

The Parish of St Laurence with St John, Ludlow

# VISION PROJECT

Completion of Phase I  
Consultation & Engagement  
October 2009

## **Frequently asked questions**

The Questions and Answers contained in this booklet have been developed to help respond to the understandably high level of interest in the plans for the future of the parish of St Laurence with St John, Ludlow. The publication of this document marks the completion of Phase I (Consultation & Engagement).

They are not exhaustive, and if you can help expand them by identifying additional questions that have not been answered, please e-mail your suggestions to [vision@stlaurences.org.uk](mailto:vision@stlaurences.org.uk)

## 1. CATALYST FOR CHANGE

In 2007, the Quinquennial Inspecting Architect for St Laurence's Tim Ratcliffe, noted that the floors in the nave continue to deteriorate and that replacement would be necessary before long. Coupled with this the ageing heating and lighting systems have become unreliable, expensive to maintain and expensive to run. A public meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms in October 2008 to launch the first phase of the Vision Project, the consultation and engagement.

## 2. CONTEXT & NEED

From the outset it was clear that any project and development plan should incorporate all church property within the parish of Ludlow i.e. St Laurence's Church, St John's Church and The Parish Office No.2 College Street. The outcome of the project must be an environmentally and financially sustainable plant fit for purpose in the next century.

There are currently three churches serving the Ludlow community. St Giles Church, although in the separate Parish of Ludford, attracts a number of Ludlow residents to its services. St John's is one of three Chapels of Ease that were created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in part due to expansion in the number of worshippers, coupled with the fact that pew rents were still charged in St Laurence's, making it unaffordable for many parishioners. The other two Chapels of Ease, St Stephen's and St Leonard's were closed in the mid-twentieth century as congregations dwindled and both are now commercial premises.

'We must try to understand the meaning of the age in which we are called to bear witness. We must accept the fact that this is an age in which the cloth is being unwoven. It is therefore no good trying to patch. We must, rather, set up the loom on which coming generations may weave new cloth according to the pattern God provides.'

Mother Mary Clare  
*The Simplicity of Prayer*, © SLG Press  
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***'United in Christ for the service of God's people'***

### **3. THE VISION FOR THE CHURCH IN LUDLOW**

We believe that the project, if it is truly to have a vision, must embrace the whole life of the Church of England in Ludlow. Our aim is to serve our community by making the best use of the resources, both people and buildings, of our three Churches, St Laurence, St John, and St Giles. Our vision is to witness to the presence of God in our town through the good news of the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of love and peace, of hope and forgiveness. We are united in Christ for the service of God's people. That is our prayer, our duty, and our joy.

#### **What is the Vision Project?**

The project is fairly long term and is expected to be complete within 4 years. In response to the public meeting the Parochial Church Council formed a Project Team and a Steering Group to help guide and shape its work. The Steering Group is drawn as widely as possible, to allow a wide range of interests to be represented, i.e. representatives from other churches, schools and colleges, political and other charitable organisations within Ludlow. In 2009 we consulted as widely as possible in the Ludlow area by first completing the Delphi study (see section 4 for explanation of Delphi) and then a town wide survey of over 4500 households. This exercise was vital in order to gather views on the role that St Laurence's should play in this coming century. By the end of 2009, we hope that we will have the shape of our plans firmed up, and will move into Phase 2 Planning & Feasibility, before the very necessary fund-raising process. Phase 3 Works-on Site, will probably begin later, in 2012.

#### **Why should we do anything?**

Church buildings are like any other. Without maintenance and repair they decay.

When St Laurence's was built it was of the latest design with the best technology available at the time. We need to bring some aspects of the building up to date. We therefore need to undertake improvements to the building over the next few years. We could simply replace, repair and renovate what we have, but this would miss the opportunity to consider whether the church needs to be adapted to its 21<sup>st</sup> century role in Ludlow.

Our church was last remodelled by the Victorians; the current needs are very different from those of that era.

We are facing a series of big projects: a new floor (to replace the current crumbling one), new energy efficient lighting and new heating to replace a system parts of which are 150 years old. This work will require clearing the nave of all of its furniture (including pews) to complete the works. The question is; what do we put back and in what form? We should remember that the removal of balconies, box pews and organ in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a radical measure in its time.

