

PROJECT INSPIRE



**Conserving our heritage • Making bold improvements
Creating welcoming spaces • Reducing our carbon footprint**



Presentation of Proposed Design

This leaflet explains the design proposals, available to view in the church from 14th September 2021, to meet the objectives of PROJECT INSPIRE and should be read in conjunction with the presentation. We seek your feedback on these designs through the questionnaire on a separate sheet to be returned by 29th October 2021.

A parish church building today needs to be adaptable to differing forms of worship for different members of the church family. The design proposals, which reflect these needs, have been developed by our conservation architects, Chedburn Codd. We have addressed comments from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). The design is now sufficiently advanced to present to the church family and wider community and reflects some key concepts:

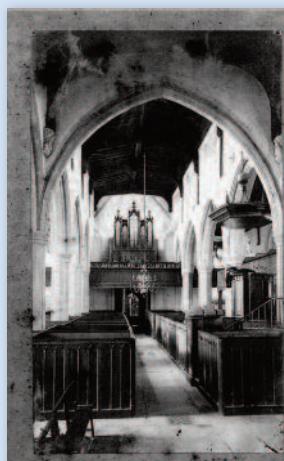
- An open and welcoming space for flexible worship and community use.
- A level access for all abilities from the re-opened north porch to the communion rail.
- Shared spaces to make optimal use of the whole church building.
- Efficient energy use towards the Church of England 'net-zero' carbon reduction target by 2030.
- Heritage conserved by careful design of internal changes.

Our Church

Church buildings are more than just visible symbols of Christianity in our towns and villages. They provide the physical, material context for local groups of Christians to come together to worship God. As worship changes over time, so too does the church building. The people influence the building, just as the building influences the people. St. Lawrence, Lechlade is a church building that shows evidence of many changes in official religious policy.

There has been a church in Lechlade since the 13th Century. The existing perpendicular church was built of Taynton limestone and completed in 1476. The external structure is a fine example of a Grade 1 Cotswold wool church and has been relatively unchanged over the last six centuries.

The internal layout has changed significantly during the same period, reflecting the liturgical needs of the church. In 1476 St. Lawrence was part of a wider Roman Catholic Europe where the Latin mass was the central act of worship. The momentous religious changes of the reformation in the second decade of the 16th Century, stripped the church and damaged artefacts. The physical building of St. Lawrence reflected these changes in theology and liturgical practice - pews were places for people to sit and primarily listen, empty niches were devoid of images and rood stairs leading nowhere reflect previous practices. For more than three hundred years there was no screen separating the chancel and the nave.



The 1828 reordering looking west- note the organ on the balcony, the box pews and stone floor.

The Oxford Movement felt the Reformation had gone too far, Protestant theology was damaging and the 'beauty of holiness' had to be restored in public worship. This meant substantial changes to the liturgical space of parish churches reflected in the 1881 reordering. Communion tables were turned back to altars again (and raised and railed off), vestments and hangings were re-introduced, as were new choir screens. The balance now swung back to sacramental worship, away from the preaching of God's Word. The ritual of the Mass/Holy Communion was made more elaborate and focussed on what the priest did in the newly separated chancel area. The whole focus of the congregation was drawn to the raised altar at the east end. The Reformation was now partially reversed.

A parish church building today needs to be adaptable to differing forms of worship for different members of the church family - from a more contemporary worship style, utilising advances in digital technology in the main body of the church, to a more traditional Book of Common Prayer service. Flexible seating arrangements will allow the building to be used for a variety of different styles of worship and wider community events. Toilet and kitchen facilities, as well as meeting rooms, will enhance appeal to all ages. A warm, well-lit and welcoming worship space, retaining the natural beauty of the medieval structure, but without unnatural barriers between people, will greatly help in encouraging more people to attend (who might have been discouraged by the existing format of the building), and reaching the local community with the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Background

