the historic centre was destroyed by bombs in the Second World War, as it was the last settlement passed over by homeward bound enemy aircraft dropping any remaining payload before crossing the sea. The town has high levels of social and economic deprivation which the Minster works hard to address.

The church and churchyard are located at the head of the market square in a Conservation Area at the centre of Great Yarmouth. It is a significant local landmark and visual feature in the town, visible for some distance on the approach to Great Yarmouth. The church is set back from the A47 dual carriageway leading into the town centre from the west, here known as Fullers Hill, which then becomes Priory Plain adjacent to the church. This insensitive 1960s dual carriageway insertion into the town has the effect of cutting the church off from the town, making access difficult. The church “disappears” from view as one enters the town and the entrance to the churchyard from the road is not marked or clear at all. Nonetheless, the glimpses visitors get of the vast roofs as they walk around the town are an important part of its character and the Minster contributes significantly to the attractiveness and heritage interest of the town, as well as being a tourist attraction in its own right. It is an important part of the local tourist industry and economy of Great Yarmouth and Norfolk and the wider region.

ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The Norman parts of the tower are of exceptional architectural interest. Further Norman work has been revealed following the restoration of the tower (2012). The upper stages of the tower represent the Perpendicular style of the mid-fifteenth century in Norfolk.

The plan form of the church, with its unusually wide aisles, is a result of the church's history as a priory and the location of a number of guild chapels. The retention of this plan is a point of significant architectural interest. The church is also of interest for the approach taken in its twentieth-century reconstruction by Dykes Bower and may be contrasted with Coventry Cathedral. There, a Medieval church of a similar size and local presence, was destroyed by enemy action and replaced with an unmistakably modern building. At Great Yarmouth, however, the Medieval interior was carefully reconstructed.

The church contains a number of ledger slabs and monuments from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries which are of some art historical interest for the development of funerary art and lettering during this period. The stained glass by Brian Thomas dates to the early 1960s and is of considerable artistic interest. The south transept window, is considered by some, to be the best modern stained glass in East Anglia.



Great Yarmouth Minster (east end) within its setting of churchyard and priory buildings

⁰⁷ The Parish and Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, Conservation Management Plan, PCC and CBC, April 2014

⁰⁸ Survey result

HISTORIC INTEREST

As an early Priory and parish church, the church and site is significant evidence for the development of Christianity in Norfolk and England. The architecture and arrangement of any church are dictated primarily by the liturgical rites which take place within and around it. The form of the church building is therefore of exceptional significance for our understanding of the evolution of a Medieval church in terms of its liturgy, the lost chapels being of particular interest in this respect, but also the wide aisles.

Associations with the architect Stephen Dykes Bower (1903-1994) are of interest. Dykes Bower was a British ecclesiastical architect who worked on other buildings such as Westminster Abbey, St Edmunds Bury Cathedral and Lancing College chapel. He is known for rejecting modernism and continuing to champion Gothic Revival architecture and Victorian traditions.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Despite the many changes including window and fabric replacements, much original and cumulative fabric remains within the church and contributes to its archaeological interest.

The site has considerable potential for the archaeology and history of the Medieval period. There is also potential for the existence of Anglo-Saxon, Roman or prehistoric remains.

The site is of archaeological interest as a burial ground used for at least 900 years, so the potential for the study of human remains and burial practice over this long period. It was also used as a burial ground for the Hospital for the Sick and Wounded of the Army and Navy (1793-1815), who died there during the Napoleonic Wars and the local Royal Naval Hospital (1811-1958).

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The church is a symbol of civic identity and pride in the history and cultural continuity of the area, being together with the other churches one of the largest and oldest buildings still used by the community (and for the original purposes). The decision of the community to rebuild the church as an interpreted facsimile in the 1950s was a significant decision at the time and illustrates the importance of continuity and the presence of an ancient building in the town.

Within the church the monuments (and the records of them) are historically significant in themselves for the understanding and research of local and social history, recording the clergy, dignitaries, families and beneficiaries of the church and town. The War Memorials are also of local significance and interest.

The following sections (indicated by a blue outline on the page) have been compiled using information gathered from an interview with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Representative and through further investigation and observation. Where direct opinions of the PCC Representative have been expressed, these have been referenced.