### **Why is this project necessary?**

There are three main motivating factors:

- a) The need to ensure that the Parish can fulfil an effective role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond and that St Laurence's is a space "fit for purpose" for the church and wider community.
- b) The need to replace flooring, heating and lighting in St Laurence's which will involve a total clearance of the nave, and give us a "blank canvas" to determine what should be the shape and form of the interior space for the future. Very little change is foreseen in the Chancel and St John's Chapel, simply improved heating and lighting.
- c) The opportunity which this will also give us to offer the church as a venue for a wider range of events, and so increase the revenue to support and maintain the church at a time when most churches are under extreme financial pressure. We need to ensure the long-term sustainability of the building. It needs to earn its keep as we cannot rely on external funding. We therefore need to consider its future uses, and make sure it is fit for those purposes.

### **What sort of purposes do you have in mind for the church that cannot be handled today?**

Without being exhaustive, the following are simply not practical with the current configuration of the church:

Drama "in the round"

Exhibitions

Large orchestral concerts

Art exhibitions

Group activities (using different parts of the church for different simultaneous activities)

Mother and toddlers group

Any other activity which requires a large open area

### **Have you consulted widely?**

Consultation with all interested parties was the first major part of our plan. We developed a structured plan to engage with everyone who wanted to have their say on the future direction. From the outset the Project Team was committed to hear from anyone who had something to contribute, and this has really helped us to shape and develop our plans. This phase of the project is now complete (see section 4 of this document).

### **What about St John's?**

This project is about the whole Parish of Ludlow, that includes both St Laurence's and St John's. The PCC will be considering the role of St John's, as part of the review of options. Our objective is to create church-based facilities in Ludlow fit for, and relevant to, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A representative of St John's is a member of the Steering Group.

### **This sounds like a big project. Where will all the funding come from?**

It is too early to be specific, but yes, this will be expensive. However, we are confident that, with a well researched and thought-through plan, there are a number of sources of funding available which will allow us to complete the work. We intend to employ the services of a professional fundraiser who has proven experience in church projects of this kind.

### **To support your fundraising, will you have a business plan?**

Yes! This will be an essential part of our projections about the future, and will, of course, be needed to convince potential funders that our plans are well thought-through and viable.

## **Have you looked at other similar projects?**

Yes. We engaged the services of an experienced Consultant who has been involved in a number of projects of the kind we are undertaking. He has provided valuable input in the first phase of the project. The Project Team and Steering Group visited seven other examples of church re-ordering. These ranged from a simple toilet in a village church, an extension to a Grade I listed medieval church, to the £1 million re-ordering of St Michael's Without, Bath.

## **Will you be destroying the awesome visual impact of the church in what you plan?**

Certainly not; we are all very conscious that we have been charged with responsibility for an architectural gem, with a history going back centuries. Whatever we do must preserve and enhance the architectural beauty of the building, whilst at the same time bringing its facilities up to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards. In fact we firmly believe that by being holistic in the scope and nature of this project we will enhance and emphasise the visual impact of one of England's greatest churches.

## **Who runs this project?**

The Project Team appointed by the PCC is made up of the following:

Revd James Stewart *Acting Team Rector & Rural Dean*

Dr Ewart Carson *Churchwarden*

Ms Anna Branston *Churchwarden*

Mr Shaun Ward *Project Co-ordinator*

Mr Don Beattie *PCC Treasurer*

Canon Jeffry Wilcox *Ludlow Town Councillor*

Revd Andrew Mottram *Ecclesiastical Property Solutions (EPS)* - Consultant to the Project Team in Phase 1

The Steering Group (which helps guide and shape the work of the Project Team) is drawn as widely as possible, to allow a wide range of interests to be represented.

Alan Althorp

Chris Conoley

John Nash

James Caird

Chris Crowcroft

Michael Page

Roy Coles

Alison Cundall

Paula Redway

Helen Coleman

Sue McColville

John Stinton

Don Millington

Laurence Taylor

## **Who are EPS and who paid for their involvement?**

Ecclesiastical Property Solutions (EPS) is a small consultancy with a track record of enabling churches to make things happen. EPS acted as Project Facilitator during Phase 1, to provide the Project Team with direction and advice during the initial stage of setting the scope of the project and the structure of the project. Their costs are funded out of the budget for Phase 1 of the project, which has been set aside by the PCC.