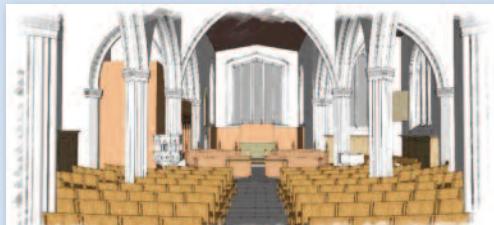
The initial consultation with the church community in the autumn of 2018 gave overwhelming support for creating open and welcoming spaces, providing access for all abilities, supporting worship and mission, and making flexible use of the building for all services, meetings and events. There was clear support for replacing pews with more comfortable seating, providing toilets for all abilities, and including a larger kitchen. The poor condition of our heating and lighting systems and the need for more effective audio-visual technology were identified as major drivers to equip the church building to new and evolving technologies to support worship and events.

Working with Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) we decided to see if the church building could be adapted inside, to include all the facilities that are needed – integral accessible toilets, a kitchen, and meeting rooms, instead of having to use church cottage next door. Our conservation architects, Chedburn Codd, have achieved just that. The cottage has been a wonderful asset for the last 20 years; however, it is far from ideal, and in need of a lot of renovation. Advice from conservation planners' constraints preclude any major changes to the building.

The Church of England target to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030 requires an efficient heating system to provide comfort to worshippers. Following professional advice, underfloor heating powered by an air source heat pump will help to meet this target.

The DAC has indicated it is content with the overarching principles of the proposed scheme and support the presentation of plans to the community. We continue to work with the DAC on some elements of the plans.

The main elements of PROJECT INSPIRE



View east through the nave.

- The north porch: this will revert to being the principal entrance. There will be a glass lobby immediately inside the north doorway, the original wooden door will be retained.
- The floor: a new level floor of finished limestone flagstones will be laid across the north porch, the nave and the aisles to match the level of the existing floor in the choir and chancel.
- The pews: replacement of all the heavy pews with seats to allow flexible seating.
- The gallery: at the west end of the church the 18th century gallery will be reinstated, with meeting rooms, kitchen and toilets below; a meeting room in the bell ringing chamber.
- The choir screen: this will be moved to the back of the first-floor gallery.
The side parclose screens will remain in situ.
- The chancel: the choir stalls will be replaced with new pews to be in keeping with the rest of the reordered church, and lightweight so seating can be flexible to reflect the multi-use use of the area.



The North Porch 1



Existing closed north porch.



Opened with external timber doors and level access.

The return of the north porch as the main church entrance will provide a welcome light entrance to the church. The porch was probably added to the church in the Elizabethan era and served as the main entrance to the church until Waller's re-ordering of 1882.

Traditional solid timber external doors will safeguard the porch internals from the weather and allow the area to be effectively used. The provision of a level access from Shelley's Walk through the north porch and into the nave will allow unimpeded access for all abilities.

The original wooden door, which has a Moderate significance, from the porch into the north aisle will be retained and held permanently open. Glass doors will allow normal access from the porch into the main church.

The Floor 2

A new Purbeck limestone floor set at a higher level above the existing will provide a durable, lighter and welcoming open space with flexibility to use for all services and a range of church and community activities. This returns the floor level near to the pre-1881 reordering. The existing lime concrete floor will remain in place with the new construction above this.

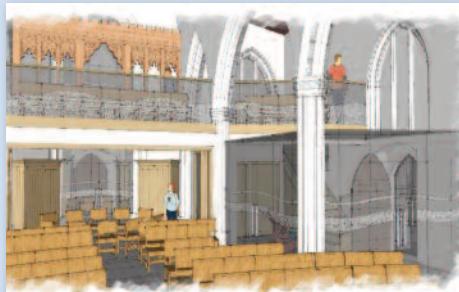
The floor will enable level, step free, access for all abilities from all entrances to the communion rail; currently this is not feasible because of steps from the north porch and into the chancel. We shall build above the existing floor which will remain undisturbed.

