

Church Buildings Support Network

Meeting Notes

Date of Meeting: 4th September 2024

Focus: Lighting and NZC

See pdf for images to accompany these notes.

St Mark's, Newnham

Alan Jones, Maintenance Officer

- Church is not listed but is 120 years old.
- Nave with one aisle and gallery. Very high roof.
- Seats approximately 200 people.
- The original Fathers of the church had to choose between gas lighting and electric lighting. They chose the latter, but unfortunately it failed on the day the church was consecrated; it was quickly repaired.

The main lighting was 8 wooden chandeliers with 80 LED bulbs; they were about 40 years old. There were also various miscellaneous spotlights, and 5 separate switches to illuminate the whole church.

The starting point for the project was access for maintenance - it was just becoming too difficult for volunteers, and employing staff to deal with it was becoming increasingly expensive.

The Treasurer suggested work in phases over 2 or 3 years, but the Working Party set-up to manage the project insisted we had an overall design, to avoid having an unfortunate mix of different schemes. We decided to remove all the existing lamps.

Over the course of one and a half years we consulted our clergy, choir, congregation etc. about renewing the lighting. We prepared a very detailed brief and 'sold the project' by writing regular letters about it, notices in church etc. which led to the appointment of a designer – **James Rackham of the Norwich Architectural Lighting Company**. Once he was on board we could focus on the aesthetic as well as the practical elements.

Key Points of the Solution:

- Wall based clusters of lamps – no pendants or chandeliers.
- Wireless switching – one switch controls all the lighting. On/off and six options. The beauty of this is that you can set them to choice for normal services, evening services and so on. It is also possible to dim all the lights from the one switch. Our curate has done a brilliant job of transferring the programming to a laptop.
- A very important point was the appointment of a main contractor. We had had initial estimates that were almost reaching £100,000 for the project. Once we appointed **Huttie** as the main contractor, we were able to move away from having scaffolding to working with a cherry picker. That was a real breakthrough and effectively halved the cost of the project. It also meant we could keep the church open for weekend services.
- There has been an energy saving of about £1000 per annum, but of course, it will become more valuable as electricity costs rise.

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- Working at height gave us a golden opportunity to clean high level areas of the church which haven't been done for about 50 years.

Cost of the project: approximately £41,000 which was within budget.

Fundraising: determined not to spend ordinary parish revenue. We ran a parish appeal "New Lamps for Old" which went really well. We also had several donations from people to pay for/sponsor a lamp. There was some uncertainty that we would be able to attract more substantial donations (each lamp cost about £250) but we were surprised by the number of donations of £1000 or more.

Completion: 4 weeks.

If anyone is interested in 8 wooden chandeliers they are for sale!

QUESTION

How easy was it to get good contractors to give competitive quotes?

We found we could only identify three contractors who were able to do the work. One dropped out very early on due to a change of management. We had a second very competitive quote from a well-regarded East Anglian firm, but we didn't think they had the manpower to do the work quickly; we didn't want the church to be closed for too long.

St Peter and St Paul's, Alconbury cum Weston

Jane Adams, Churchwarden

- Parish church for 2 villages about a mile apart
- Very rural church, part of the North Leightonstone Benefice which comprises 10 parishes, 13 churches and 1 part-time Priest.
- New porch added in 2015 with kitchenette and toilet.
- Anglican and Methodists working together with 1 service a week, and a coffee morning which has been growing since the heating and lighting was improved.

Old lighting consisted of pendant lights, which took ages to get going and produced very little light and spotlights which were generally tucked up in corners with unattractive wiring.

A feasibility study was done in about 2018 when we were trying to create a warm meeting place, but in the end, there wasn't enough support/interest from the community to use such a space; this support was needed to get grant funding. Lots of people did, however, comment about the lighting and heating as something that needed doing.

Two years ago the church was left a legacy. We didn't want the money to just go into a general fund to be gradually used up, we wanted to do something to remember the individual, so we decided to tackle the lighting.

We contacted Geoffrey Hunter at the DAC to ask what companies would support the new lighting. We had 2 quotes and ended up with **CLS – Church Lighting Systems**. CLS drew up a

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specification for the provision and installation which was needed for the faculty application. We did have to pay CLS upfront to do this, but it really helped having this. We had a request from the DAC to show the cable routes on the documents. Our architect came out and helped with that.

This all started in around March 2023; by July we suddenly realised that if we were having this done, we could actually improve the heating as well. We have pew heating, so the pews are relatively warm, but the area at the back which we use a lot for coffees etc. is not heated so we included that in the project as well. It made sense as we would have the scaffolding (mobile scaffolding towers) in to do the lighting.

The new spotlights illuminate the roofs, and it looks amazing. We had to choose between black or white lights, but white actually looked very stark against the stone so we chose black. There are some angels in the nave roof we had never seen before. The angels in the Chancel look amazing.

Lighting controls: there are 8 different scenes and an on/off switch. It works really well. We also got a sensor so when people come into the church it lights up. When they come through the main door, little areas such as around the font light up and stay on for about 15 minutes. We might have to adjust this as we have found that our electricity bill has gone up a bit.

The faculty was easier than I expected, and the company, CLS, was amazing. We didn't have to shut the church for very long at all and were still able to have Sunday services.

