

May 2023

BERWICK BASSETT. ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH PLAN



Part A - [Current Report](#)

The report current at the time of first issue summarises known activity at the church, stakeholders, trends, site resources and results in hand.

Part B - [Consultation](#)

Open consultation findings summarise notes provided by survey recipients in reaction to Part A, the current report and specifies community planning meeting details.

Part C - [Community Recommendations](#)

Community recommendations include the full resolutions set at the community planning meeting.

Part D - [Action Plan](#)

The action plan splits tasks agreed at and implied by the community recommendations.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

St Nicholas's Church in Berwick Bassett, Wiltshire, England dates from the early 13th century. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II* listed building, It was declared redundant on 30 June 1972, and was vested in the Trust on 12 December 1973.

The church can only be approached by a pedestrian footpath. The red brick chancel was built between 1199 and 1221, with the nave being added in 14th century and built of sarsen stone. On the south wall is a scratch dial. The interior includes a font from the 13th century and a rood screen from the 15th. The pulpit, altar rail and pews are from the 19th century. There is a trefoiled piscina, which is a shallow basin used for washing the communion vessels. The monuments include four wall tablets including those to Henry Webb, who died in 1776, John Nalder, a 1794 death, and Elizabeth Nalder, dating from 1835.

In the 1660s the church was visited by John Aubrey who described the memorials and tombs he saw. In 1857 the church had a major restoration by Thomas Henry Wyatt. This included replacement of the original wooden structure with the current stone tower which contains three bells dating from the 17th century. At this point the walls were rendered and whitewashed. The parish joined with Avebury and Winterbourne Monkton in 1970 and is now part of the benefice of Upper Kennett.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

St Nicholas' benefits from the voluntary support of a few neighbours and members of the local community, as well as from the services of a CCT Area Volunteer. Voluntary activity undertaken by this group includes

- Regular calendar of services.
- Occasional cleaning
- 6 monthly site inspection
- Voluntary maintenance of the vested churchyard.
- Ad hoc reporting of building change

Collection Review

Open Churches Policy status:	Open
Local Community Officer:	Rachel Whitty
Closest Church Classification:	Open
Classification outstanding items:	Functioning wall safe. Laminated Church History
Visitor nos. 2016/ 17 (est):	1424
Visitor nos. 2017/18 (est):	1218
Visitor nos. 2018/19 (est):	1002
Current project:	None
Cleaning schedule:	Before services
Welcome table:	Present
Keyholder role:	Present
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (remittances, maintenance reporting)
Area volunteer role:	Fulfilled
Fundraising roles:	none formal
Stewardship roles:	None.
Research, interp & talks role:	None formal.
Accessibility details:	Provided via website
CCT silver plaque:	Installed, poor condition
CCT information board:	Not installed..
Oak post:	Not installed.
CCT freestanding board:	Provided
Wall safe poster:	Installed, current
CCT A board:	None.
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Provided
Building services:	No electricity, no heating
Parking:	None formal. Spaces on road
Organ:	None
Churchyard:	Vested CCT, maintained by the owners of neighboring

farm.

Ringable bells: chiming.	3. Hung for full-circle ringing but now only safe for swing-
Pews:	Yes.
Fire rated capacity:	60
Seating capacity:	Not determined
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	None
CCTV:	None
Individual item security measures:	None
Nearby attractions:	
Public transport:	
Social media presence:	None.
Images on CCT website:	One of three
Regular feature parish news:	Unsure
Services per year:	2-3
CofE support for services:	Apparently
Christmas memory tree:	No.
Tea Party:	No.
Historic Church Tour:	No
Heritage Open Days:	No
Ride & Stride:	No
Champing:	No.
Retail:	No.
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Security Audit:	2015
Children's explorer cart:	No.
Children's trail:	No.

Conservation reports

Condition Report:

Repairs liability: £32,700

Annualised maintenance: £2,554.44

- **Short term:** **£6,750.00**
 - External repairs to W window £2,500.00
 - Reset and repoint paving outside church £1,500.00
 - Localised repointing to boundary walls £2,750.00

- **Medium term:** **£11,700.00**
 - Repairs to Sound openings and improvements to weatherproofing £7,000.00
 - Conservator repairs to listed Nalder chest tomb £4,700.00

- **Long term:** **£14,250.00**
 - Re-plaster and redecorate W wall £7,500.00
 - Timber screen report and repairs £5,500.00
 - Remove masonry paint from piscina £1,250.00