Underfloor heating and insulation will be installed between the existing and higher floor to deliver effective even heat across the nave and aisles, improving the comfort of the congregation. The underfloor heating will be powered from an air source heat pump. This will allow us to meet the Church of England target for carbon reduction by 2030.

Routing the services under the new floor will allow the removal of unsightly radiators and pipework and allow the walls to be restored to their original light colour, contributing to the open and welcoming aspect of the church. Power and data sockets will be installed within the floor.



The Gallery 3



View of the new gallery from the south east.

The west gallery will be reinstated on generally the same alignment as the previous gallery. This will have a floor at the same level as the existing bell ringing chamber providing additional seating. Beneath the gallery two toilets are proposed in the north-west corner, one for accessible use. The kitchen proposed for beneath the south-west corner of the gallery replaces smaller units recently installed in the north-west corner of the north aisle.

A singing gallery was located at the west end during the 18th century. The 1828 reordering by Pace shows galleries at the west end and along the north aisle, one of the defining features of that time. The plans show an organ and 'organ loft' at the rear of the gallery. Both the west and north galleries were dismantled as part of the 1881 reordering by Waller. The organ was moved to the north-east chapel around the same time.



View at gallery level looking north.



View of kitchen door and hatch from the meeting room.

The area below the gallery includes a central meeting room with sliding doors into the nave. This allows room for discreet meetings or to be part of the nave seating. Entry to the meeting room will be normally through the lobby and north porch, without disturbing worship or events in the nave. Continuing to the south, a door opens into the kitchen, fully equipped for serving drinks and light meals.



1. North Porch

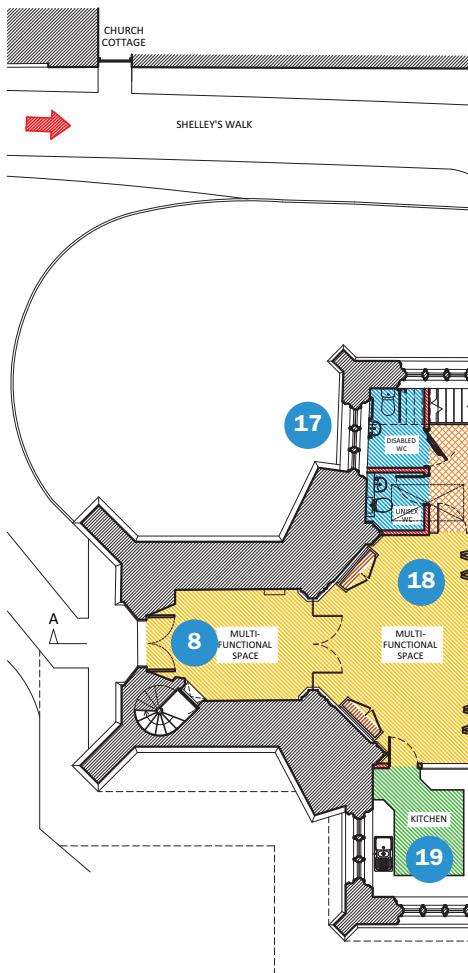
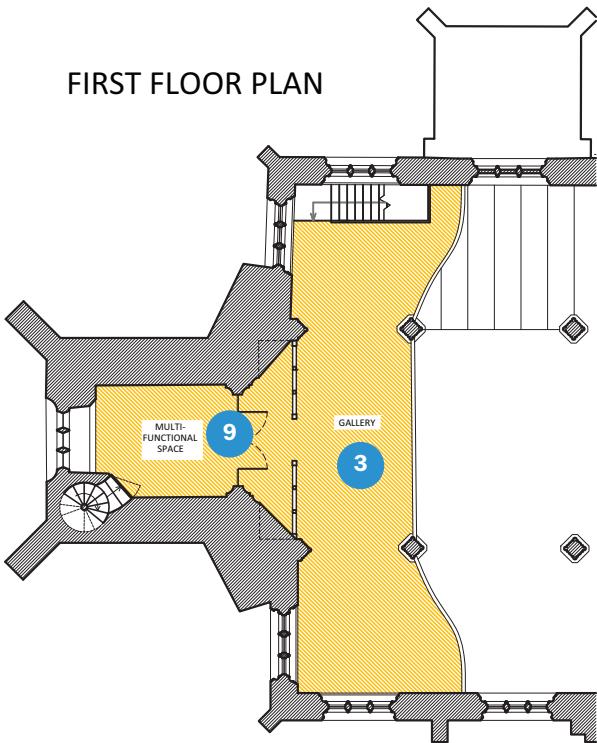
2. Raised Floor to the Nave