IMPACT OF THE BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

“Visitors often comment on [the] atmosphere of peace and the beauty of the building. We want to maintain this legacy for future generations, while increasing access to it for everyone to enjoy and use.”⁰⁹

When asked to select either 'help' or 'hindrance', Great Yarmouth Minster considers the size and/or heritage significance of the church building to be a help. This places Great Yarmouth Minster with an overwhelming majority of other Major Parish Churches.¹⁰

Even among Major Parish Churches, St Nicholas', or Great Yarmouth Minster, is unusually large. Its size is a key part of the building's impact, lends it a high profile within the town and is remarked upon by most visitors. The area it serves, by reason of its coastal geography is remote from other parts of the Diocese and has an 'islander feel'¹¹. All of this contributes to the cathedral-like role played by the Minster, both as the civic church and as the principal church in the Deanery. This is a role that the Minster feels keenly. It has in the past hosted carol services instead of Norwich Cathedral and attracts external partners, such as musicians, who might otherwise go to the cathedral.

The large and impressive space within the building, although dismissed by Pevsner as too open, allows for considerable flexibility in its use. Not only can it be used for major civic services but it has accommodated an indoor Christmas market, arts festivals and exhibitions without obstructing the liturgical space at its centre. The church has well-admired acoustic qualities and the clergy capitalise on the different sounds, qualities and silence of different areas.

The Minster has two daughter churches, St Mary's and St Paul's. It is also responsible for two closed churches, St Luke's, Cobham (recently disposed of for residential conversion) and St John's (currently unsustainable and, it is hoped, to be converted into a heritage skills centre). St Nicholas was designated a Minster in 2011. It is one of two Minsters in the diocese, the other being at King's Lynn. Giving a building the title of Minster is a strategy used to deal with a struggling church presence, in an area with high economic and social deprivation. This offers the church a greater presence, leadership and resources concentrated in a single 'hub'. The title 'minster' is believed by the PCC to have more cache than simply 'parish church' and helps draw people to the building.¹²

Whilst the size of the building is an asset in many ways, it also presents challenges. Even maintenance and repairs costs are many times what they would be for a smaller building. Its insurance premium (£1,100 a month) is calculated by their insurers as if it were a cathedral. The Minster is too large to benefit from the diocese's gutter clearance contract (which offers a flat rate of £250 for most churches) and must employ its own contractors. It has over a thousand lightbulbs and heating costs are similarly scaled up. Whilst the heating is often turned off to economise and external users are charged a supplement for its use, it is necessary in winter to maintain visitor and worshipping numbers. Besides these financial difficulties, there is a constant challenge to use the space in the building positively, rather than being overwhelmed by it, particularly at some of the daily or weekly services when there is only a small congregation.



Vandalism to the rear of the Minster and intrusive anti-vandalism measures over windows at ground level

—
09 PCC representative
10 Survey result
11 PCC representative
12 PCC representative

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

“The PCC is grateful for the contribution made to its work by volunteers who are involved in ministry, maintenance of the buildings...It is impossible to quantify a monetary value but if we paid for the voluntary time it would probably add £30,000 or more to our budget.”¹³

The Minster is the responsibility of the PCC and the incumbent rector. The current PCC has 26 members, and the Minster also has a team of three stipendiary clergy, two Ordained Local Ministries' (OLMs), one retired OLM and three lay readers. The clergy work across the three churches of the Minster, St Mary's and St Paul's. The PCC operates two sub-committees, one on finance and one on fabric. There is also a Minster Preservation Trust, an independent organisation which raises funds for the repair and maintenance of the building. Although the Trust works closely with the fabric committee and the PCC, the maintenance of the building remains exclusively the PCC's responsibility.

The paid staff at Great Yarmouth Minster are the steward, parish administrator, finance operator, three vergers, three caretakers and an organist. This amounts to two full-time employees.

Approximately 100 volunteers serve the Minster in a variety of capacities. There is certainly scope to develop volunteer skills in both tourism and maintenance, although it is a challenge to do this whilst retaining goodwill and assurance that existing skills are valued. The Minster engages with vulnerable adults by offering volunteering opportunities with competent supervision. Although this is time consuming and does not benefit the Minster directly, it is a valuable mission activity.

The Minster has recently implemented a maintenance plan following the completion of work on the tower. It has a Quinquennial Inspection (QI) in place and a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP was drafted as part of a proposal to divide the internal space of the church into distinct areas. The scheme was not adopted and, although it should have been a useful resource in its own right, the CMP has not been updated since and remains in draft form (2014). Change has been resisted by some stakeholders and consensus on the future is needed.¹⁴

By longstanding arrangement, the churchyard is maintained by the Borough Council. This was agreed historically, in return for church land taken up by the widening of Northgate Street.