- **Desirable:** **£**

All cost figures are estimates, exclusive of VAT and professional fees

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

Income 2019 – 2020:	£240
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£0
Income 2018-2019:	£200
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£0
Income 2017-2018:	£265
Wall safe 2017-2018: (incl. above):	£15
Income 2016-2017:	£73
Wall safe 2016-2017: (incl. above):	£23

Expenditure

Conservation expenditure '18/'19:	£0
Maintenance expenditure '18/'19:	£798
Maintenance expenditure '17/'18:	£1892
Electricity '18/'19:	£0
Electricity '17/'18:	£0

Balances

Restricted Balance Report Jul '19	£440.81
Income less expenditure '18/'19	-£598
Income less ann. maint. '18/'19:	-£2,354.44

Local Community Officer's Summary

St Nicholas' Church, Berwick Bassett has been fortunate to of had many years of support from its nearest neighbours, the owners of Manor Farm and The Old Farmhouse. They have kept the churchyard in a good condition for many years and helped with services and cleaning, as well as providing financial support to the church.

St Nicholas' has also benefitted from the more recent support of two CCT Area Volunteers, who have conducted 6 monthly building surveys.

The main current issue at St Nicholas' is the rusted up and un-useable donation box, which has rusted closed as a result of being rather unusually situated in the covered porch, where it gets very damp.

Regular services do take place at the church but historically the CCT have not been informed in advance of this, and we find out about it usually via the visitor book

St. Nicholas' inspires generous support from a relatively small number of visitors each year, the maximum number of visits limited perhaps by the limited options for parking. The addition of video-directions on the church webpage might encourage additional visits over time, all of which would be certain to encounter an extremely well-presented church thanks to the continuing and extremely dedicated care of its neighbour who visits to clean throughout the season.

The availability of an electrical supply could enable flexible use of the interior for occasional performances, especially where any such would be of interest to local residents from nearby residential centres, or where audiences of sufficient number might be able to walk to the venue from other parts of the village.

Improved "open church" and donation signage and interpretation (no current guidebook in print) in the church could improve visitor numbers and donation per head.

It is hoped that new ideas for use and potential supporters for the church may emerge from the church planning process.

Part B - Consultation (Interim Round September 2020)

Summary of consultation responses received by end August 2020

*Following distribution of fifteen questions through our standard church plan questionnaire in summer 2020 to existing Churches Conservation Trust correspondents, (together with an invitation for correspondents to share the survey and associated Church Plan Part A), 1 response was received for **Berwick Bassett, St Nicholas'** by the deadline of **August 30th**.*

The response received was from 1 respondent writing in a **personal** capacity, who confirmed that their responses related to **St. Nicholas', Berwick Bassett**.

In addressing the question of *a perfect outcome for our work together at the church* the respondent indicated **That the community was already involved with the church as much as it wanted to be.**

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicates **That continued upkeep of the building will be challenging.**

Thinking about local life away from the church, in relation to other community projects or activities which might combine with our work to protect the church for the future, the respondent indicated **There was very little local life away from the church as they are such a small community.**

Considering if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself, the respondent indicated **They have as many services as the vicar is able to handle**

In relation to identifying conservation priorities for the church, the respondent provided **That continued use of the church was important**

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising the respondent noted **That this was very difficult in a tiny community.** In respect of means for initiating fundraising activity, the respondent gave **[no response]**. The respondent also indicated that they **are, and have been previously involved** in fundraising activity for the church.

In seeking respondents' participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning the respondent indicated **They'd be happy to meet through phone or video conference.**

In answering our final, open question about any additional church matters not covered in other areas of the survey, the respondent indicated **[no response]**.

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **[no response]** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives:

Nil

Part C - Community Recommendations (to follow meetings scheduled for October 2020 - January 2021 ahead of final report April 2021)

May 2023 Update – As there was no record of previous church plan meetings, RW (LCO) telephoned main contact (**A**) from ThankQ as an introduction. RW also wanted to pass on thanks to whomever had mowed the churchyard as it was looking lovely on her recent 6 monthly maintenance visit.

A explained that they mowed the churchyard and were also counting the swallows nesting for the RSPB. They also mentioned that they used to have a lot of contact from the CCT but not for some time. **A** also mentioned that they were still termed key holders which was not the case as they do not hold any keys.

RW explained about the role of the LCO and was keen to meet up in person to see how best to engage with the wider community. RW appreciated it that it was a small community and would be happy to come and talk at a Parish Council meeting or community meeting.

