

Our reordered church – what we have done and why

For many years, we have been looking at how to make our church more welcoming, warm and uncluttered. We wanted to rearrange it so that it could be flexible in its uses for the church and the community. We also felt the need for a separate smaller space for meetings and small groups.

So what have we done?

Heating and lighting

One of the major drawbacks in worshipping in our church, particularly in the winter, was that it was cold! Getting an efficient heating system that wasn't as noisy as our previous one became a top priority. After consultation, we decided to put in underfloor heating which can be on constantly providing a background heat. We also knew that the electrical system was very old and needed to be completely rewired and brought up to current standards of safety and efficiency.

A separate room and other facilities

At the back of the North aisle we now have an all purpose small room which can be used for meetings, crèches, youth work, craft work or whatever activity would benefit from a small friendly space. This can be heated separately from the body of the church. We have also created a balcony above it as another alternative space and overflow for big services. We now have two toilets, one set up for the disabled and with baby changing table. A new kitchen with a dishwasher adds to the new facilities so that we can use the church for all sorts of events involving refreshments.

Declutter

One of the things we felt detracted from the peace and tranquillity of the building was the amount of clutter we had stored in various parts of the church. We tried to hide it away and then it was difficult to get at. We decided that we were seriously in need of more organized storage space and also needed a good declutter of items no longer used. We now have more cupboards along the walls of the new entrance lobby as well as storage in the room and upstairs. The vestry door has been repositioned making better use of that small space too whilst also providing improved storage.

Repositioning of the font

Previously the font was in a very unusual position tucked behind a pillar with limited room around it for people to gather and have a good view. It was also a trip hazard for our toddler group as it had a raised plinth underneath it. It has been relocated to a more traditional spot near the entrance and we have left plenty of space for people to gather there.

A new floor

Previously we had a complete mixture of floor covering – carpet, wooden floorboards, Cotswold stone and red tiles giving a very dark overall appearance to the church. We wanted to have something which would make the church lighter and promote the sense of peace in the building. We therefore opted for the uniformity of a light coloured stone floor, similar to Cotswold stone throughout the whole nave. We have also had all the existing stone work cleaned. We are planning to have the windows cleaned too.

More flexible space

By removing the pews in the North aisle and at the back of the church we have created some flexible space which we can use for a variety of activities such as youth events or exhibitions or refreshments. When more seating is required we can fill it with chairs, which we are buying from Race Furniture who are based on the Industrial Estate.

A welcoming entrance lobby and a great view to the altar

By changing the entrance to the west door and relocating the kitchenette and toilet we have created a space where we can introduce ourselves to those who enter with information boards along the wall and have created the stunning view through the glass doors up the aisle to the altar. The chancel space, which we love, has remained unchanged. The south door will remain in use for occasions when it is needed.

Thank you ...

... for bearing with us during the last 6 months & to all those who have helped this project happen. Our thanks also to The Parish Council & the George Moore Community Centre for their welcome whilst we were homeless! We have enjoyed working with JND from Cirencester, who have used a variety of local contractors to complete this project.

We hope you are as pleased with the result as we are.