## **Summary**

St Laurence's church building is a sacred and historic space. Its origins date from a time when the parish church played a central role in all the various aspects of the lives of the people in and around Ludlow, be it religious, business, legal, social or entertainment.

St Laurence's has served the needs of the town and area of Ludlow for many centuries. It must retain its primary roles as a holy place where people can experience faith. At the same time we want to enhance its visual impact, its sense of history and its architecture, developing its potential as a place for the wider community and rediscovering something of the medieval intention for the church building in the parish.

The Vision Project has been catalysed by the need to undertake significant work on the church buildings (flooring, heating, lighting) in the next few years to make the space a place where people want to come – to worship, and for other reasons.

More broadly we are aware that St Laurence's lacks many of the "creature comforts" of 21<sup>st</sup> century venues, and those that it has are ineffective and inefficient. Both St John's Church and No 2 College Street (Parish Office) also require significant capital expenditure to maintain their use and this will all need to be taken into account by the PCC in deciding the future development of the Parish.

We want St Laurence's to build on its role as a holy place – making the fabric secure so as to enable future generations to continue worshipping here. We shall then have a building that is accessible to the wide and varied range of congregations who will worship in St Laurence's.

Our vision is that St Laurence's should be once more the heart of the parish, a beacon of excellence in everything it does, and in everything it represents - a holy and sacred place, a place with an outstanding liturgical and musical tradition, a world-class architectural experience, and a venue of choice for many forms of events, in short, a place that serves the community in a diverse range of ways, and a place which the community regards as its own.

