

# Renewing our parish church for its future service of the Church: Repair and renewal project 2026-7

Every 5 years there is a major inspection of our church building to help identify necessary repair works. The most recent inspection has highlighted the need for some repairs, and also echoed the comments of many in the parish that it is time for the redecoration of the interior of the church.

## Repair

The recommendations made in the Quinquennial report regarding repair to our building are detailed in **SECTION ONE** below.

## Renewal

The primary function of a church building is to house and facilitate the celebration of the Church's liturgy - the source and summit of Christian life.

There is other work that might help make our church more fit for purpose and more user-friendly. Such works are listed in **SECTION TWO** below. You will see that things are presented there in fairly general terms. This is because your views are sought on what is suggested – and indeed you may have suggestions about other improvements which would be good to consider at this stage.

## Process for the Project

All comments and suggestions are welcome.

The proposed process for progressing the project is outlined in the text box on this page.

Anonymous submissions will not be accepted or considered by the Parish Pastoral Council or the Project Group.

## Our task

As we embark on the more or less once in a life time work of repairing, refurbishing and re-focussing of our church building it is important that we remember that above all our church building is there to serve the mission of the Church by the way it helps us bravely receive the Gospel and take up the responsibility that belongs to all the faithful of living faithfully and faithfully bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



## Anticipated process

### Most dates are still to be added!

- Review of initial information/consultation document by the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) (Feb 2)
- Issue this paper to the parish (Feb 7/8)
- Open Parish meeting to answer questions arising from the initial paper
- Formal Consultation period
- Review of submissions by PPC and Project Group
- Open Parish Meeting to share the recommendations of the PPC/Project Group
- Formalise proposals
- Invite comments on proposals from parish and Diocesan Art and Architecture Committee and Property Services
- Finalise proposals and invite tenders
- Evaluation of tenders and placing contract
- Works to be carried out
- Anticipated completion date

## SECTION ONE

The 2025 Quinquennial report included an Executive Summary of the results of the inspection.

*St Nicholas Church is in generally good condition. Much work was undertaken to attend to defects raised in the previous quinquennial inspection (2017). Internally the building remains in a similar condition and is generally unchanged since the last QI. The internal decorations to the worship areas are poor due to an extensive build up of carbon deposits across all walls and ceilings. The poor quality heating (Drugassar gas units) is a significant contributing factor. The heating is very inefficient and is approaching the end of its life. Consideration should be given to a new, more sustainable, source of heating. The interior should then be redecorated. Lighting is also noted to be very poor in the worship area – consideration should be given to a new energy efficient system.*

*Externally the building is in largely good condition. However, the below ground drainage to the north is suspect and currently inoperable in part. Early investigation and repair by a drainage specialist is required. The defective section is immediately adjacent to the cellar which continues to flood. This should be attended to by the drainage specialist.*

*Lead flashings are rusting to the east end junction with the meeting room extensions. The flashband repair is likely to fail – renewal of lead flashings is required.*



**These works will all be carried out at the appropriate time, coordinated with such additional works as agreed upon.**

The report identified the following **NECESSARY** works

### 1. External works

- Raking out and re-pointing of the copings of West Elevation of the Nave
- Redecorate west doors
- Consolidate mortar around the base of the eaves of North Chapel
- Survey and repair drainage pipes; Clear drainage channels and drains
- Replace/repair lead flashings
- Treat and redecorate the balustrade outside the Benedict Room
- Re-varnish timber door on South Elevation of Narthex
- Repair damage to boundary wall to Jockey Road and re-point wall

### 2. Internal works

- Replace missing quarry tiles in the skirting at the West end of the nave
- Check drainage of cellar and install sump and pump to avoid future flooding

The report also identified the following **RECOMMENDED** works:

- Redecorate the walls and ceilings of the sanctuary, side chapels and reconciliation room – in all cases walls and ceiling
- Upgrade heating system and lighting

### 1. Redecoration

It is proposed to retain the current colour scheme in the nave, but

- to clean the walls/tiles and repaint
- replace the carpets.

### 2. Upgrading heating lighting

- It is proposed to explore the replacement of current gas fan heaters with electric fan heaters.
- To explore potential for increasing the solar panelling presently on the church roof, and installing batteries to meet most of our energy needs.
- To increase the lighting in the church, and provide a more adaptable set of controls to provide for various scenarios

**It is proposed that both the necessary and recommended works be carried out as part of the 2026/27 Repair and Renewal Project.**

## SECTION TWO

In addition to the works identified in Section One as necessary or recommended the following works are being considered that the building might be better suited to the worthy celebration of the Liturgy and the needs of the community more generally.

The proposed works are listed in no particular order.