Great Yarmouth Minster has no business plan, feasibility study or overall plan for the future development of the church. In the short-term, building alterations to revive the fortunes of the Minster have been put on hold due to the imminent retirement of the current incumbent (although substantial mission initiatives and an organ refit are currently underway). As reserves dwindle to unsustainable levels, hopes are now riding on the new incumbent to have the skills, resources and drive to act as a catalyst for wider change in both fortunes and mindsets.

Number of members on PCC	26
Number of clergy	6 3 stipendiary; 2 OLM; 1 retired priest; 3 lay-readers – across three churches
Number of paid staff	10 steward; parish admin; finance officer; 3 caretakers; 3 vergers; organist/director of music; equivalent to two full-time positions
Number of volunteers	100
Number of sub-committees	2 finance and fabric committee



Display within the church showcasing the work of the Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust

¹³ The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014

¹⁴ PCC representative

FINANCES

“... the PCC is very aware that since the year end it has been necessary to spend substantial sums on urgent repairs at the Minster. The PCC will be looking at ways other than holding fund raising events to increase the income of the PCC.”¹⁵

Great Yarmouth Minster’s highest single item of expenditure over the last five years has been building repairs. They anticipate parish share will be the biggest expenditure in the future. Building repairs and Parish Share are regularly the principal items of expenditure for Major Parish Churches.¹⁶

The PCC spends more each year than it receives. In 2014, the Minster ran at a deficit of £29,000, much of which was due to repairs carried out to historic fabric at the Minster mission hall and urgent repairs to the Minster. This situation has been repeated in 2015 and is very worrying for the PCC.¹⁷

Hosting events is the main source of income. The Minster does not feel that it can charge the same level of venue hire as a cathedral, and typically charges £100 per evening. This amount has been determined by the economic conditions of the area and is based on basic market research. Average income in Great Yarmouth is £13,000 p.a., and the PCC has found that most people are unlikely to pay more than £7.50 for a ticket and are very reluctant to book in advance. This makes it difficult to organise events effectively. The Minster makes an additional charge to users for heating in the winter. However, the Minster also hosts major civic events which it views as part of its civic function and mission. It does not charge for these (although it shares the collection), even though they require additional heating and resources.

The PCC runs a café inside the church, offering drinks and snacks. This is popular but kept deliberately low scale so as not to challenge nearby food businesses, even though this impacts on its viability. The café is easily accommodated in the space of the building and is used by visitors and tourists, and also as a convenient, non-bookable space for local groups. The Minster also has a bookable space, the Minster mission hall (the former church hall of St James’s), which is available for groups and community events. The revenue generated goes into the parish funds and supports the Minster’s own projects at the mission, such as the Pathway Café and Support Centre. The focus is strongly on mission rather than business and income generation is not a priority for these facilities.

To support the Minster, people tend to give time rather than money and there are many volunteers. One particularly successful event is the Christmas Fair, which raised £600 in donations, alongside £1,500 for the hire of the church. The Minster occasionally receives small legacies. It is clear that the cathedral-like scale and perceived role of the Minster is not linked to cathedral-like resources.

The main outgoings of Great Yarmouth Minster are parish share, insurance and maintenance. Parish share is voluntary in the Diocese of Norwich and does not accumulate if a church goes into arrears. Due to the financial situation of the Minster, the Diocese does not expect the PCC to pay the full amount of £104,000 and asks instead for £54,000. However, the Minster is only likely to be able to pay £42,000 in 2016.

The Minster is classified by its insurers as a cathedral and pays £1,100 a month (£132,000 annually) for a full rebuild to the value of £37 million. Reserves and external funding are used for major repairs and maintenance. For example, money from the sale of St Luke’s was used for the repair of the Minster pumps (the church is technically below sea level).

The church economises where it can, for instance by doing its own publicity and switching to LED lighting. However, the underlying poverty in Great Yarmouth is considered a severe handicap to increasing income generation at the Minster. The population of Great Yarmouth has not recovered since wartime bombing, and many of the current population are immigrant families in low paid industries. They are often Roman Catholic rather than Church of England, although this has begun to change in recent years. The church is reluctant to be too commercial in its approach as it feels that its activities should be focussed on its mission of serving the communities in need around them. The Minster recognises that this is not sustainable in the long term but has yet to produce a coherent plan to tackle this. One change recently has been to increase its charges for use of the carpark and is working closely with the town on developing the tourist potential of Yarmouth’s Medieval heritage.