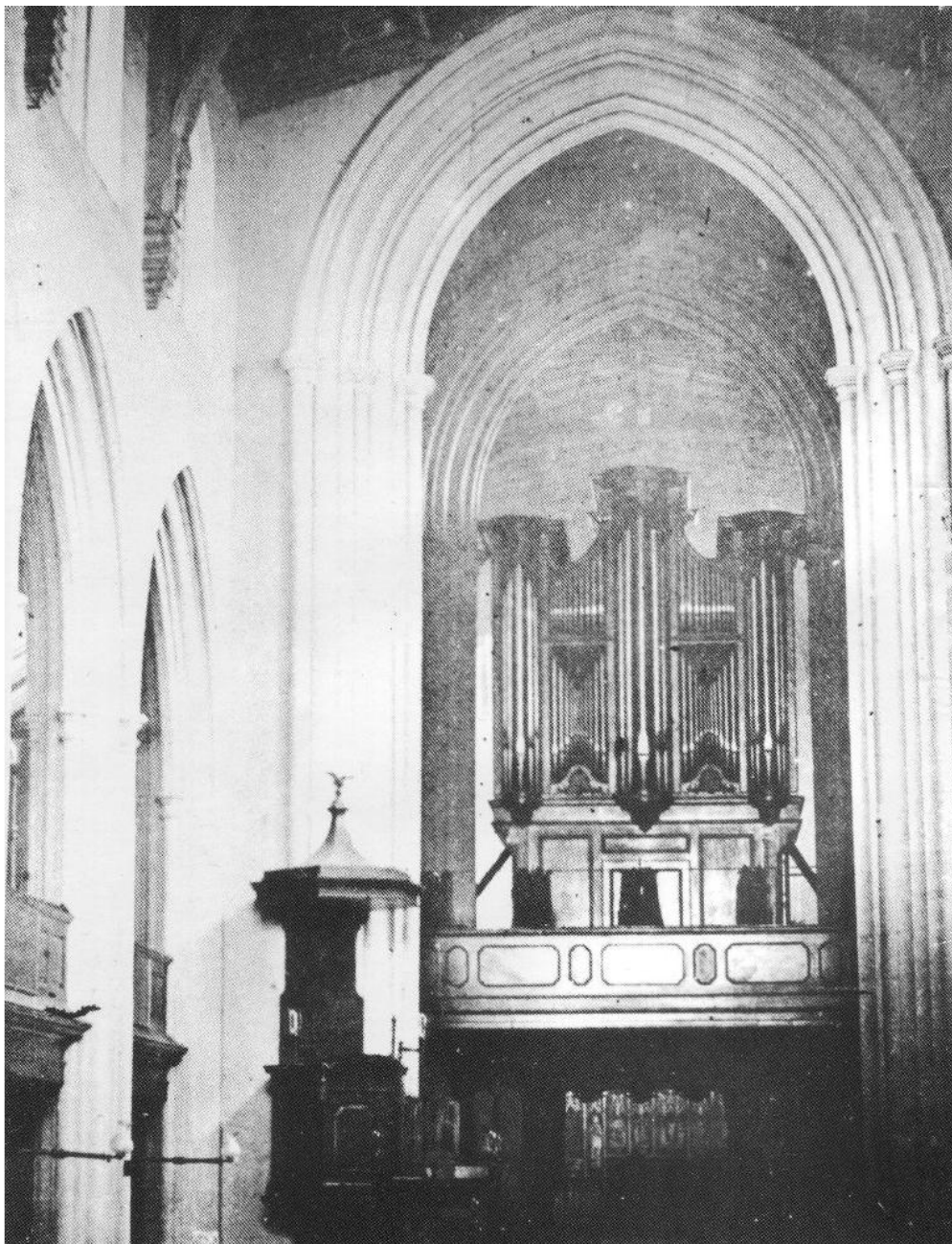


Fig. 1 A photograph showing the church pre 1860 with the organ under the tower. Note the organ standing on its own gallery directly underneath the tower, the plastered and white washed walls and balconies in the nave.

## **4. PHASE I - THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT**

A project of this scale and importance should be firmly rooted in the community which it will serve. It was with this in mind that the Project Team were committed to seeking the views of everyone who lives in Ludlow and even further afield. Three separate exercises were carried out. Firstly, a Delphi study, a vital tool in establishing the views of a wide spectrum of interested parties. Secondly, the town-wide survey, enabling everyone who lives in Ludlow to take an active role in the project. Thirdly, a survey of the church electoral roll, the members of the church community, at both St Laurence's and St John's. It was then possible to identify the common themes amongst all of these consultations.

### **What methodology was used for the consultation process?**

A Delphi approach was adopted. The term 'Delphi' originates from the Oracle at Delphi where the ancient Greeks were said to be able to predict the future. A Delphi study is an efficient and effective way of combining the expertise of a group of people to obtain information for planning and predictive purposes. It differs from other surveys and questionnaires as it involves asking a panel of 'experts' to generate, rate and prioritise (in this study) the ways in which the Parish Church of St Laurence, Ludlow could better meet the needs of the wider community. These suggestions focus on the experts' opinions, predictions and judgements concerning a specific topic of interest. Those taking part in this study were able to do so on an anonymous basis, with EPS acting as an intermediary.

In the first round panel members were asked to state the one way in which the Parish Church could better meet the needs of the wider community. The results were analysed and then 21 distinct suggestions identified. Those members of the expert panel who had responded in the first round were then asked to select the seven that they each deemed to be the most important.

### **How was the expert panel chosen?**

The 'expert panel', numbering approximately 100 people, was set up so as to include representation of all categories of individual and organisation that might have an interest in the refurbishment of St Laurence's. Therefore it included political representatives, cultural and historical stakeholders, members of groups auxiliary to the church, members of the congregation

members of the Project Steering Group, statutory agencies, residents, voluntary agencies and commercial enterprises of the town. For each category a database of names was set up. One name in each category was then chosen at random by the external consultant who had been commissioned to carry out this study (none of the Project Team knew who had been chosen). In this way the expert panel was constituted.

### **How successful has the overall consultation process been?**

First of all, much interest in the Vision Project has been generated by the consultation process. That said, the Delphi study involving the expert panel has revealed that some areas of the Ludlow community have a greater degree of engagement with St Laurence's than others. There was a high response rate from the cultural and historical stakeholders, from political representatives and from organisations auxiliary to the church. On the other hand it is clear, as evidenced by their comparatively low response rate, that more effort is needed to increase the level of engagement with the commercial enterprises of the town.

The response to the town-wide survey was very encouraging. Out of the 4500 questionnaires that were distributed, more than 14% responded. This is a very high rate of return for a survey of this type, revealing the extent to which St Laurence's Church registers as an important feature of Ludlow.

### **Did the views expressed in the town-wide survey differ from those of the expert panel?**

There was broad agreement between the views of the church electoral roll, the town-wide survey and those of the expert panel. In all cases there was a strong emphasis on the need to create a space that is flexible, accessible and comfortable for the user.