### 1. To better provide for the celebration of Mass by smaller groups – e.g. weekday Mass.

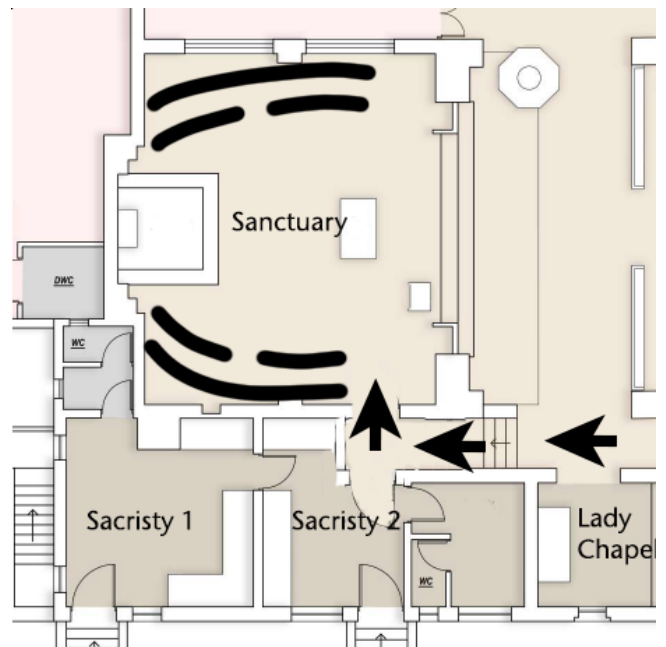
*The number of people who attend weekday Mass is small. Faced with an empty nave people will sit often at a distance from each other and from the sanctuary. This militates against the expectation that in our gathering we express and experience our unity in Christ and that we play our part in the prayer of the Mass not only in our personal engagement but together in the responses and songs. This means being close enough to one another to hear the responses others make, to exchange the sign of peace etc.*

*The current arrangements of allows for the priest to stand eastward or westward facing at the altar. It would be possible to provide seating for c15-20 people on the seating (with kneelers)*

*In addition to providing a more suitable space for the celebration of daily Mass, it will also make the sanctuary a more suitable place for gathering for other times of prayer – e.g. services of word and communion; divine office; lectio divina - for which the church does not presently provide.*

#### Requirements

- To replace current benches with seating/kneelers on the sanctuary to assist the congregation's participation in Mass.
- Move the door to servers' sacristy to allow easier, direct access to the sanctuary from the existing sacristy stairs but preserving security of sacristy rooms



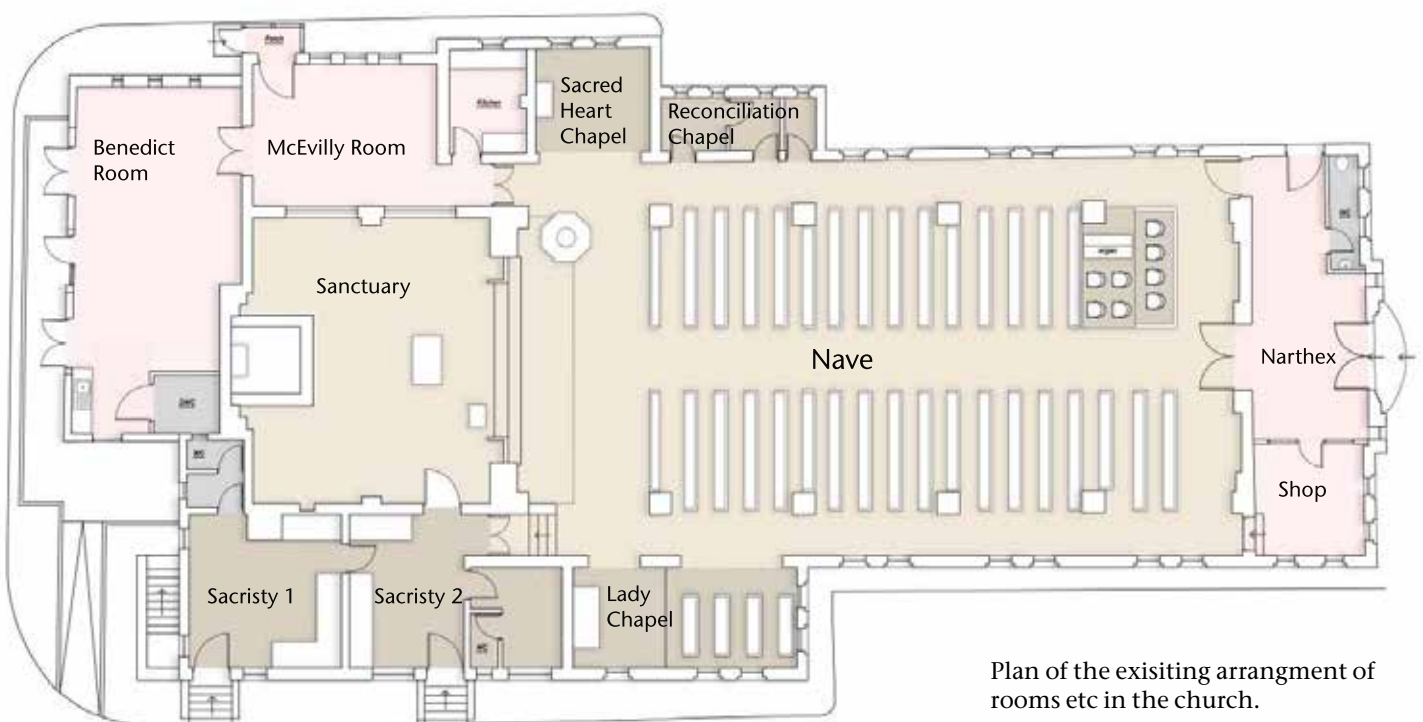
Sketch to suggest proposed new seating arrangement on sanctuary and new access

