

## ALL SAINTS CHURCH, PETHAM

Diocese of Canterbury

### INTRODUCTION

The small rural village of Petham is about five miles south of Canterbury and All Saints church stands on gently rising ground at the end of Church Lane, about half a mile south east from The Street which forms the centre of the village. There are sweeping views of the downland from the tower and the building is itself a prominent local landmark. It is Grade I listed, which reflects its high historical and architectural significance and is set within Petham Conservation Area.

The church is predominantly built of flint with Ragstone quoins and both the north porch and nave are of Norman origin. The nave was extended in the early 13th century and the base of the west tower is of a similar date but with a late 14th century west window and door. The chancel and south aisle were also enlarged during the late 13th century. The red brick top portion of the tower was added much later in 1760 and contains six bells.

Much restoration work was carried out during 1857 including the rebuilding of the north porch. A further major restoration took place after a fire gutted the church in 1922 when the nave and south aisle roofs had to be completely rebuilt. The south arcade was also reconstructed at the same time. The interior has brightly painted roof timbers and there are several 18th century wall monuments.

### THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

All Saints is within the United Wye Benefice which comprises eight rural churches and also includes the parishes of Boughton Aluph, Brook, Elmsted, Hastingleigh, Hinxhill, Waltham and Wye.

One service is held weekly at Petham although the service on the first Sunday of each month is held in rotation throughout the uphill parishes of Petham, Elmsted, Hastingleigh and Waltham.

The church has close links with the primary school which is situated on the opposite side of the road to the east.



Above: View of church from the east (copyright annes country gallery)

Below: View of church from the north



## THE PROJECT BRIEF

The PCC wanted to broaden the mission of the church with improvements including a kitchenette and WC. Although the village hall has excellent facilities it is too far away to be used in conjunction with the church for events. The former Lady Chapel at the east end of the south aisle was enclosed by curtains and needed updating so this area was considered to be the ideal location for the new facilities, including storage cupboards. In addition, improvements to the south and west doors were needed to address the problem of draughts and loss of heat in winter months.

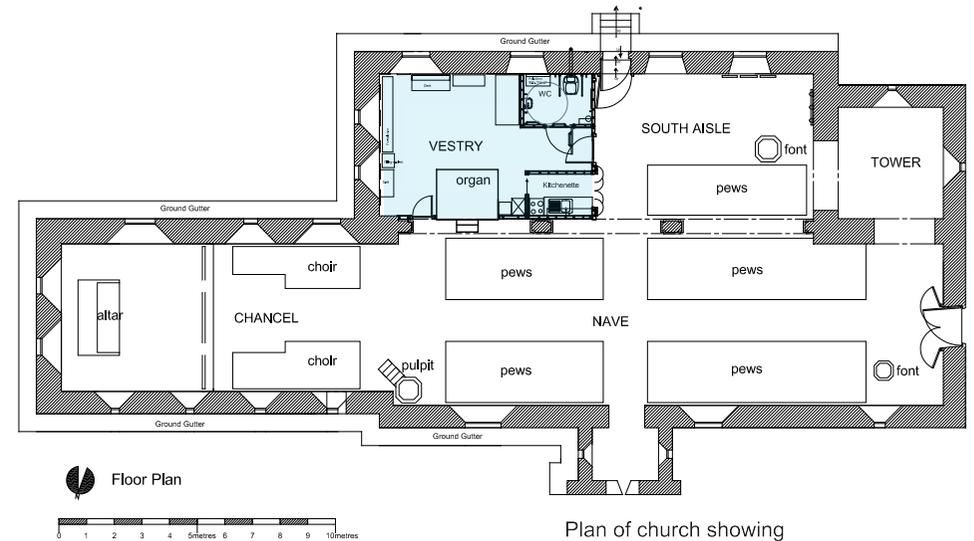
The provision of facilities in a new extension was not feasible due to external ground levels, invasive archaeological interventions and high cost. However, the adaptation of the interior of the building was considered much more achievable.

## THE PROPOSALS

The kitchenette and WC installation comprised Phase 1 of the new works and are hidden behind purpose made solid oak screens adjacent to the organ. Inside the kitchenette are modern off-the peg cupboards and fittings with a mobile servery table. Both spaces have suspended ceilings to form a complete acoustic separation from the main body of the church.

The drainage to the WC proved to be a difficult technical issue to resolve, due to the lack of mains drainage and the external ground levels. Initially a trench arch system was favoured on the south side of the church but the adverse slope of the ground would have resulted in relatively deep archaeological disturbance. The solution was a 'Biolet' electric composting WC, which does not require a normal underground piped waste disposal and the ventilation pipe was accommodated externally within a false rainwater pipe. Due to the relatively low use levels, the wash basin and kitchen sink were able to discharge into the existing surface water system, with the proviso that ecologically sound soaps and washing up liquids are used. A new water main also had to be laid underground was carried out under an archaeological watching brief.