The five main priorities of all the surveys (in no particular order) were:

- Provide appropriate heating, lighting, sound transmission and floor covering
- Encourage opportunities for all sections of the wider community to organise and participate in both liturgical and cultural or community events in St Laurence's
- Remove all pews, replacing them with attractive, comfortable and movable seats for flexibility of use
- Enhance and highlight the character and historic features of the building

- Provide a range of art events not just concerts

Only a further eight ideas were generated in the final open question that had not already been suggested by the expert panel, and out of these, only two were repeated by more than one person.

These were

- Sell St John's and concentrate all services at St Laurence's
- Use the west door as the main entrance

### **Are you serious about the trattoria/wine bar?**

All the suggestions in the questionnaire were generated by the people who responded to the Delphi Study, none of them came from the Project Team or PCC directly. In this way we were able to discern new ideas and understand what the people of Ludlow wanted in their church. The press did focus on this particular idea, in fact it was one of the least popular options in the whole consultation.

## **5. BUILDINGS & FABRIC**

### **Never mind exciting plans, what about repairs?**

We are preparing an Asset Management Plan to identify, schedule and budget for the on-going repairs and maintenance to all of our buildings. This will specify the work that needs to be done to maintain the fabric, and prioritise it in terms of urgency. The plant that we use for our ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has to be sustainable. Our friends, the Conservation Trust for St Laurence, will work with us to see what the Trust can fund, but we expect significant external funding to be necessary to enable us to meet the Plan. However each one of our buildings now requires significant capital expenditure to maintain the status quo.

### **What is happening to the floors and heating?**

Our heating is old (some parts of the system are 150 years old) and very inefficient (approximately 55%). It is also not very effective. We need to change our approach to heating the building. Modern heating systems for churches are under-floor and much more efficient than the current one in St Laurence's. Last year's gas bill was £26 000, of which half was lost in

inefficiency of the boiler. This year alone we have had to spend nearly £2000 repairing the boiler. At the same time, the Victorian floor tiles in the aisles are breaking up, and the floor is uneven in places. Repair is not a long-term option; the floor has outlived its expected life - we need a new floor and one of equal, if not superior, quality and longevity. Taken together, this means we will need to remove the pews whilst we access the floor for the heating and re-flooring work. At the same time, we will need to address the lighting system, which as well as being ineffective, is inefficient and expensive to maintain and run.

### **Why don't you just fix the floor, heating and lighting and leave the rest of the building as it is? How much would that cost?**

Experience of church projects elsewhere indicates this could cost about £1 million (based on the cost of a similar floor, heating and lighting at Cirencester Parish Church, completed in September 2009).

To do both the floor and the heating will require the removal of all of the furniture in the Nave and transepts (pews etc). It would be an act of irresponsibility to automatically assume that we should return everything to its original state; we must remember St Laurence's has had many different internal layouts over its 800 year old history. This is an opportunity not to be missed as it provides a once in a lifetime chance to work on a 'blank canvas'.

### **What do you plan to do to improve accessibility?**

This is another aspect that will form part of our thinking. At present St Laurence's is very difficult for, e.g. wheelchair access. Not only is the floor uneven, but there are many steps and few ramps. We need to improve the accessibility, but without detracting from the visual impact of the building. Our plans therefore will make the nave fully DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant. We intend that the physical barriers to movement within the building will be removed by reconsidering the internal layout of the church and the provision of proper access ramps and steps.

### **Will your plans improve the carbon footprint of the church?**

Within the scope of the project, we envisage including a much more efficient heating system, better lighting (at lower power consumption) and possibly the use of some form of renewable energy. Again, it is too early to be specific but we expect the carbon footprint to reduce significantly as a result of the works.



Fig. 2 An artist's impression of the pre-reformation Rood screen

### **What about removing the pews?**

There was broad agreement across the public consultation that consideration should be given to the 'Removal of all the pews'. The pews in St Laurence's are mounted on wooden platforms which are trip hazards. The fixed nature of the pews also stops us from providing space for wheelchair users in the main body of the church. Kneeling is not necessarily inhibited if there are no

pews. Some chairs have the facility to carry hassocks and therefore do not inhibit kneeling. It is a fact that in many churches where chairs have been introduced, some of the people attending worship have given up kneeling. However there are many solutions to seating, not only chairs. Many churches now have successfully used a new type of modern pew that stacks. The need for seating will be described in the architect's brief; finding the solution will be the job of the architect as it was with Sir Gilbert Scott in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most importantly the seating must allow us the opportunity to use the whole of the nave to its full potential once more.

