

## Statement of Significance – Major projects

Guidance on completing this form can be found on the ChurchCare website at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/statements-of-significance-need>

*This document must be accompanied by the Standard Information Form 1A*

### **Section 1: The church in its urban / rural environment.**

#### **1.1 Setting of the Church**

How does the setting out of the church contribute to its landscape / townscape value and to its significance?

All Saints' Church is situated at the heart of the village. Where previously it was adjacent to fields and open spaces, it is now almost surrounded by dwellings, with open space only to the rear of the churchyard. Dickleburgh, which began as a tiny village, is now a growing community with a sought-after primary school, several village-based businesses, including a village shop, public house, and fish shop, and a population in excess of 1100. Throughout its history, which dates from around the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the church has been the centre of the community and, although service congregation numbers are currently smaller than in years gone by (particularly following Covid19 lockdowns), the church is open daily for private prayer, many people going in and out during every day. For some it links with a visit to a family grave in the churchyard, while for others – many of whom are visitors to the village and church – it is a quiet place in which to contemplate for a while. There are regular services each week and church members are active in outreach to the community, both in welcoming them in for worship and social activities and in keeping the community in touch with local happenings through the production a monthly free parish magazine. Over a number of years, various members of our congregation, including Rectors, have forged firm links with the local school, the children and teachers attending the church several times each year for special services. During the past warm summer, a new innovation was tried where the older children spent time in the churchyard, learning about 'Faith in Nature', an initiative set up by the, then, Rector and a local environmentalist, with speakers from our own faith and others. It was so well received that we understand the school is planning to include similar events in its future curriculum. Through the school's involvement, All Saints is brought to the attention of many families in the area.

#### **1.2 The Living Churchyard**

What is the significance of the natural heritage of the site?

A large churchyard surrounds the church building. There is an archived Baptism and Burial register dating from 1540, when simple records were kept, and further burial records throughout the years right up to this day. Although the condition of the churchyard in its early days cannot be commented on, in more recent years it has been managed and maintained by summer mowing and strimming, thus making it accessible and acceptable to visitors and villagers alike. More recently, with the advent of more environmentally sound management, less has been mown regularly, and consideration is now being given by the Parochial Church Council to the churchyard being maintained in a more environmentally friendly manner. One of the churchwardens is developing a suitable policy in line with Bishop Graham's thoughts on graveyards. The churchyard has the potential to be an excellent habitat for wildlife, but it is difficult to assess how much

actually uses it, partially because it is frequented regularly by dog-walkers, both during the day and at night. Through observation in our own homes, we have noticed that when dogs are regularly present, much wildlife appears to keep its distance. There are, however, some 80 trees which have been the subject of the tree report and maintenance within the past 12 months. This was carried out with full authority from South Norfolk Council and the Diocese. One tree in particular is protected; it is a Sequoia of considerable size, situated quite close to the church building itself.

### **1.3 Social History**

What is the historic and present use of the church and churchyard by the congregation and wider community? How does this contribute to its significance?

In its original form, the church at Dickleburgh is likely to have been a missionary centre manned by monks, forming the centre of the community and caring for the people it attracted. Over hundreds of years many changes have occurred, including growth of the area, the dissolution of the monasteries, changes in canon law, and the strict expectations of Victorian times, making the church and churchyard of today in itself a record of Dickleburgh's worshipping and social history. It has survived world wars, pandemics and societal upheavals and, with the love and care of villagers and its worshipping community, still stands the tests of time.

In Dickleburgh's history, two people who should be noted here and whose influence changed lives within the area, were Rector Henry Brandreth (1871 – 1900) and his wife, Louisa. In a book by Rosemary Steer, wife of Norman, OLM in the benefice of Dickleburgh and the Pulhams, a detailed study of the lives of over 300 pauper children cared for by a charity set up by Louisa Brandreth looks at the period of the Poor Law Amendment Act. In the Dickleburgh churchyard is the grave of some of these children, known to us as 'the Brandreth grave'.

Today, society has changed radically, but Dickleburgh is still not a wealthy village. There are new private estates and longer established social housing alongside the more traditional village dwellings. In addition to its usual worship services, the church and churchyard serve many in this community with weddings, baptisms and funerals. Evidence of the latter can be seen by the number of families who attend graves regularly, both for burials over more recent years, and also in the older part of the churchyard.

### **1.4 The church building in general**

Provide a description of the church.