3. The Gallery

4. The Pews

5. The Chancel

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



6. South Chapel

7. Choir Screen

8. West porch meeting area

9. Bell ringing chamber and meeting room

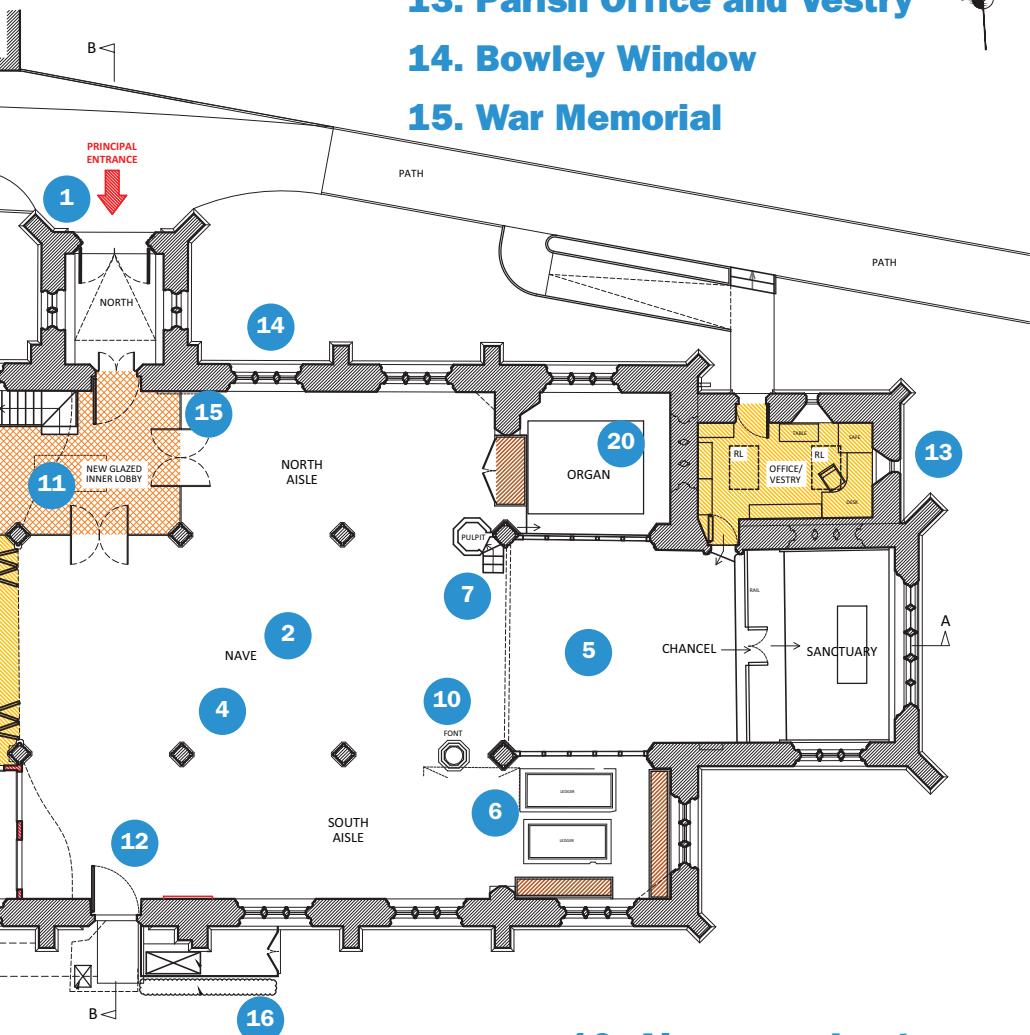
10. Font



St Lawrence Church
LECHLADE-ON-THAMES



- 11. Ledgerstone**
- 12. South Door**
- 13. Parish Office and Vestry**
- 14. Bowley Window**
- 15. War Memorial**



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- 16. Air source heat pump**
- 17. Accessible Toilets**
- 18. Meeting Room**
- 19. Kitchen**
- 20. Organ**

The Pews 4

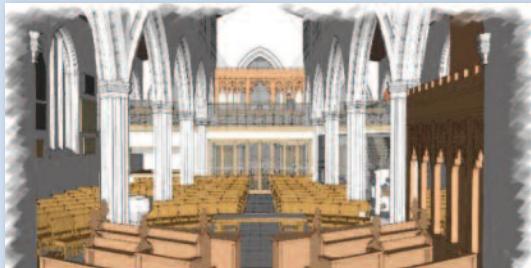


View of nave showing existing pew arrangements.

The objective of having an open and flexible area for worship and events is currently constrained by the existing pews. These are uncomfortable, confirmed by the 2018 consultation, and very heavy to move. This is particularly difficult with our more elderly helpers and a significant constraint on the ability to provide flexible space for current and future activities.

The bench pews were installed as part of the 1882 re-ordering. These replaced box pews constructed as part of the earlier reordering in 1828. The existing pine pews with plain ends covered the whole nave and aisles extending to the west door and including the south side chapel.

The pews are to be replaced with modern chairs and some bench pews; the selection of a suitable chair design is one of the subjects of this presentation. The removal of the pews meets the objective to provide flexible use of the building for services and community events. The ongoing covid spacing requirements support the need for flexibility in seating arrangements.