### 2. Upgrade the Lady chapel

*In addition to redecoration of the chapel, there is an opportunity to make the Lady chapel a more worthy place for private prayer outside of Mass, and provide a more private space during Mass for families with young children who, because of their children's liveliness, sometimes prefer to sit apart from the main congregation*

#### Requirements

- Upgrade the decoration – something more elaborate than the plain walls
- Provide a more dignified setting for the figure of St Joseph; and provide figures of St Anne and St Joachim, Our Lady's parents, and Jesus' maternal grandparents.
- Enclose the chapel with glazing etc. to provide



Plan of the existing arrangement of rooms etc in the church.

some sound proofing (but without compromising the already rather poor sight lines, and adding speakers)

### **3. Upgrade the Sacred Heart chapel.**

*In addition to redecoration of the chapel, there is an opportunity to make the Sacred Heart chapel a more worthy setting for the image of the Sacred Heart while retaining it as a space for overflow seating on bigger occasions.*

#### **Requirements**

- Place the image of the Sacred Heart on a plinth between the windows.
- Removing small altar and tabernacle.
- Remove the carving of the English Martyrs and re-site it on the South wall of the nave (between the two doors of the reconciliation room).

### **4. Upgrade the Reconciliation Chapel**

*In addition to the redecoration of the room, looking how better use the space for the celebration. At present it does not comfortably provide for face to face confession, or for the comfortable seating of those unable to kneel.*

#### **Requirements**

- Remove existing screen and shelving
- Provide new seating making face to face confession more accessible (and fit less space-consuming screen and kneeler)
- **Or** open up window into adjacent cupboard, making that place for 'confession from behind a screen'
- Investigate opportunities to improve sound proofing of the rooms.

### **5. Improve access for people with additional needs**

*It is presently not possible for people in wheelchairs to access the church unaided. It is presently not possible for those in wheelchairs or larger pushchairs to access the Benedict or McEvelly Rooms from the nave, without split doors being opened for them*

#### **Requirements**

- Provide push button door opener at West Door from the porch into the nave
- Replace the current doors into McEvelly Room with a new door (with push button door opener)
- Replace existing door between Benedict Room and McEvelly room with single door wide enough for wheelchair etc., and provide push-button door opener. (In addition, improve sound isolation between two rooms.
- Provide dedicated spaces in nave for people with mobility problems – e.g. using wheel chairs
- Better space the benches in the church by removing a row of benches, space out the remaining benches, and fix them to the floor.

### **6. Reconfigure the Narthex/Porch**

*The narthex is intended to provide a space for people to linger and talk before entering or leaving the church. Presently there is no room for this, without blocking the exit/entrance to church or nave.*

*The narthex presently houses a repository shop and a lavatory (regularly need for a lavatory exceeds our provision, and the current lavatory does not give disabled access).*

*It is intended to close the parish repository from Easter 2026. Attempts to get volunteers to staff shop at all Sunday Mass, and to do stock control/ordering have proved unsuccessful. If volunteers are available a smaller stock of key items (eg Mass cards; rosaries, bibles) will be made available for sale in the McEvelly Room after Sunday Mass.*

#### **Requirements**

- Open the enclosed space occupied by the current repository.
- Put two lavatories against the North wall - one with disabled access.
- Remove the existing lavatory on the West Wall
- Remove existing tables to free up maximum space for people to pause and talk
- Install high level radiant heaters for independent heating of the porch

#### **Repair and renewal project 2026-7**

is an information/consultation document produced for the parish of St Nicholas, Boldmere. Our Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216