Records show that All Saints Church is not the first place of Christian worship in Dickleburgh. A charter from around 1050 refers to a minster with two priests, which appears to have been in use for many years at that time. It was likely to have originated as a missionary centre led by a community of priests who travelled far and wide.

Research conducted for the summary of All Saints church history, still used today, argues that this minster may well date back to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. This is based on two premises, or clues, both linked to the village name. The 'burgh' in Dickleburgh probably derives from 'burh', meaning an earthwork or fort, while the 'Dickle' is more likely to come from a person's name. In the Domesday Book it is written 'Diccles-burc'.

In the East Anglia of Saxon times, it is known that there lived an Irishman named Dicul (sometimes spelt Dicuil or Dicel), a companion to Fursa, who built a monastery believed to have been at a place called Burgh Castle. When Fursa left some years later, he left the monastery in the hands of Dicul and others, who became responsible 'for the care of souls in the district'. From this, it is thought possible that Dicul founded a minster from which the village took its name.

In due time, through many changes of leadership and land ownership, the minster survived. From 1044 to 1065, it is recorded that Leofstan, the Abbot, was 'guardian of the minsters', those presumably being that at Dickleburgh and another at Semere, both of which were in existence at that time. There were 4 priests for the two minsters, the annual land rent of 20s being paid to Norwich Castle.

By 1086 there were still two priests in Dickleburgh, and about a century later it is recorded in the chronicle of Jocelin of Brakeland, who became a monk in Bury Abbey, that "Abbot Samson had 'restored to his own right of patronage three portions of the church of Dickleburgh'", those portions being 'one in the marsh', 'one in the fields' and one at Semere. Each had its own priest who had a house and some land, the three of them sharing the church. Langmere, also now part of the Dickleburgh parish, had its own stipendiary chaplains and chapel.

According to church records, the first listed incumbent was Roger (no dates recorded), succeeded in 1231 by Henry Feeman, and from then forward Rectors have come and gone. By the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the building appears to have been in a bad state of repair; several wills of that time, the first of which dates from 1375, show that bequests were made for church maintenance. To bear this out, much of the fabric of today's building dates from that period.

By 1454, the three portions and Langmere had joined together to form the parish we have today, and two years later the dissolution of the monasteries removed the right to nominate a vicar from Bury Abbey to the Crown. Some 80 years later still, this rite passed to Trinity College, Cambridge in perpetuity, thus the church of All Saints, Dickleburgh remains under their patronage today.

Built largely of flint and freestone quoins, over the years many changes to the building have taken place. For example, in 1845 the north aisle was repaired and given a new roof; in 1851 the tower clock was installed; in 1860 the porch was restored; in 1867 the old box pews were removed and replaced by open oak benches 'sufficient to hold up to 400 people'. In addition, the chancel was restored, walls and steps were repaired, the floor paved, oak ceiling timbers and roof slates were renewed, as were the clerestory and most of the windows.

In 1923, parts of the tower were repaired, something which 100 years later we need to do again. In 1938 electric light was installed and in 1963 electric heating replaced the 2 stoves which were sited on either side of the, then, arch to the tower. Later still, in 1998, a 'new' and larger organ was installed.

The church building, both inside and out, is welcoming and spiritually uplifting. Visitors often comment on its beauty and the feeling of peace it instils.

## 1.5 The church building in detail

Assess the significance of either each historical phase of the building or of each area within it. For example, north aisle, south chancel elevation, Norman tower

*(Taken from a summarised history of All Saints, Dickleburgh written by Mrs. Avril Pierssené in 1998)*

### *External Architecture*

*The building consists of chancel, nave with clerestory, vestry, west tower and south porch. The walls are made of flint and freestone quoins and, except for the tower, are strengthened at the corners with buttresses. The parapets are battlemented, the gable at the east end of the nave stepped and the roof slated. A Tudor brick stair turret protrudes on the outside of the northern face of the tower. The walls of the square, plain tower are about four feet thick at the base and are faced with small, whole flints. The north and south bell openings are perpendicular in style, but the west face has an earlier style of bell opening with Y tracery which could belong to the decorated period of the fourteenth century or earlier. A fourth bell opening has been replaced by a clock with a small window of a quatrefoil design below it.*

*All the windows of the aisles and chancel are of the perpendicular style. There are eight clerestory windows on each side, each with three lights and, like those of the aisles, have stepped embattled transoms. A window on the east end of the vestry is more in keeping with the decorated period. There are niches left and right outside of the large East window with ogee arches above and mouldings terminated by head stops.*