### **Why don't you close St Laurence's and give it to English Heritage?**

St Laurence's is the historic Parish Church of Ludlow, a Grade 1 listed building and one of the finest churches in England. It has borne witness to the Christian gospel for over eight centuries and we are committed to it being the focus of the parish, town and wider community for which it is the mother church of the Team Ministry with its 16 other churches. Two of these, St John's and St Giles are within the town. We have to explore how we may make the best use of our three church buildings in Ludlow for the benefit of the wider community which we are called to serve.

## **6. FUNDING AND FINANCE**

### **The papers say you've run out of money – is this true?**

The papers, not surprisingly, picked on one aspect of the public presentation made in October 2008, and sensationalised it. No, we have not run out of money. In fact, our performance was better than budget last year and we showed a modest surplus. However, we are not a rich church. Unlike some other "greater" churches, we do not have a large capital endowment – our general combined cash reserves as a Parish are in the order of £ 50,000. Future trends suggest that the budget of the church will become increasingly difficult to achieve, and so we need to consider both the running costs of the church, and means of raising income, as part of the future plans.

### **Isn't the church rich?**

Neither St Laurence's, or St John's is a rich Church financially. Our combined general cash reserves of some £50,000 are of the order of 3 months operating expenses. In common with the vast majority of Parish Churches we

receive no funding from the Church of England, nor from the Government, nor any regular grants; hence why we have to be self supporting.

### **Why don't you charge tourists to come into St Laurence's?**

We have thought about this. Our view is that this is not the preferred way of raising funds. Our experience is that some people resent being charged for entry to a sacred building, and equally that others, having paid an entry fee, feel no obligation or motivation to spend money in the gift shop whilst in the church. This could have an overall adverse impact to our total revenue. So at least for the moment, we feel that an entry fee is not appropriate. After all the building is the heart of a Christian community not a museum.

### **Why don't you sell the Rectory and use the money for the church building?**

The Rectory is the property of the Diocese of Hereford, and not the PCC of Ludlow. It is therefore not ours to sell. However, we do have responsibility for No 2 College Street, and St John's, and our review will include considering a wide range of options for the property that we do look after.

## **7. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

### **Why does the church have to change? It has always been this way, hasn't it?**

Change and adaptation have been constant features in the 800 year history of the Parish.

In the Middle Ages the chancel of St Laurence's was a holy place, where mass was celebrated by clergy and choir. The rest of the building, at various times, accommodated the grammar school, meeting places for trade guilds, and chantry chapels endowed by benefactors.

After the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century preaching replaced the altar as the main focus of worship, and box pews and galleries were inserted. Peripheral spaces were variously used: the chancel for tombs of dignitaries, St John's Chapel for church courts, and the Lady Chapel for the Borough's fire appliances. In 1764 the new Snetzler Organ, positioned centrally directly under the tower, highlighted the nave as a concert venue.

In 1859–60 the church interior was reorganized following liturgical developments of the period. By relocating the organ in the north transept attention was now drawn to the high altar in the much restored chancel; the box pews and balconies were removed from the nave and this became a single unified auditorium; the ceiling of the lantern tower was raised 40 feet to reveal the magnificent windows and allow light into the building, while religious roles were restored to the side chapels which had been unused for centuries. Also three ‘chapels of ease’ were built to serve the growing population: St Leonard’s, St Stephens and St John’s; the first two of which closed over 50 years ago as weekly church attendance gradually declined. St Giles Church, although located in the separate parish of Ludford is also the focus of worship for a number of people in Ludlow.

In recent years in St Laurence’s a nave altar has been provided, and pews have been removed to provide space for baptisms and for fellowship, while a gift shop, a toilet and a small kitchen all reflect widening community uses.