Nave with chairs in place.



Nave with pews removed.

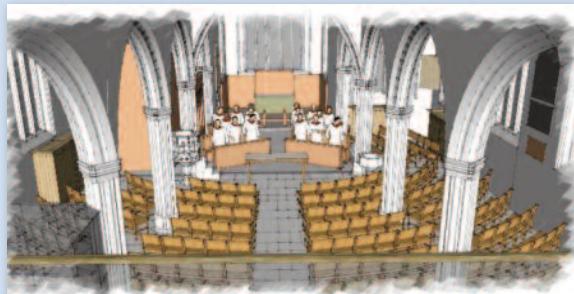
Two styles of chair being actively considered are examples well used around the UK. The first is a wooden design whilst the second has a wooden seat and back but with polished steel legs in a U-form to spread the weight along the base. Manufacturers offer a range of finishes plus features such as a shelf for our pew Bibles and a hassock hook. These designs allow for chairs to be stacked when not all of them are in use (for example at Ladies' Breakfasts) and for them to be linked to maintain rows. Fabric seats are not being considered as they get damaged over time; furniture without upholstery also future-proofs them if a cleaning/sanitising regime is required.

The use of chairs will allow a more flexible arrangement for services and events such as concerts and where tables are used.

A sample of suitable chairs is available to see in the presentation. We welcome your comments and preference.



The Chancel 5



View of the chancel and sanctuary looking east from the gallery.

The changing forms of worship and events are driving a more flexible arrangement of choir stalls. The proposed arrangement will allow east facing stalls for small communion services, west facing to allow the choir to engage more closely with the congregation or for a large choral concert, or the current north/south alignment. This means that the choir furniture needs to be more adaptable than in the current arrangement.

