The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Project Type: New Works: toilet, servery and flexible community space

Project Title: The Aisle Project

Location: St Mary's, Feltwell

Aims: To install facilities and create a flexible community space

Total Cost: £120,000 (excl VAT)

Funding Sources:

- Friends Group - £22,000
- Benefact Trust - £4000
- Beatrice Laing Trust - £3000
- Bernard Sunley Foundation - £10,000
- Geoffrey Watling (Norfolk only) - £4000
- Garfield Weston - £20,000
- Warren Engineering (Norfolk only) - £1000
- Congregational and General Charitable Trust - £15,000
- West Norfolk Borough Council Small Grants Scheme - £10,000
- Donations from local businesses following appeal letter - £25,000
- Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme – eligible VAT

Project Duration: 2020 - 2024

Brief Overview

The Aisle Project has been an ambition of the church and Friends Group for over 15 years, but it suffered numerous setbacks and challenges. Following the success of *Feltwell's Faith in Flint* (see separate project summary) there was renewed enthusiasm to revive plans. The Aisle Project had the following priorities:

- install an accessible toilet and a kitchen; connect the church to mains water and sewerage
- replace part of the floor in the north aisle (pews had already been removed) to make it level
- fill an old boiler pit which was a hazard.

Covid and the lockdowns gave people time to submit numerous grant applications. It also led to new uses of the church, such as the establishment of a Food Pantry. This helped to build a stronger case for support.

In April 2024, the aisle was formally opened by Lady Dannatt and the church is now host to a thriving weekly community café.

Top Tips:

- When planning any changes to your church, get an early steer from the DAC.
- Never spend or commit money you haven't seen in your bank account first!
- One thing which really helped with grant applications was this video demonstrating the need.

More Information: Watch a presentation by Chris and Sue from St Mary's Church – The Aisle Project

Website: A Church Near You - Feltwell