### **Will St Laurence’s remain at the heart of the Christian community?**

St Laurence Ludlow is a very special place, with a rich religious, architectural and musical heritage. Over the centuries it has been adapted by successive generations to reflect the needs of the religious and secular communities of Ludlow. Our firm commitment is that St Laurence’s will remain at the heart of the Christian community in South Shropshire, providing witness and service to the community.

### **What about the people who are not part of the Christian community?**

In addition to being a place of worship, a historic function of a parish church building is to provide a meeting place for ‘all sorts of conditions of people’ (a slightly amended form of words from *The Book of Common Prayer*). The parish church is not just the preserve of the Anglican Christian community, nor is the place limited to the wider Christian community for that matter. It is for all people and, as such, the church community is responsible for providing an all-embracing community resource.

## **What about the primary purpose of a church building, which is to remind people of God?**

It will of course be essential to ensure there is a sense of sacred space in the building and that this adds to peoples' experience rather than inhibiting it. To do this will take both careful arrangement of the interior space and good management. It has been done before, here and elsewhere, and we are confident that it can be done again now. We are all acutely aware of the need to retain and, if possible, enhance the sense that St Laurence's is a sacred space. It is an awe-inspiring building and that is why we are being so careful about the process of determining what we should do.

## **Will St Laurence's appeal to people who are not usually interested in church life?**

St Laurence's is a special place. We are seeking to enable people to rediscover something of the medieval understanding of a parish church as the social and community centre of parish life.

## **If St Laurence's is always busy with activities, where can the parishioners mark the important events of life, such as, baptisms, weddings and funerals?**

St Laurence's is, and will remain, first and foremost a church; so church activities will take precedence. But because Ludlow and the associated churches are all part of a team it is possible for parishioners to choose any of the buildings in the Team Ministry in which to hold such services.

## **How does the Conservation Trust fit into all this?**

The Conservation Trust is an independent secular charity and is concerned with the repair and conservation of the fabric of St Laurence's. The Trust is a huge support and we are extremely grateful for all that the Trust does on behalf of the church. However the Trust does not have the responsibility for issues like whether the building is 'fit for purpose' which is the focus of the Ludlow Vision Project, and the responsibility of the PCC. Naturally we hope that for appropriate repair and conservation work as part of this project, the Trust will be able to help financially.

## **You say you want to make the church suitable for events, but aren't there already alternative venues in Ludlow?**

St Laurence's is the largest venue in Ludlow. Of course there are others, and each is best suited to particular types of event. We are not seeking to take business from the existing venues, but rather to offer a facility that complements what already exists. St Laurence's is already used by a significant number of organisations, but in truth fails to offer 21<sup>st</sup> century facilities, both for secular and liturgical use.

## **How will St Laurence's role fit alongside, e.g., the Assembly Rooms?**

Our aim is that the various venues in Ludlow should be complementary to each other. Indeed we can learn from the Assembly Rooms and other such providers to see what will complement what they are doing. We are aware that running the Assembly Rooms demands a lot from the staff and volunteers and we do not want in any way to threaten the success of that venue. Fortunately St Laurence's is such a very different space from the Assembly Rooms that we think it will be possible for both organisations to work together and cooperate in the provision of different spaces for use by the community. For instance, during the Ludlow Festival, both venues are extensively used, complementing each other. One of the main themes in the response from the consultation was that we should work in conjunction with the Assembly Rooms.

## **What if someone leaves or retires from the Project Team?**

The Project Team, together with a Steering Group, has been set up to ensure that no one person is key to making things happen and that there is a system in place for succession and changes in personnel.

## **8. WHAT NEXT**

### **Having completed the consultation process, what will be the next steps in the Vision Project?**

Over the coming months a statement of the needs of the Parish of St Laurence with St John will be compiled. This will form the structure of the brief for the Vision Project. This document will be based both on the results

of the consultation process, and the information about the maintenance of the buildings in the Asset Management Plan. As such it sets out the needs and aspirations, not necessarily how the project will physically look or be manifested. This statement of need will eventually be the basis upon which a number of architects will be invited to express an interest in producing designs for a re-ordered interior of St Laurence's, fully incorporating our needs as a community. Initial discussions will also take place with the Hereford Diocesan Advisory Committee, whose approval would be required for any significant changes. Preliminary discussions will also take place with the relevant heritage bodies, including English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Over the coming months a decision will also be made as to which professional fund-raiser is to be engaged.