*There are similar ogee niches and mouldings with head stops on the front of the elaborate porch, which has diagonal buttresses, an embattled parapet and flushwork panelling. The square flints vary in colour from almost white to almost black. In the outer arch moulding of the doorway there are fleurons and heads, and in each of the two spandrels above the arch there is a shield, one with the emblem of the Holy Trinity and the other the three crowns of Bury Abbey, the same shields that appear on the fond inside the church.*

*Several gargoyles adorn the outside of the building, both on the tower and on the main body of the church.*

### *Internal Architecture*

*Nikolaus Pevsner in the Norfolk volume of his series of books on 'The Building of England' (1962), gives a good description of the nave arches, ascribing them to the decorated period. They are double chamfered with an incision along the middle of each chamfer and rest on quatrefoil piers with fillets which are capped with polygonal capitals. The chancel arch is of the same design. In the east wall of the tower, hidden behind the organ is another arch of considerable height and width and in a slightly different style to the others.*

*On the north wall of the nave behind the pulpit, there is a small doorway leading to a crumbling stairway. These steps once gave access to the top of the rood screen of which only the bottom part remains.'*

## 1.6 Contents of the Church

Provide a description of its contents and their significance. It is reasonable to group these if there is a contemporary scheme which is significant as such, for example one could say a complete scheme of 18<sup>th</sup>-century furnishings, of high significance.

To comment on various parts of the building, we move around the inside of the church in a clockwise direction from the porch at the west end of the south wall.

**The ancient main door** is of traditional wooden design, with metal studs and large metal hinges, with a central metal handle which lifts an internal bar to allow access. The ancient keyhole is no longer used, the current lock being of heavy mortice design.



**The two plaques** above the doorway show the ten commandments.



Under the first window is a large traditional table, surrounded on 3 sides by old and damp, hessian covered, notice boards.



The base of the tower under the ringing chamber, houses a small Rector's vestry which includes a large modern wooden chest for altar frontals etc.



The stone font is octagonal, its panels decorated with shields as mentioned above, plus depictions of the Passion *'(with cross, spear, reed with sponge, nails and whip)'* and the Sacraments *'(with three chalices)'*. At its base are alternating lions and *'wildmen with clubs'*.



The organ installed in 1998, was built by Norman and Beard in 1908 for the church of St. James in Great Yarmouth. Before installation it was restored and additional stops were added by local organ building firm W and A Boggis of Roydonian Works, Diss. The console, blower bellows, extra sound boards and additional pipework came from St. Michael's Church, Warfield. The organ is housed in an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century musician's gallery at the west end of the nave.





The **choir vestry** is a wooden partitioned off area to the back of the north aisle, with hanging rails for robes and shelving for music books etc. On the north wall there is an ancient **external** door of traditional design in wood with large metal hinges, a metal bar fastening, and no external handle. This is currently used as an emergency exit. Above the door is a hatchment as shown.



The **family space** is an area set aside for use by children and their parents/carers; it is currently on a Temporary Licence and a full Faculty application is being processed. Formerly in a cold, uncomfortable, and rather exclusive area of the church at the east end of the north aisle, it has been moved to the centre on that side where it is warmer and more inclusive. It is kept well equipped (although storage for the toys, books, etc. is sparse and difficult), and is accessible every day when the church is open. At occasional and special services – weddings, baptisms, funerals, plus Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday, Harvest – it is usually well used, although at weekly services the number of children is few. However, parents and carers with young children are welcome to use it at any time; some do so regularly, others occasionally.



A **memorial plaque** is on the north wall of the nave, which reads '*Near this spot are deposited the remains of Nicholas Starkie, who died in 1797, aged 29.*



The **quiet space**, formerly the children's corner, is an area now used by small groups for services and meetings. The seating is re-arranged pews, with a central traditional table.



The **pulpit** is Jacobean, with the familiar short broad blank arches and arabesque work (*taken from Pevsner*). Each blank arch is carved with shallow arabesques and is fitted with curly capitals. Each panel has a split egg shape in the centre. Oblong panels with deep leaf mouldings are ranged under the rim. The steps up to it were added in the nineteenth century.



The **small doorway** behind the pulpit leads to a crumbling stairway. These steps once gave access to the top of the rood screen of which only the bottom part remains.





