

Appendix A Background to the initial LBC application for organ

The original plan for the organ in the major project was always to keep it in the space (without refurbishing it due to it no longer being played for services by the worshipping congregation or any other events during the testing / trialling development period). We had no need to remove it.

During the HLF Development phase extensive issues in the Nave involving lack of foundations and poor repair work carried out in the 1930's) meant that CCT postponed submitting the HLF Round 2 for six months in order to raise more money, an unexpected £500K increase in repair costs. The HLF then agreed to provide an uplift of £230K, but with the understanding that a value engineering (VE) exercise was also carried out.

The organ was included as a VE item as it was not used regularly at all, its condition was deteriorating, and it was the one of the largest costing non-repair items. It now also needed to be removed from the site to allow works to the floor. After internal discussion a decision was taken to reduce the budget for the organ from £60K to protect and for works to it, to £55K to remove, store and replace casing only.

With this decision made, CCT had to look at the options for the organ's future, and the potential of not having it back in the church. Advice was sought from the CCT's Conservation Committee and the British Institute of Organ Studies on what would be best for the organ. It was confirmed that the organ was not technically significant, and new research evidence highlighted findings that supported the organ being delisted. It was agreed that the instrument still deserved to be refurbished, used and maintained if possible. The advice was, if costs prohibited the organ being kept at Holy Trinity, efforts should be made to rehouse the organ as a whole instrument, ideally in another church, and failing that, it could be disposed of for parts.

Following CCT disposal procedure, a positive expression of interest to take the instrument as a whole was given by Instrumente Ladach, who would take the organ to Germany to restore and give to a community who could not afford a new organ. This would have been at zero costs and profit to the CCT (any savings in the budget for the organ would have gone back into the project to address the still outstanding £57K underwrite).

Instrumente Ladach preference was to take the organ before Brexit (March 2019). As part of the preparations for this expression of interest (it was not a done deal), we submitted the LBC application for the organ's permanent removal.

The report by Sunderland City Council (SCC) officers supported the LBC request but after intervention by a local councillor the application was moved to committee decision (December 2018). Due to the objections on the SCC planning portal, CCT took the decision to withdraw the LBC application to listen to these concerns before proceeding further.