The proposal is to replace the choir stalls with a modern and appropriate design of church/ chorister furniture that reflects the proposed seating in the nave. This would allow a more flexible arrangement of choir furniture that can be easily moved by volunteers. We investigated the retention of the existing choir stalls by sub-dividing them and adding end panels and wheel frames on the bases but concluded that their weight and shape would make them unmanageable for volunteers to move. There is also potential damage to the tiled floor.

The South Chapel 6



Townsend ledgerstone.

This is the Blaise chapel which was consecrated in 1954. Prior to 1954, bench or box pews were fitted in the area. The chapel is used mainly for Holy Communion services and quiet prayer. The services will be moved to the chancel and sanctuary. This will allow the chapel area to form part of the south aisle providing greater flexibility in use while being retained as a quiet area for prayer. The new floor level will continue into this area.

Following investigations and advice from the church buildings conservator, the two large ledgerstones with brasses, currently at the east end of the nave (and not in their original location), will be moved to the new floor in this side chapel area. The lower footfall in this area will help to conserve the brasses.



Lazarus window.

The Lazarus window lights this area, particularly in the early morning sun. The proposal will enhance this feature while providing discreet storage cupboards at a low level and relocating historic chests. Under normal use, the area can be used for quiet prayer and provide space for additional seating for large events.



The Choir Screen 10



Looking towards the east window
(circa 1830).

For the three centuries between the Reformation in the 16th Century and the 1881 reordering the space between the nave and chancel was clear with an unobstructed view of the altar, the officiating priest and the east window. Simon Jenkins in his book on England's Thousand Best Churches¹ comments that 'a heavy Victorian screen shields the chancel and thus obstructs the view of the East window'. There was strong support from the initial consultation for relocating the screen which would provide a clear aspect to the chancel and sanctuary

The prevailing view of the present worshipping community is that we should seek to remove barriers between the clergy and congregation, as we are all the People of God. Holy Communion is open to all as a sign of God's grace and welcome. This stance differs from a more sacramental Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology of Victorian times which sought to emphasise the distancing between laity and clergy.

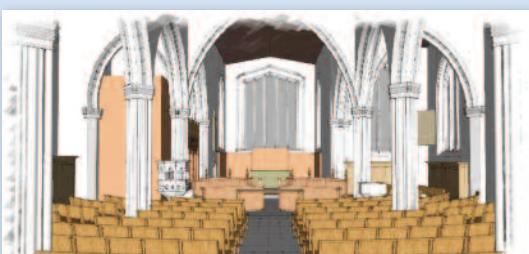
This removal of the screen returns the area to the pre-1881 reordering where for three centuries there were no physical barriers between clergy and congregation.

The central screen will be retained as an example of 19th century workmanship and relocated to the rear of the west-end gallery at first floor level. The relocation will create an open, flexible space that will appear longer, and which draws the eye through to the chancel, opening views along the church.

The arrangement will contribute to the open and light nature of the church and provide a clear view of the east window. The transition between nave and choir will be marked by the transition in the floor materials and by the two side screens which will be retained.



The choir screen relocated at the rear of the balcony.



Looking east with the choir screen removed, allowing an un-interrupted view of a magnificent window.

¹ England's Thousand Best Churches, Simon Jenkins 1999

Other elements of the project

The West Porch 8

The proposal is to replace the choir stalls with a modern and appropriate design of church/ chorister furniture that reflects the proposed seating in the nave. This would allow a more flexible arrangement of choir furniture that can be easily moved by volunteers. We investigated the retention of the existing choir stalls by sub-dividing them and adding end panels and wheel frames on the bases but concluded that their weight and shape would make them unmanageable for volunteers to move. There is also potential damage to the tiled floor.