The **rood screen** – the base only, very unusual in the design of the panels. Each has one large quatrefoil with big square leaf cusps and inside each foil more small cusping. Figure carving in the spandrels (*taken from Pevsner*). A close look shows that in the spandrels the carving is beautifully executed: flowers mostly in two of the panels and in the other two a riot of subjects, including dragons, green men, a monk playing pipes, a shepherd with two sheep, a bird with a fish, and a fox dragging a goose by the neck.



The **organ console**, sits on a wooden base so that it can be moved if necessary.



**Three memorials** are on the north wall of the chancel. The first in the name of Charles Turner, the second in the name of Henry Turner, and the third in the name of Dame Frances Playters. The latter has a noticeable crack which is monitored by a ‘tell-tale’ device. According to *Pevsner*, the Playters memorial is “*attributed by Mrs. Esdaile to Edward Marshall. The architectural form typical of the mid-C17 ‘Artisan Mannerism’, e.g. the shanks of a pediment below the two columns. In the middle, above an inordinately tall inscription, demi-figure, frontal. Top with open segmental pediment ending in scrolls.*” Between the second and third memorials is an additional hatchment as shown below.



The **door to the old vestry** is ancient with both the original lock and a more modern mortice lock. This is the original vestry mentioned in the architectural excerpt which, being very dark and impractical, now houses much of the church's valuables, the electrical distribution boards and meters, and is used for storage of many books, equipment and archived materials.



The **east window**, donated by Mary Mathison in 1870 in memory of her husband, William (Rector, 1868 – 1870) depicts angels playing instruments at the top; the two main lights show the transfigurations and the Ascension; the left hand light shows Old Testament characters, including Adam and Eve; and the right hand light shows saints and martyrs, with each figure bearing a distinguishing detail, for example Isaiah holds a book, Joshua carries a sun motif on his chest.



The **altar and altar rail**, both built in dark wood, the altar is a traditional box-like structure, with plain panelled sides. The altar rail has decorated carvings and a removable centre section for access to the sanctuary.



The **two bishop's chars** are elaborately carved and date from 1688



The **chancel door** is ancient with the original lock, and is now used as an emergency exit from the chancel. Above the door is a hatchment, as shown.





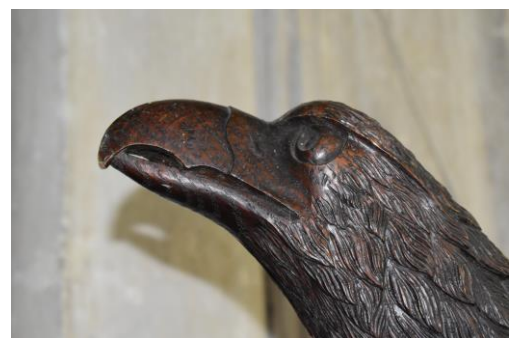
The **memorial plaque** dedicated to Joseph Dover is on the south wall of the chancel.



The **minister's stall and desk**, of a traditional design, with a candle holder on the back of the seat, are wooden with carved decorations, freestanding and both movable.



The **lectern** has a carved wooden eagle with fine feather details on a carved and decorated support. It was bought in 1884 by Henry Brandreth who was rector at the time.



The **ancient tabernacle** is in the north wall of the side chapel on the south side of the church.



The **side altar**, a basic, open framed, wooden structure, with a plain wooden top, was installed in 1981 in memory of Walter Hammond, a long-term dedicated church member and benefactor. The altar is covered with an altar frontal, the area beneath the alter often being used as storage for cumbersome items which are used only occasionally.



The **chest**, housed near the side altar, is thought to be an ancient chest for record storage.



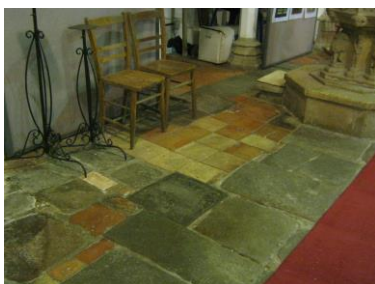
**Two memorial plaques** are on the south wall of the nave, the first, built in stone, is in the name of George Lee, and the second, in brass, is in the name of George Womack.



The **internal war memorial**, is in three sections, comprising a wooden wall plaque and roll of honour, with a shelf below on which rest the books of dedication.