A was very happy for RW to drop in when next passing as it was difficult for them to commit to a date at present.

RW agreed to ring ahead to check availability when planning next visit which would be in the next month

Part D - Action Plan

The action plan below has been amended to reflect activity since the *interim edition* of the church plan, published at the end of **September 2020** and the previous church plan published at the end of March 2021.

Community Actions

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

- Agree a date for a face-to-face meeting to review interim church plan
- Review CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

- Investigate suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences.
- Consider use of the church as gallery space, offering local artists and makers a chance to mount exhibitions, or providing community groups and educational establishments with a suitable venue for temporary displays
- Consider the suitability of the site for Champing

Long term actions (to end September 2024)

Actions complete

Local Community Officer Actions

Short term actions (to end of September 2023)

- Agree a date for a face-to-face meeting with main contact to review interim church plan and establish link with local incumbent
- Consider posters for a call out for volunteers and event activities
- Complete community audit to establish appetite within the local community to support activities at the church

- Review church web page to ensure clear directions available for all visitors
- Share CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report
- Follow up on and publish online audio guide produced for the church to address the lack of printed interpretation.

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

- Consider adding video directions to the church for prospective visitors' information
- Investigate suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences.
- Consider use of the church as gallery space, offering local artists and makers a chance to mount exhibitions, or providing community groups and educational establishments with a suitable venue for temporary displays
- Consider the suitability of the site for Champing

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

- Agree dates for face-to-face or digital community meetings by end January 2021
- Resolve updated findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A, B & C expressed as short, medium and long-term actions for each site (Part D)
- Publish Church Plan Version '2021-22'
- Distribution Part A reports for each church to all existing correspondents, together with survey
- Receive, anonymise and collate survey responses and add to Church Plan Part B
- Resolve initial findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A & B, expressed as short, medium and long-term actions
- Publish Part A, B & D as Interim Church Plan to colleagues by end September 2020
- Undertake staff consultation against Interim Church Plan by end November 2020
- By end November 2020 review colleagues' feedback regarding updates to church plan part A, to include
 - Conservation interpretations
 - Presentation improvements
 - Champing data
- Support EO and CPM in replacing the donation box.
- New wall safe installed in porch
- Share the annual maintenance figure via CCT website "church page" and other channels

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

- Provide interpretation of maintenance and repair plans to further explain anticipated costs described in part A above.

Medium term actions (to end March 2022)

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

Appendix 1: Summer 2020 Questionnaire

1. This is the first of fourteen questions in the survey - thank you in advance for working through each one. First of all, we need to know if you're completing the survey on behalf of an organisation or writing in a personal capacity (If you're writing on behalf of an organisation, please use the text box to let us know which one. Thank you!)
2. Which church are you writing about? (Don't worry, you can complete additional questionnaires for other sites if you like!) Please state the location and dedication, as in 'Sapperton, St. Kenelm's'. Thank you.
3. People are involved with our sites in so many different ways. In your own words, please describe your relationship with the church building.
4. Some people are actively involved at the churches we look after together. If you're part of this group, tell us about your involvement. Cleaning, attending services and fundraising are just a few of the most frequent activities we share, but we'd appreciate as much detail as you might be happy to provide.
5. In your own words, and having reviewed 'Part A' of our church plan (sent to you by email with the invitation to this questionnaire), please describe a perfect outcome for our work together at the church. What would you like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building?
6. Bearing in mind the repair liabilities and running costs described in the report you've read, what challenges do you anticipate for a sustainable future at your church?
7. Thinking about local life away from the church, which other community projects or activities are you aware of that could combine with our work to protect the church for the future?
8. Here are two questions together... Could increased use of the church benefit the community? How would this increased use benefit the church itself?
9. What do you think are the most important conservation priorities at your church? For each or all of these priorities, please also let us know about any ideas you have for addressing them.

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10. Income and expenditure for the church is detailed in 'Part A' of the report we sent you. Addressing conservation priorities will entail finding new ways to raise funds. Tell us about any ideas or opportunities you have identified for raising additional income at the church.

 11. What do you think might be the best ways to get started with any fundraising activities you have suggested?

 12. If you don't already, would you be interested and available to take part in future fundraising activity?

 13. Almost done! We'd like to invite you to join us in a group discussion about the church later this year, either in person or through 'phone / video conference. Would you be willing to join the discussion?

 14. Last question! Is there anything else you'd like to share about your interest in the church which we haven't asked you already? Otherwise, thank you again so much for reflecting on the future of the church through your answers.

