

Statement of Needs

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

1. General information

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

Section 1. General information

Haveringland is a dispersed settlement approximately 10 miles north of Norwich and with a population of around 200 people. Over recent years the small population has been added to from new development, most significantly the growth of the Haveringland Hall Country Park for lodge style homes and holiday properties.

The village has no public buildings or facilities other than the Parish Church. The church remains locked apart from services and events.

Around six years ago the church was facing an uncertain future. Dwindling congregations and a degree of neglect of its fabric and surroundings posed questions about how long it could continue to function. A group of parishioners (including the Chair and Clerk of the Parish Meeting) and the relatively recently appointed Vicar, decided that a plan was needed to address this decline. The *Church Action Group* (CAG) was formed as a sub group of the *Parochial Church Council*. It's Terms of Reference were to be accountable to the P.C.C. for :

1. Planning and organising a programme of services, events and activities at the church.
2. Leading work on the development, costing, design and funding of an improvement plan for the church and its grounds.
3. Undertaking fundraising and attending to the general maintenance of the building and its grounds.

The CAG has now been subsumed in the PCC, which is pursuing a vision of a 'Festival Church' which holds at least six religious services per annum and alongside this a programme of other events, activities and functions which meet the needs of both the immediate population (of whom about 50% are aged over 60 years), and those living in surrounding areas, where other churches have been declared redundant and/or there are few if any community facilities. In addition it is seeking to engage with other 'communities of interest' such as those with family or other connections to the church and village, the RAF Swannington Airfield; those interested in the heritage of the Church and area, Church architecture history, the arts, music etc.

Following a consultation exercise with local residents in 2017, the plans for improvements and repairs have been developed to provide a venue that is:

- a focus for relatively frequent meetings and gatherings of the local community (clubs, interest groups, talks, parish meetings etc.)
- a setting for less frequent, more major events, possibly in conjunction with other churches and groups, and serving a wider community (arts and crafts events, musical performances, rallies etc.), building on our involvement in the 'Twelve Towers Festival' for example
- a base from where to provide public services and promote wellbeing

- a centre for explaining and exploring local heritage and acting as a focal point for nature recovery in the local landscape.
- an income generator

A further consultation was held with local people in September 2019 when firmer ideas for improvements were described, and those present (around 40 people) had the opportunity to ask questions and comment. Discussions also covered a review of the original outcomes from the 2017 consultation and developing the thinking about the Church's future range of uses. In summary, those participating were unanimous in their support for the preferred option for improvements and confirmed that the range of uses and activities envisioned in 2017 was still relevant; further, specific ideas for events and activities were put forward. More recently these conclusions were reaffirmed at Parish meetings, and the potential for the church to play a part in promoting health and wellbeing (through shared silences, retreats, as a base for wellbeing walks etc.) has been explored, as has its potential as an 'anchor' in the review and development of the wider landscape to help with nature recovery.

Over the last few years we have been piloting new forms of service and other events and uses, which include:

- Well attended **Harvest Festivals** (with vintage tractor runs and other attractions)
- **'Follow the Star' and 'Christmas by Candlelight'** Christmas services (which included an astronomical presentation about the Natal star and a candlelit churchyard quiz)
- **'All Creatures Great and Small'** (a special service to bless pets and other animals and which featured presentations from the RSPCA and 'Pets As Therapy' organisation)
- **Remembrance and reunion** events to commemorate those serving from RAF Swannington (the 70th anniversary of the airfield closing in 2017 was attended by over 300 people)
- **'Forties in the Fields'** – a themed re-creation of wartime Britain complete with vintage vehicles, posters and literature, accompanied by music and food from the era. The first event in 2017 was so successful that it has been re-run in subsequent years and is becoming a fixture in the annual calendar
- **Parish Meetings** to discuss and agree action on issues of importance to local people
- **Book and Jigsaw Swaps**- a monthly opportunity to visit the church and chat
- **'More Tea Vicar?'**- a summer Sunday afternoon tea in the beautiful churchyard
- **Shared Silences**- a chance to get away from the world and spend an hour or two in silence sitting or walking in the church or churchyard, with some music and refreshments.
- **Heritage Open Days**- telling the stories of local people and those associated with the village, including oral histories; over 3 afternoons in September 2019 nearly 200 people visited to see exhibits and activities about people with historical connections to the village.

The churchyard and some surrounding open spaces (in agreement with land owners) have been managed as wildlife conservation areas. This includes local volunteers as well as the *Community Payback Scheme* to carry out programmed cutting and raking off of grasses and wild plants, as well as more frequent mowing of paths in the churchyard to enable access to tended graves. A project to work with local landowners about further enhancing biodiversity in the surrounding area of the church ('Living Landscape') is supported by Heritage Lottery funding. A Friends Group ('Haverlingland Together') has also been formed to keep people in touch with

developments, organise events and to help in raising funds for further improvements and repairs to the Church. A recent example is the holding of an 'Earth Day Fair' at the church in April 2023, which attracted around 200 people and raised £500 towards the costs of new facilities at the church.

2. What do you need?

Briefly explain your needs (not your proposals). Append any brief for your architect.

The church is currently not a comfortable, accessible, easy to use or attractive venue with its stained and eroded walls (due mainly to water penetration and poor drainage), damaged glass and lack of basic facilities.