The **flooring** in the church is a mixture of flagstones, ancient red and cream tiles, and more modern red quarry tiles; the flooring in the sanctuary is light and dark grey tiles with stone steps. In the chancel floor, now covered by carpet, there are two memorials and an access stone to a family vault. The memorials are both in the chancel. One is a black marble stone in memory of Maria Palgrave of Pulham who died in 1730 and her husband John Whitfield, Rector, who died in 1731. The other is close to the south door in the name of Christopher Barnard, another former Rector, who died in 1680 and his wife Alice. The access stone to the George Lee family vault lies immediately in front of the front pew in the nave.





The **pews** in the nave are plain wooden structures, with carved decorated end panels.



The **choir stalls** on the south side of the the chancel are also in wood, again with carved decorated ends and front panels, and with ornate carved finials. Those on the north side are of simpler design, without finials but with carved front panels.



The **internal roof structure** is wood throughout, the design varying slightly between the nave and the chancel.



### **1.7 Significance for mission**

What are the strengths of the building as it is for worship and mission? What potential for adapted and new uses does the church and its setting already have with little or no change?

The church building, as it stands, is suitable for traditional and modern forms of worship and for all the occasional offices, weddings, funerals etc. It has also proved suitable for concerts, talks, presentations, and so on, where the audience is static and many can be seated in the pews.

The more recent re-arrangement of pews at the rear of the nave has given more space for informal gatherings and, as such, has been more adaptable for various outreach events, such as collection of foodstuffs for the local foodbank, an interactive 'walk-through' crib service, and so on. When necessary, additional chairs are placed in this area to increase the available seating capacity (to approximately 200).

Because the church has good parking facilities in its own grounds and access to a further parking area on an adjacent meadow, together with good kitchen and toilet facilities in the Church Rooms, it is possible to host large congregations on special occasions and when the local primary school and/or the Royal British Legion hold their services there, and allows for larger funerals, some of which use the Church Rooms for the reception afterwards. The local school is also encouraged to bring its pupils into church for specific events in its curriculum, such as the recent 'Faith in Nature' day, when the church and churchyard were both used for large and small group work.

It is also possible to host other gatherings, such as the themed festivals (Christmas Trees, Tree of Life etc.) and more recently to use both the church and the Church Rooms for fundraising events, although for these it would be easier if the church could be adapted to allow more open floor space. If it should be possible to adapt the church in this way, it would open up a new range of possibilities in terms of outreach and serving the local community.

## Section 2 : The significance of the area affected by the proposal.

### 2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal.

The part of the church which would be directly affected by this proposal for the installation of new cupboards is the area immediately underneath the organ loft, where currently the available space is cluttered with items for which we have no other storage.

Indirectly, the area immediately behind the back pew on the north side of the central aisle would be improved because the contents of the random storage boxes currently standing there could be rehoused in the proposed new cupboards. The bookstand would remain in situ.

### 2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.

Currently, the area concerned is hidden behind large, heavy but portable, notice boards, which keep hidden the clutter behind them. The north side of the space houses nothing but a small electrical unit, which is situated low on the wall close to the access door to the Rector's vestry and the ringing chamber. The south side of the space, however, houses two elderly seats, both of which are fixed to the wall at one end and would need to be removed (see pictures). These are never used as seating, and simply support the clutter placed upon them. On both sides of the space there are fluted sections of pillars visible, which would need to be taken into consideration. There are two heaters overhead, suspended from the underside of the organ loft; it may be necessary to move, remove, or adjust these to ensure the taller cupboard doors do not clash with them.



### **Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals**

#### **3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.**

The impact of the proposed new cupboards could be seen as significant in that they would improve both the storage facilities available to us and the appearance of the area under the organ loft. Thus, through both these factors, the appearance of the church overall could be enhanced.

#### **3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.**

The intention is for the new cupboards to echo the style and colour of the organ loft above and other panelling which can be seen throughout several other areas of the church. Although it would be necessary to remove the two elderly pews, the cupboards will be built around the visible fluted sections of the rear pillars so that there are no gaps showing. The cupboards will be higher in the north and south outer corners than in the middle sections, allowing a more open approach to the central doorway. The portable notice boards can be removed to other locations in the church.

#### **Sources consulted**

List the sources consulted

The building of England, book 24 North West and South Norfolk – the section on Dickleburgh, by Nikolaus Pevsner, 1962

The church guide, entitled 'The Church of All Saints, Dickleburgh', researched and produced by Mrs. Avril Pierssené, 1998