A range of new oak cupboards provides much needed storage along the south wall of the former Lady Chapel. Purpose made inner oak doors to the south and west entrances formed Phase 2 of the works. These have also been designed in oak to reflect the style and material of the screen that encloses the new facilities. A local blacksmith crafted the new ironmongery for the doors to match the existing Victorian fittings on the outer doors. The south aisle was also redecorated to complete the reordering works in this part of the church.



Plan of church showing reordered areas shaded in blue



View of nave looking east to chancel

## OBTAINING PERMISSIONS AND TIME LINE

The project for installing hospitality facilities was first explored by the PCC and their architects Lee Evans in 2008 and following detailed consultation with the DAC, Historic England and SPAB, a Faculty was obtained in July 2015.

Originally a trench arch drainage system was proposed but as the ground levels were not compatible, the decision was made to install an electric composting toilet which did not need permission for discharge from the Environment Agency.

An archaeological watching brief was required and this was carried out by Albert Daniels.

Phase 1 commenced on site in mid October 2015 and was completed in mid March 2016 whilst the Phase 2 works for the redecoration and new oak doors started in May 2017 and were completed in mid August 2017.

## PROJECT COSTS, FUNDRAISING AND GRANT AID

The building contract costs were £49,580 for Phase 1 and £25,000 for Phase 2, making a total cost of £74,580 whilst the overall project cost for both phases was £117,444 including all professional fees for the architect, archaeologist, local authority charges and VAT.

Funds for the project were achieved by a very generous donation, as well as other smaller donations and fund raising events.

## PROJECT TEAM & SPECIALIST SUPPLIERS

Architects: Lee Evans Partnership  
Contractor: Colman Contractors Ltd  
Archaeologist: Albert Daniels  
Blacksmith: Joel Tarr



Top: view of new screens in nave arcade next to the organ  
Left: view of screens in south aisle with new south door  
Right: new west door

## PROJECT REVIEW

### *Has the completed scheme achieved the objectives of the brief?*

Yes, the new facilities have proved to be extremely useful and have enabled us to carry out more church events. The reordering of the vestry, with all its new cupboards, has enabled this area and the whole church to become tidy and given us more space. The new doors have stopped the draughts and the re-decoration has given the whole church a clean and bright appearance.

### *Have new uses for the church been generated?*

Yes, the church can now be used for concerts, meetings, open days, etc as we now have the facilities of the kitchen and toilet. The latter has been especially useful at weddings, baptisms and funerals, as well as services for our local school and, of course, our own services, especially our Family Service.

### *Has the congregation changed/increased/decreased?*

The congregation has increased marginally since the reordering project, particularly at the Family Service and also more elderly people are attending now we have the new facilities.

### *Were there any unexpected conflicts between church and community?*

There were no unexpected conflicts. One or two parishioners were initially unsure about having a toilet or preparing and eating food in the church. People visiting the church from the community have been pleasantly surprised and pleased by the alterations.

### *Is the project sustainable in the long term?*

Yes.

### *Does the PCC have any future plans?*

The PCC is considering the possible re-ordering of the bell tower.

### *Best Piece of Advice?*

Good communications are needed between the building contractor and the PCC as well as between the PCC and the church and wider community.

### *Parish website details and contact details:*

[www.united-wyebenefice.org.uk](http://www.united-wyebenefice.org.uk)

e-mail: [office@wyebenefice.org.uk](mailto:office@wyebenefice.org.uk)

telephone: 01233 813 793



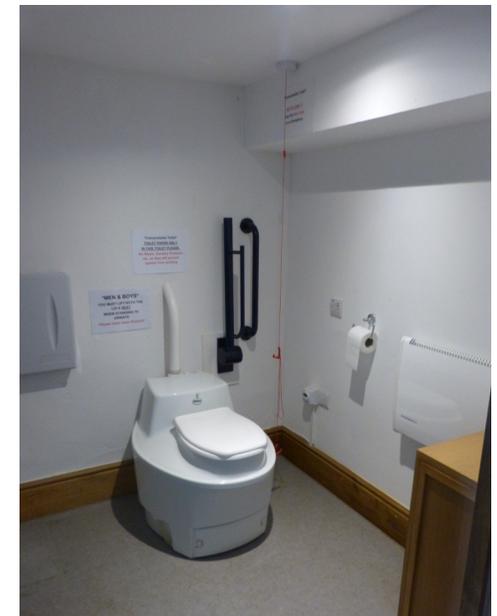
Tea station open with servery in position  
Photographs courtesy of Lee Evans LLP



Interior of tea station



New cupboards in former Lady Chapel



Interior view of biolet