It is also locked most of the time and those with mobility or other disabilities cannot use it easily. As there is no heating the building is not a comfortable venue all the year round, which further limits its use, as does the lack of flexible space for displays and performances. Its damp condition is also a limitation for exhibitions, art displays etc. The wealth of historical information and material already discovered, and which has been used in several events, is too large to be displayed effectively in the current space wholly on exhibition boards and suffers from the damp conditions.

The Church requires a range of urgent repairs and improvements so that it can provide a safe, well equipped, comfortable venue for religious and other activities that a *Festival Church* will provide; and enable it to further expand and develop the range of functions it performs, including a number that will have wider appeal and will ensure the church's viability.

The needs can be summarised as:

1. Enabling the church to be opened and closed securely every day which will, amongst other things, lead to a greater sense of local ownership
2. Ensuring that those with mobility and hearing problems can access and use the church safely
3. Having hygienic and comfortable 'all access' toilet and baby changing facilities
4. Being able to prepare and serve food and drinks conveniently
5. Providing an environment which is adequately and appropriately heated and lit
6. Providing a building which is able to deal with surface water and waste water efficiently and sustainably, which is 'wind and watertight' and which is actively conserving important architectural or other features
7. Having an attractively presented interior which can be used flexibly for the range of existing and potential uses envisaged (including open floor areas for displays, performances, small group discussion etc.)
8. Having the heritage of the church and the surrounding area presented in attractive, engaging ways, with scope for delving into various aspects of this more deeply

3. The proposals

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2

A programme of repairs and improvements is proposed:

1. **Automatic door opening and closing** device to be fitted, with **CCTV** coverage
2. A new reinforced **grass, graded access path** from the churchyard gate to the porch, where a **reconstructed floor, new bird gates and adjusted door thresholds** will give easy access for wheelchair users.
3. Install a **chandelier heating system plus portable heaters** plus some adjustments and additions to **lighting**.
4. Provide a **new drainage and waste water system**, which can be taken through the churchyard to disposal facilities in areas outside the churchyard wall (with the permission of the landowner)
5. Carry out **urgent repairs** to the exterior of the building (repointing, stonework repairs, glass repairs etc.) to ensure that it is sound and conserving important features.
6. **Repairing and decorating** the internal walls and carrying out a deep clean.
7. **Removing, and adapting some pews** to provide space for the fittings mentioned above (welcome, heritage and displays) and larger open spaces for different uses (the inward facing choir stalls to enable a space at the crossing point and so clear the front of the church for displays, meetings, performances etc.)
8. Creating **area(s) where the important stories** of the church, wider area and local people can be told in a range of engaging ways (including opening up a cleared Tower with display space)
9. **Further enhancing biodiversity** in the area surrounding the church in collaboration with landowners; creating new habitats and food sources for a range of species (e.g. bat boxes, water areas, hedges, trees)
10. **Install an induction loop and audio system** to benefit the hard of hearing.
11. Fit a new stone memorial to commemorate the dedication of the church as a Memorial Church for the RAF 100 (Bomber support) Group (subject of a separate Faculty application)
12. Install an **'all access' toilet and baby changing area and kitchen servery** (subject to gaining extra funding and separate Faculty application).

4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals.

The current building is not able to meet the basic needs of the range of uses it is currently a venue for; it is not routinely open or accessible, has no water supply, toilet or refreshment area, has no heating or effective and efficient lighting; has little space to allow a range of activities to be carried out.

The programme of activities is continuing to grow (as is the local population) and cannot develop further without the works envisaged. It needs investment in basic repairs and improvements to make it fit for purpose and a sustainable venue for the future.

Without investment soon the building will deteriorate further and the foundations of its future use will not be built upon, and so a viable Festival Church will not be possible, leading to the church's closure and the loss of the only available public building and place of worship in the area.

Section 5. Justification

The proposals will create the conditions and spaces required for the foreseeable future, without impacting to any great degree on the more important aspects, features and fittings of the church and its surroundings. They will add to its value as an historic building and churchyard and at the same time provide a cost effective, efficient and sustainable solution to meeting the practical needs of a venue for mission, heritage interpretation, promoting wellbeing, community support and cultural events.

6. How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

How is it reducing the carbon footprint, contributing to the Church's commitment to be 'net zero carbon' by 2030?

The Church has achieved the bronze Eco Church award and will continue to pursue higher awards. A future programme of 'green' events and activities to promote sustainable living will be helped by the proposed repairs and improvements, which will make these events more attractive and so reach more people.

The new heating system and improved lighting are designed to be energy efficient; LED bulbs will replace the current halogen system and the system will be flexible to allow partial use, with heating directed to the areas/people needed rather than generally.

The disposal of rainwater and foul water will not impact the local mains sewer and drainage network. We propose systems whereby all waste water will be handled on adjacent land with no impact to the Anglian Water network, and a very small carbon impact.

The Church is hoping to build on its conservation churchyard by engaging local landowners in taking further action to improve biodiversity.

7. What other options to meet the need were considered, taking Point 6 and the impact identified in the Statement of Significance into account?

Alternative layouts to meet the need for improved or new facilities were considered and thoroughly examined and evaluated. The chosen option is considered to be the least intrusive or damaging to important architectural features and most sustainable given the expected pattern and greater intensity of use.

June 2023