We will publish a Newsletter from time to time, and also will be carrying the latest news on our website:

[www.stlaurences.org.uk/developing-a-vision-future](http://www.stlaurences.org.uk/developing-a-vision-future)

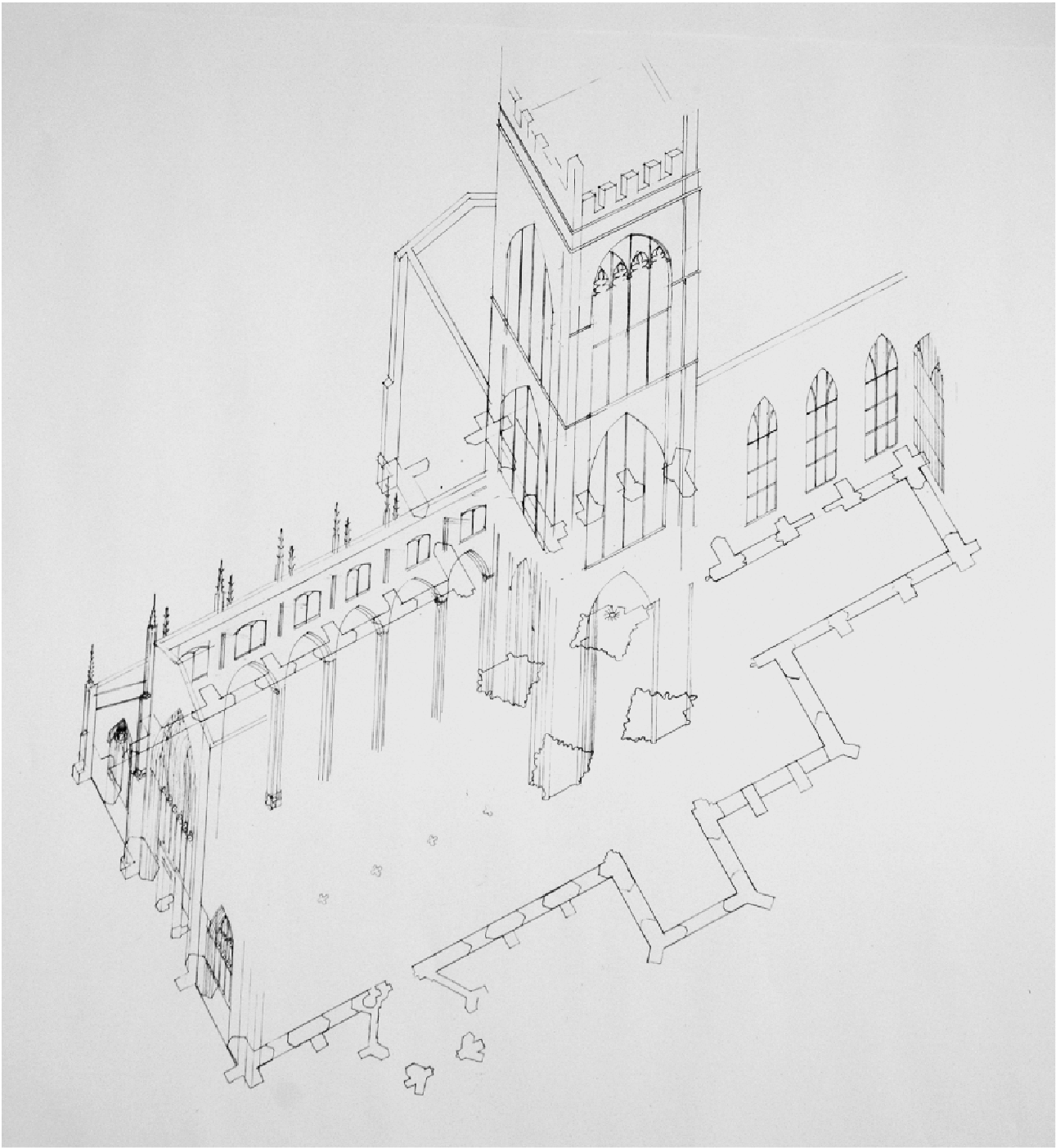


Fig. 3 A blank canvas - what legacy will we leave for future generations?

*Drawn illustrations courtesy of Michael Philips Architects, Ludlow*