



Church of St Jude,
Knaresdale



**Notes of the Public Meeting
held on Friday 28th February,
2025 at 7.30pm**



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These notes are best read alongside the presentation, which can be downloaded from www.alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/knaresdale – or contact Mark Nash-Williams for a printed copy.

Around 40 people attended the meeting, which Mark Nash-Williams (Vicar), Irene Boyles and Carol Grieves (Churchwardens) and Kim Boyce (Treasurer) had called to discuss the future of St Jude's Church, Knaresdale.

Introduction

Mark welcomed those present, stressed the importance of the church as a beautiful place of worship, peace and reflection for all the community to enjoy, and mark the great moments of family life – baptisms, weddings, funerals. He thanked those who support the church financially, those who have helped to maintain the churchyard and those who donate cakes for the Coffee Stop, which has become such an important part of community life.

Unfortunately, even with this support the church at present is not sustainable:

- ◆ income does not cover running costs and routine maintenance;
- ◆ major restoration works are required;
- ◆ we need facilities to make the church fit for the 21st century – running water, toilets, basic kitchen facilities;
- ◆ keeping a church running is a lot of work – more than can really be done by the Churchwardens and Treasurer at the moment.

Historic churches typically need major work done on them every 100-150 years, and St Jude's is now at that point.

Financially, every church has to be self-sufficient: there is no central funding from Government, the national Church of England or the diocese. So if we want St Jude's Church to survive, it's up to the community to raise the money required.

Mark explained that the purpose of the meeting was to explain the situation the church was in, and how the community could ensure its future for generations to come.

History of St Jude's Church

Local historian Alastair Robertson gave a presentation about the history of the church over the centuries, from the first record of a priest here, John de Beverley, in AD1135 to the construction of the current building in 1833 and the

additions made to it in 1892 and 1906. Alastair also spoke about the fine East window by Charles Kempe, and some of the historic graves, including that of Robert Baxter, allegedly poisoned in 1796.

Restoration Works required

Irene then spoke about findings of the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) – an architect’s inspection carried out every five years, most recently in late 2024. The inspection showed that major work is required, including:

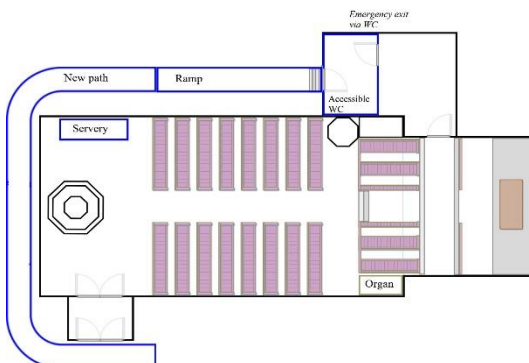
- ◆ complete re-roofing
- ◆ work to rainwater goods
- ◆ repointing and stonework repairs (including replacement of inappropriate cement mortar)
- ◆ extensive repairs to windows
- ◆ replastering and redecoration
- ◆ new heating system
- ◆ restoration of the hearse house

The cost of these works is estimated at £239,250. In addition the organ needs extensive work to get it back into good working order. See the presentation for a more detailed breakdown.

Development Project

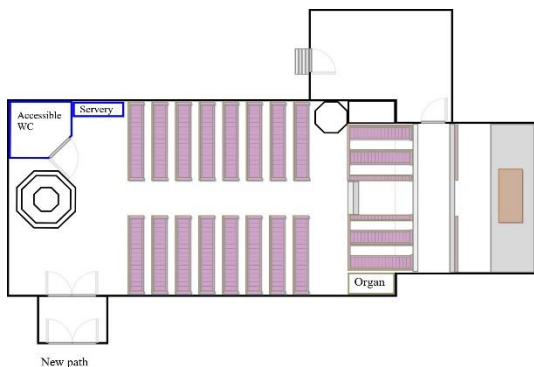
Mark outlined the need for basic facilities – toilets and baby changing facilities, capacity to serve refreshments. Currently we have nothing, which makes the church unwelcoming – not least to people coming from a distance for christenings, weddings, funerals.

Our architect has come up with three potential layouts, each with pros and cons. No decision has yet been made, and there will be a full consultation process before anything is agreed, but the budget cost is around £80,000 – including installing drains, sewers etc.



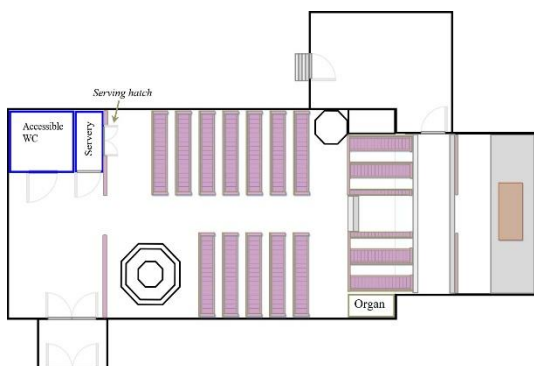
Option 1

- Discreet, little disruption
- Long trek to the toilet in bad weather. Reduced vestry



Option 2

- More accessible, vestry space not restricted
- Cramped space around font



Option 3

- Tidy solution, creates new lobby space
- More disruption, less seating (*chairs in lobby for funerals etc*)

It was stressed that this is not so that the church can compete with the Community Hall: each has its strengths, and the two can and should work together so that, for example, social events and sales would be best in the hall, but musical events would benefit from the church's acoustics.

So the total cost of works – repairs identified in the QI, the development project and restoration of the organ – is likely to be around £350,000. We are in the process of obtaining estimates for the QI work, to give us a more precise figure.

