

Statement of Needs 2021, St. John the Baptist Church, Hatherleigh, Devon

1. St. John's is at the centre of the community and holds a special place in the hearts of local people. So far the building has been used for:

a) The usual range of Church of England Services, including an all-age alternative style service.

b) Weddings, baptisms and funerals.

c) Civic Services such as the town's annual Service of Remembrance and other civil services.

d) The Community Primary School holds regular services in St John's and end of term events. And one of the after school club is run by church members *occasionally in the building at present*. We also work in close partnership with the school to help those experiencing poverty such as a Food Bank and Christmas Hampers.

e) St. John's is regularly used for the creative arts:

(i) The Hatherleigh Players have performed *drama productions* in the church.

(ii) The Two Moors Festival uses the church annually for *classical concerts* because of the excellent acoustics of the building.

(iii) Numerous Music Concerts have been held in the church and our excellent Gray & Harrison (London) organ (1852) which was rebuilt and enlarged by George Osmond (1913) is also available for concerts.

(iv) Beaford Arts planned an exhibition and performances in the church which have been postponed because of Covid 19.

(v) An Eco Event is held in St. John's as part of the annual Hatherleigh Festival and the church tower is also open with a video link to the belfry so that visitors on the ground floor can see what happens when the bells ring.

f) St. John's has an impressive ring of eight bells, which attract bell ringers from all over the country. We also have our own prize-winning team of bell ringers.

g) We have an ongoing wild churchyard project as part of our commitment to becoming a greener church. In the older parts of St. John's churchyard wild flowers are allowed to flourish throughout the season and during the winter habitat piles are left for hibernating creatures. We are also in the process of installing Swift boxes in the church tower.

Wildflower flower survey; Doug Smith & Jo Pullin **07830 340246**

2. St John's is a growing church – attendance at Sunday morning services has grown from 18 to 45 plus in the last two years.

3. The Need for Toilets

This application includes a planning request to fit toilets in the church because *[we believe in a theology of the hospitality of God which we would like to see expressed in our actions but are unable to do at present because of the limitations of the building]:*

(I) No public building of similar size and use today would be without toilet facilities.

(III) The nearest toilet is upstairs in the church hall, a walk of about in the open, down, a steep cobbled path. This is not considered acceptable, especially after dark or in wet, cold or icy weather. This is especially the case for children and the elderly.

(IV) The church hall is frequently hired out to other organisations or may be in use by other church groups. Those hiring/ using the hall are very wary of people they do not know coming into the premises.

(III) If the church hall is not in use it has to be kept locked for security reasons. This means that someone needing the toilet during a service, concert etc. has to get the key or be accompanied by a key-holder.

(IV) We believe the lack of toilets in the church limits the frequency and range of community use.

4. The Need for a Kitchen Area.

(I) We believe that the lack of a kitchen area also seriously restricts community use of the church especially young families and elderly people *[and limits our desire to share hospitality and fellowship].*

(II) On occasions when we have served refreshments in the church we have had to bring everything we need, including drinking water, from the Rectory down a steep incline to the church *and barrowing everything [including the washing up] back again afterwards.*

(III) This is not practical in the dark, or in wet, cold or icy weather. We then have to do the return journey up a steep incline to the Rectory, again not practical in adverse conditions. A kitchen area is desirable, not only for refreshments but also for hand-washing before serving refreshments and warming baby's bottles.

(IV) On occasions we have used the church hall but, as stated in the need for the toilets, this is a long walk, in the open and down a steep cobbled path. This is not considered acceptable in adverse conditions.

(V) A water supply in the church would also help our team of flower arrangers, who have to bring heavy bottles of water into the church. It would also help our church cleaner.

5. The need for these facilities is becoming urgent because:

a) The Sunday morning congregation is growing with young families attending.

b) The lack of facilities is actively discouraging people from attending community events in the church.

c) We anticipate that the addition of toilets and a kitchen area will make St John's a more attractive venue for community groups to hire for a wide range of events.