¹⁵ The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014

¹⁶ Survey result

¹⁷ PCC representative

Like over 50% of other Major Parish Churches, Great Yarmouth Minster's income does not meet expenditure.¹⁸

For the purposes of this report, the following simplified picture of Great Yarmouth Minster's financial position has been extracted from the most recent annual report.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Total QI cost	£1,349,000
Urgent QI cost	£31,000
Annual maintenance cost	£48,500
Parish share cost	£104,000 total, reduced to £54,000. £42,000 to be contributed 2016
Insurance Cost	£132,000
Utilities cost	Unknown
Major project cost	£43,000

Annual donations income	£58,000
Funds, trusts, foundations income	£6,300 rental income
Events/church hall income	£36,700 weddings and funerals
Other income - land/ interest	£7,700 interest
Individual project income	None

¹⁸ Survey result

MAKING CHANGES AND DOING REPAIRS

The Minster has recently (2014) completed a restoration project of the tower, in the course of which surviving Norman stonework was discovered. The project was very successful and well supported by the architect. It was partly funded by an Historic England/Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Repair Grant for Places of Worship (RGPOW). Although a major project, it ran smoothly and was completed within budget. A maintenance plan was drawn up as a result of the repairs, with a total annual budget of £48,500 required for cyclical and occasional tasks. A total of £91,400 was spent on repairs to buildings in 2014, although maintenance tasks are not separated out from repairs in the annual report. The QI provided the Minster with a 10-year plan for repairs, with a total of £1.8 million. It is unlikely that this can be followed at this stage due to financial constraints.

A project is currently under way to repair the porch roof and upper storey. The Listed Places of Worship Roofs Repair Fund has given £34,000 towards the total of £43,000. There was an opportunity to make further improvements to the porch with a new lobby and glass

doors to improve heat retention, but this is not being taken, partly because the funding only covers the roof but largely because no final decision has been made about the location and design of the new entrance.

The Minster is actively developing links with local schools with the aim of establishing an education and music programme. The choir vestry space is already used as overflow teaching space. The Minster is keen to build up a relationship, enhancing its civic reputation and promote particularly music in schools. This will have benefits for the Minster's choir and provision of sung services. The project is in its early stages but offers potential.

There is a large amount of potential archaeology in the church grounds, including links with the Medieval priory. There is an ambition to explore this, which has potential links with Yarmouth's Medieval heritage, but there is currently no opportunity to do so.

Great Yarmouth Minster has several management documents: accessibility audit, maintenance plan, strategic document, conservation plan, and a Statement of Significance. It has a high number of management documents when compared with other Major Parish Churches.¹⁹



View of the south porch roof, which is soon to be repaired

¹⁹ Survey result

RECENT PROJECT

The main repair contract to the tower saw the involvement of stonemasons, structural engineers, quantity surveyors, architects and national statutory advisors such as Historic England. The project comprised rebuilding and stone renewals for the tower's four pinnacles, renewal of the tower east, south and west parapets and repair of the north parapet, selective stone renewal and pointing to the belfry, and removal of buried ironwork. The clock face was repainted and gilded, and a falcon box was constructed and placed on the tower roof. The flagpole ironwork on the tower roof was overhauled while redundant floodlights, radio aerials and gas beacon were removed.²⁰

Works that have been undertaken at Great Yarmouth Minster since the last QI in 2010 include:

- Investigations into the drainage system.
- Repairs to rainwater goods.
- Investigations into the tower.
- Repairs to the organ.
- South chapel south door stonework repaired.
- Lamps and security lights installed.



Damaged stonework in need of repair

²⁰ Quinquennial Inspection of the Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, The Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP, March 2015

CURRENT USE

The Minster is used for civic celebrations such as the mayor's service, national and local commemorations such as the Queen's birthday, town parades and carol services. It is also frequently used as a venue for graduations and school leavers' assemblies. There are a number of local traditional events such as the blessing of the fishing nets and the annual Christmas tree festival. The Minster views its civic role as a key part of its function and mission. It is probably the largest venue in the town at approximately 4,500 seats (St George's theatre in the town has only 300).