The church's financial situation

Kim talked us through the 2024 accounts.

Income totalled £9,339, of which £2,723 came from collections and donations; £500 from grants; £4,959 from Coffee Stop and other fundraising events; £1,127 from wedding/funeral fees; £30 from Easyfundraising.

Expenditure was £8,584, including £2,612 Parish Share; £600 vicar's expenses; £775 insurance; £241 energy; £1,453 churchyard maintenance; £813 building

maintenance and works; £995 charitable donations; £250 organist; £240 hall hire; £605 other. (charitable giving is a core part of our purpose, which we are proud to fulfil). These figures are unusual: our income is typically around £1,000 /less than our expenditure; and we are not spending enough on regular maintenance.

Current assets are: general fund £10,550 (this includes a one-off grant obtained during Covid); contingency fund £2,539; churchyard fund £428; Christmas party fund £289; development project fund £1,042.

Parish Share: Mark explained that this is our contribution to the diocese. The six churches on Alston Moor collectively pay £13,996; in return, the diocese pays for a vicar and all the associated costs (training, pension...); legal and safeguarding services; training and other support etc, totalling around £65-70,000. So we are being heavily subsidised by the diocese and other parishes which pay more (e.g. Hexham Abbey which pays around £100,000).

The bottom line:

- ◆ annual expenditure is around £1,000/year less than income, and we are not spending enough on regular maintenance;
- ◆ so regular income needs to increase by at least £1,500/year;
- ◆ the restoration and development works will cost around £350,000;
- ◆ The Knarsdale Estate have contributed £20,000 in exchange for the lifting of the covenant on the Old Rectory;
- ◆ So we have around £30,000 available so far;
- ◆ We will need to apply for grants;
- ◆ The more we raise ourselves, the more likely our applications will be successful;
- ◆ 30% is a good amount to be able to put in, i.e. £105,000; so we should be aiming to raise another £75,000;
- ◆ Some of this may come from small grant-givers – no guarantees!

How to support the church to ensure its future

Mark then explained how he hopes the community will support the church:

1) Financial

- ◆ Donations from the community will make a big difference:
- ◆ Regular donations (even small ones) are ideal, as they allow us to plan ahead;
- ◆ One-off donations are gladly received too.

- ◆ Donations can be for the whole life of the church (including the restoration and development projects), or for the restoration/development projects only.
- ◆ Individuals or businesses might like to sponsor the church for a day a month, or a day a year (£25)
- ◆ Leaving a legacy in you will can make a huge difference in the future.

2) Practical

There are many ways in which individuals could help practically. Possible ways include:

- ◆ Cleaning & polishing
- ◆ Flower arranging
- ◆ Building maintenance
- ◆ Churchyard maintenance
- ◆ Organising and helping with fundraising events
- ◆ Refreshments at events and services
- ◆ Admin or book-keeping
- ◆ Advertising (distributing posters, flyers...)
- ◆ Setting up before and after services
- ◆ Music?

3) The restoration and development projects

These will involve significant work, and we'd be very grateful for help with...

- ◆ Researching grant funding
- ◆ Grant applications
- ◆ Working with us on developing the project
- ◆ Looking into feasibility of long term fundraising – “champing” ...
- ◆ Eventually, practical help with e.g. decorating?

In some circumstances, it will be possible to assign a monetary value to volunteer work and count it towards match funding for grant applications.

Worship

The church is fundamentally a place of worship; we hold a variety of services, one a month on a Sunday afternoon or a Friday evening; but these may not be what people want; so we would like to know what kinds of services – and on what days and times – would be appreciated and enjoyed.

Next Steps

Mark asked everyone to take away a questionnaire to complete, and to return it to the church, to Irene Boyles or to himself by Sunday 16th March – or to fill in the online version at <https://alstonmoor.tiny.us/KnaresdaleResponse>

The questionnaire invites people to offer donations, practical help and support to develop the project; and to indicate preferences for worship. Once responses have been received, Mark will reply with details of how to make donations, and to follow up offers of help.

Questions and comments

Responses were generally positive, and encouraged that the clear intention is to keep the church open.

Questions asked during the meeting included:

The state of the trees in the churchyard: some work has been done recently, partly paid for by the Knarsdale Estate. An arboriculturist has been booked to make a full report in April, and further work will be done in the light of his report.

The organ: Veronica knows of an organists' association, and will look into whether there might be volunteers able to help with restoring the organ.

Grants for environmentally friendly heating schemes: there isn't much available these days, but we will certainly apply for anything that is going!

Applying for grants: it's hard to get grants for religious buildings unless we can show they have secular uses as well. But it's hard to put on secular events (concerts...) without heating and facilities. Perhaps putting on events in high summer when it's warm, to prove there is a demand, is the best we could do at this stage.

Questions after the meeting included:

The hearse house: could it be demolished and the stone sold to raise income? It might be worth considering; it would depend whether there is a use for the hearse house (as a shed for churchyard maintenance equipment, or a bunkhouse maybe?); whether permission would be granted to demolish it; whether demolition would be cheaper than restoration.

Seating: option 3 for the development project reduces the seating capacity – this could be an issue for big weddings/christenings/funerals. But chairs could be put in the proposed lobby and in front of the hatch, so the loss isn't as great as it appears.

Knarsdale charities: a question was asked about the John Stephenson and Allotment charities – but these are nothing to do with the church. The Vicar is an ex officio trustee, but the income is for the relief of individual need or hardship, not for the church.

Refreshments!

The meeting was followed by informal conversation and an opportunity to look at the displays, while enjoying delicious refreshments – many thanks to the ladies who provided them!