The Bell Ringing Chamber and Meeting Room 9

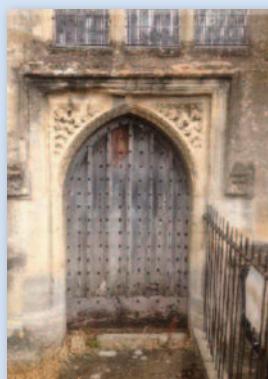
The bell ringing chamber will be unchanged, where ringing will continue to be a significant part of our worship. Glass doors within the stone arch will separate the room from the balcony. The room will also be used as a meeting room when ringing is not taking place. Bell ropes will be secured when not in use.

The Font and Pulpit 10

The font will be moved to the east of the nave and opposite the pulpit. This will provide greater visibility as new members of the church are baptised. The pulpit will be raised to meet the new floor level.

Ledgerstones 11

Investigations have confirmed that the three ledgerstones are not in their original locations. The third ledgerstone, in memory of Sir Edward Bathurst, will be laid in the entrance lobby.



External view.

The South Door 12

The door has been sealed for many years, has suffered from the prevailing weather and causes significant cold draughts in the winter. Evidence suggests this was well used in earlier times. Investigations are underway to determine its age. The door will be restored and used as a secondary entrance and emergency exit.

The Vestry and Parish Office 13

This will be used as the parish office during the week and a vestry on a Sunday and for other services. The external door will be made accessible to all for everyday use.



Base of door with loss of timber and a clear opening for draughts.

The Bowley Window 14

The stained-glass window will be moved from the north to the south side so that it can be appreciated in a stronger light.

War Memorial and Monuments 15

The war memorial will be moved from the north to the south aisle to accommodate the entrance lobby. A small number of other memorials will be moved where they are obscured by the balcony.

Audio Visual Technology

There is increasing need to provide audio visual technology to support our services and mission. The proposals are flexible yet respect the heritage of the church, with a central drop-down screen behind the chancel arch, mobile screens in the north and south aisles and also in the meeting rooms.



Carbon reduction

'We believe that responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation. Our environmental campaign exists to enable the whole church to address — in faith, practice and mission — the issue of climate change.' [Church of England]

The Church of England's General Synod in February 2020 set new targets for all parts of the church to work to become carbon 'net zero' by 2030. Clearly, this is a challenge for such an old and historic building.

Heating 16

Heating our lofty church building is a challenge, though the proposal to create enclosed areas at the west end will reduce draughts and provide more effective heating. A higher floor level provides the opportunity to include effective insulation and install underfloor heating without disturbing the existing lime concrete floor. Heat distribution will be more effective using underfloor heating and discrete column convectors.



An air source heat pump (ASHP) is to be located just outside the south door. It can extract heat when air temperatures are as low as -15°C although at lower efficiency. The output temperature is lower than gas boilers and is more suitable for underfloor heating. The ASHP will be powered by renewable electricity purchased from the grid. Photovoltaic cells were considered but were not cost effective.

Lighting

The installation of new lighting not only offers an opportunity to reconfigure it for the various uses of the church but also enables low energy systems to be adopted. The much longer life of LED type lamps reduces our maintenance burden too. New lighting will provide a whiter light that is brighter (more lux) yet uses less energy and thus contributes to the national goal of reducing our impact on the environment.

Next Steps

Thank you for your interest in the proposals. Please tell us what you think by completing the questionnaire where you can comment on the designs, express your support or note any concern. We shall consider all comments in finalizing our design. Please support us with this exciting and bold project to support our worship and mission.

Supporting documents are available to view on our website:
www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk

An application for formal approval of these proposals, known as a 'Faculty', will be made to the Diocese in the next few months. The submission will include a summary of the outcome of the consultation with the church and wider community.

**Please return a
questionnaire by
29th October, with
your comments and
any questions to:**

**The Project Inspire Group,
Parish Office, Church Cottage,
Market Place, Lechlade GL7 3AB**

Email: Projectinspire@stlawrencelechlade.org.uk

PROJECT INSPIRE

Further Information is available
on our website:
www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk



St Lawrence Church
LECHLADE-ON-THAMES