The Minster operates a busy programme of events but lacks the resources to coordinate them beyond keeping a shared diary. One of the difficulties is the variety of people who use the building for services or for concerts and other events, for civic functions and as a venue for externally organised events.

The Minster is also a key part of Great Yarmouth's heritage and tourism industry and is keen to develop its role through school visits and educational displays and events. Tours of the building and walks of the town can be booked by arrangement. The Minster's educational role is very important, and the vestries are currently used by the local school for music and languages lessons due to a shortage of classroom space.

In addition, the Minster retains the functions of a traditional parish church. There is an adult choir, which the Minster is keen to develop, and it is seeking an outreach officer to work with schools and set up a children's choir as well. The Minster hosts around 100 baptisms, 25-30 weddings, 20 funerals and 25 memorial services each year. Its buildings are also used by a number of church and secular groups such as a toddlers group, the Mothers' Union, handbell ringers and Great Yarmouth Youth Brass. It operates a food and shelter project at the Minster mission.

Baptisms	100
Funerals	20 25 memorials
Weddings	25-30



Café in the south transept

OUR EXPERIENCE: AS TOLD BY THE PCC REPRESENTATIVE

One of the long-term goals of the Minster is to improve the heating of the church, with either separate schemes for the east and west ends (allowing independent use of each) or underfloor heating throughout.

These ideas are connected to our earlier proposals to divide the church internally and the restoration of the organ, which currently draws air from outside. The modernity of the internal fabric (most of which is post war reconstruction) makes some alteration less controversial and Historic England and the HLF have been supportive in initial discussions with us.

Unfortunately, since our original discussions with national organisations, the project has lost momentum. Without a clear steer on direction it has been difficult for us to understand what we need and very little progress has been made since 2014. In the meantime, repairs grow and our responses to these are reactive due to constraints on funding and a lack of a holistic overview of the wider picture.

Civic church (town use):

Civic services - national commemorations i.e. Waterloo, Somme, Remembrance.

Commemoration of the 1953 flooding and memorials to local figures i.e. James Paget.

Queen's birthday.

Graduations.

School Leaver services.

School concerts.

Yarmouth College graduations.

Parades i.e. Mayor's services.

Fishing nets service – blessing inside the church and share the herrings.

HMS Dauntless (Royal Navy destroyer) services.

Tourist church (visitor use):

Tours (booked in advance).

Walks from the town.

National music groups.

Heritage – heritage open days, seaside town display, art exhibitions.

Cathedral library book display.

John Dashwood paintings retrospective.

Parish church (traditional parish use):

Regular worship.

Carol services.

Butterfly group (toddlers).

Hand bell ringers.

Bell ringers.

Mothers union.

GY future brass.

Schools – displays and educational events.

Agencies – homelessness services, and local support.

Meetings for local groups i.e. bereavement.

Welfare groups i.e. urban fund organisation uses clergy vestry.

School educational use – music and languages lessons.

WELCOMING VISITORS

“The Minster is now open seven days a week with many people visiting it throughout the year especially when various exhibitions are on. We estimate that up to 6,000 visitors a year come to the Minster.”²¹

The church is kept open seven days a week. Access is level, although it requires the larger main door to be opened, which is more difficult in winter. Visitor numbers are not recorded but are estimated at 6,000. The Minster recognises a need to improve access and parking for coach parties. There is a café, volunteers welcome, information boards and laminated sheets for visitors. Leaflets are available on the liturgical use of the of the building while the website is basic but up to date. There is a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, although there is limited time to maximise its use.

The Minster Preservation Trust and the town hold cultural and heritage activities in Great Yarmouth, which also publicise the minster and its history. There is a weekly pew sheet and a monthly magazine to disseminate information. Most publicity is paper-based, as internet connectivity in Great Yarmouth is limited and not all residents have a home computer.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Parish and Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, Conservation Management Plan, PCC and CBC, April 2014

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014

Quinquennial Inspection of the Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, The Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP, March 2015

The Minster Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, Report with Revised Proposals for New Space Heating Installation, Environmental Engineering Partnership, September 2015

Norfolk: Norwich and North-east Volume I: (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England), 1997

National Heritage List for England list description www.historicengland.org.uk

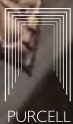
²¹ The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, Unaudited annual report and financial Statements, 31 December 2014



The Minster Church of St Nicholas (Great Yarmouth Minster) 16



SUSTAINING MAJOR PARISH CHURCHES
Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities
October 2016



PURCELL