Cost: £16,265

We could have had fancy-coloured lights but didn't feel it was needed. We don't have the lighting control on an iPad yet so we can't change things in that way.

QUESTION

Use of Wifi – how much use do you make of it in sectionally lighting the building rather than using conventional switches?

Alconbury: we have 8 different options, including:

- Normal service – nave, chancel
- Full service – funerals for example all areas lit but you can adjust
- Coffee plus – lights up the back
- Youth – softly lights areas that they don't use much

Just push the button and they stay on. We are quite a small church and people are a bit hesitant about new technology, so using an iPad/laptop it would probably just get left to one person to do. Simple switches most people are okay with.

Newnham: our system uses the Wifi to communicate between the router and the switching and the lighting. It can work without it, but it just communicates slightly better and communities into the iPad as well. On a day-to-day basis we don't use the iPad at all to control the lighting, but if we want additional scenes that we don't have a programme for we can set it up on the iPad. This works well at Christmas, or St Mark's is used a lot for drama so if we wanted dynamic

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lighting, we would use the iPad to set it and change between settings. But for the day-to-day, no-one needs to use the iPad or any other technology other than the switch.

DAC and NZC

John Morgan and Sacha Watson

The key thing with applications for consent tend to be cable runs and fixings, particularly in listed churches.

- Concern about where the cables will run as well as colour. Typically want the cables to match the colour of the background so they disappear, to some extent, into the background.
- Concern about how cables and light fittings are mounted. Fixings into mortar rather than stone wherever possible.

NZC (Net Zero Carbon) advice is generally don't pay money to light your ceiling, however, where you have particularly important roofs and features such as carved angels, careful lighting can help to enhance the heritage and attract visitors and is often something funders like.

When it comes to NZC, lighting is relatively low on the radar compared to heating, but it is still part of it. Anything to do with NZC the DAC has to answer a question about whether they think the application has given "Due regard" to the Church's approach to NZC. The Diocese's Church Buildings Team is currently setting up a way to deal with the NZC requirements, which effectively brings in another layer of review for the DAC.

Small-scale NZC improvements can be made by simply switching to an LED bulb; this can reduce bills (lighting consumption) by up to 90%.

Important to consider zoning in new lighting schemes, this is a good way to reduce use. Consider having an eco-mode, such as using light to highlight roof angels just at special events.

Scaffolding – there is a need to create a safe working platform, but it is reassuring to find that alternatives such as mobile towers and cherry pickers have been used. You don't always need to fill the church with scaffolding, so do challenge this when getting quotes.

Look at lifetime of lighting, particularly if they are fixed units, and what warranties are given. Talk to the supplier about that happens in the event of failure as this can happen – you don't want to have to put scaffolding up just to fix one failed unit.

QUESTION: Green Energy Providers

A condition of faculties has been to look into greener suppliers, but this has not been easy. How do you do that now?

The Church of England's NZC programme is currently working on defining what criteria meet their definition of a NZC energy provider. On an annual basis, for the Energy Footprint Tool, they are identifying which suppliers meet the criteria, so they will be announcing soon the suppliers which met the criteria for the current year. But it will be constantly changing and some which are on the current list may change and then 'drop-off' the list.

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They are already suppliers which are at the upper end of the general criteria, so if you google providers, you will generally get those which come up at the top such as Octopus; we would be surprised if they fell off the list.

Some confusion came about as Parish Buying did purport to be offering a green energy tariff, but on close inspection it wasn't the case. One of the issues is that some green tariffs are tied up with carbon offsetting which makes the green credentials questionable. It is a complex area that will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

CONTACTS

To find out more about the churches featured and arrange a visit please visit the church websites for contact details or contact Holly Robinson.

St Mark's, Newham - <https://stmarksnewnham.org/contact-us/>

St Peter and St Paul's, Alconbury cum Weston - <https://norleigh.org.uk/contact/>

DAC

All initial enquiries about works to your building or churchyard and queries about the faculty process or applying for consent should please be directed to the Church Buildings office via dac@elydiocese.org or on 01353 652729.

NZC

Sacha Watson - Net Zero Carbon Officer Telephone: 07301 29856 or email sacha.watson@elydiocese.org

Grants and anything else you can think of!

Holly Robinson - Historic Church Buildings Support Officer Telephone 07948 350211 or email holly.robinson@elydiocese.org

QUICK SURVEY – Church Buildings Team Review

Please spare a few minutes to tell us how we are doing, so we can make improvements where needed. The short survey will take about 5-10 minutes depending on how you answer some of the open-ended questions.

It can be accessed here: <https://forms.office.com/e/ym9G01i0by>

Paper copies are available on request, from Holly.

The survey will remain open until October 7th and the results will be discussed during the meeting of the Church Buildings Network on November 20th.

Meeting Dates:

9th October – Community Engagement with Samuel Pedlar, Church and Community Support Advisor. Covering Friends Groups, Festival churches and general tips on how to engage with the

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wider community. If this is a topic which particularly interests you, find out about the Friends and Festival Churches conference on the 30th September -

<https://www.elydiocese.org/calendar/1542>

29th November – Open Session and the future of the support network

Topics for Future Meetings

Please send your suggestions to Holly. The current list is:

- Handrails and Ramps
- Clocks
- Heating
- Grants and Fundraising